

INSPECTION REPORT

HALLMOOR SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103610

Headteacher: Mrs S Charvis

Reporting inspector: Dr Eric Peagam
14943

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 May 2001

Inspection number: 193252

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (moderate learning difficulties)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hallmoor Road,
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Hoey

Date of previous inspection: 24 February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hallmoor is a community special school in the south-east of Birmingham for pupils aged 3 to 19 with moderate learning difficulties, which increasingly admits pupils with a range of additional difficulties. There are 234 pupils on roll with twice as many boys as girls. Of these, 31 are in the post 16 unit. There are no pupils under five and only one in the foundation stage (under six). All pupils have statements of special educational need. There is a large proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds (44 percent), for most of whom English is an additional language, and additional support is provided through central funding. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds but most come from areas with high levels of deprivation so that the proportion entitled to free school meals is high at 60 percent. The school is situated on two sites, with older secondary and post 16 provision offered on the top floor of a former secondary school half a mile away.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hallmoor is a very effective and improving school with many strengths which strongly outweigh its few shortcomings. Good teaching which supports good achievement, allied to a very high standard of care and support, ensure that pupils make good progress in subjects across the curriculum and very good progress in personal development. Overall educational provision is good and meets the needs of post 16 students very well. Leadership is decisive and effective in setting clear goals and taking the action necessary to achieve them. Overall, the school continues to give good value for money, especially for post 16 students.

What the school does well

- Good teaching inspires good learning across the school, and especially for students at post 16.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development very well and achieves very good attitudes and mutually supportive relationships.
- The distinctive provision for post 16 students is very effective and its successful implementation is enabling the Key Stage 4 curriculum to develop similar strengths.
- The successful development of strategies for literacy and numeracy is enhancing learning and improving the confidence with which pupils apply basic skills in other areas.
- The school looks after pupils very well, their health, safety and welfare are very well promoted.

What could be improved

- Monitoring the balance of the curriculum and the use of time
- Target setting in individual education plans (IEPs) and to support individual subject development.
- Facilities for science at Key Stage 4 and the external environment at the Mirfield site.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in February 1997, when shortcomings were identified in teaching, including planning, setting and use of targets, the curriculum and use of specialist accommodation at Key Stage 4, the use of time and staff and monitoring of teaching and learning. There have been significant improvements in these areas as a result of the successful implementation of the action plan. In particular, teaching and progress, which were satisfactory, are now good and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved from being weak, to being a strength. Monitoring of teaching and learning is established and is having a positive impact. In addition, the school has responded well to national initiatives such as those for literacy and numeracy. Some issues remain, however: there are still inadequate facilities for science at Key Stage 4, curriculum time is still short especially for older pupils and IEP targets are still of inconsistent quality. Overall, therefore, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 16	by age 19	Key
speaking and listening	B	A	very good A
reading	B	B	good B
writing	B	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	C	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	B	

** IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

The school sets targets for improvements in literacy and numeracy and is effective in achieving these. As a result of the implementation of a school-wide strategy, progress in these areas is good. Achievement is particularly good for students at post 16; it is least good in Key Stage 1, where the teaching is not always well matched to pupils' needs. Progress towards IEP targets is good at post 16 and in some classes in Key Stages 2 and 3, but in other classes and at Key Stage 4, targets are inappropriate or insufficiently measurable for the school to confidently address them. Progress in PSHE is satisfactory overall, reflecting good progress in some aspects, but is insufficiently assessed for the school to plan effectively on the basis of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall.

Pupils are proud of their school, enjoy coming, work hard and concentrate well. They generally behave well in classrooms and when moving about the building. Playground behaviour is civilised and disciplined. Where pupils have behaviour difficulties these are usually well managed and exclusion, although high, is appropriately used, reflecting the particularly difficult behaviour of a few pupils. Pupils develop self-confidence very well and form mutually supportive relationships. This is particularly noticeable among pupils at the Mirfield site where pupils demonstrate high levels of maturity and responsibility. Most pupils attend well, but exclusions and extended absences on the part of some pupils reduce the overall percentage.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	None seen	Good	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.

Teaching is good overall, being at least good in 73 percent of lessons; it is very good in 47 percent and is only unsatisfactory in five percent. It is very good for students at post 16, and where specialist teachers are working within their own subject. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils with different needs and levels of attainment are equally able to benefit from lessons. Teaching in science is consistently very good. In English and mathematics, teaching is good; the successful strategies used for teaching literacy and numeracy are also well used to teach other aspects of the subjects. Additional communication needs are well supported by the work of outside professionals. In PSHE, teaching is good whether the subject is being directly taught or issues within it are being addressed through work in other subjects or tutorials. Teachers plan very effectively to link learning in different subjects through the use of projects and themes, and ICT is well promoted through its use in other subjects. Teaching is particularly good where secure subject and special educational needs expertise are brought to bear to ensure that planning is very well focused, assessment is used well to set tasks and the pace is brisk, allowing pupils to proceed without distraction. Teachers ensure that pupils with additional special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language are well supported which enables them to take part. Highly skilled support staff play a very important part in providing good teaching through individual support, managing groups and supporting teachers in the management of pupils' behaviour

difficulties. Teaching is less successful where time is not used effectively, where assessment is not used systematically to plan tasks that are suited to the capabilities of pupils and where support staff are insufficiently used to support them. At other times, teachers do not respond well to pupils whom they see as a problem so that pupils who could contribute well do not participate sufficiently in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall and very good at post 16.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good - a significant strength of the school. As a result, pupils demonstrate a high level of awareness of and sensitivity to, the values and beliefs of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good - all staff show a high regard for pupils' welfare and well-being.

The curriculum provides well for basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, and there are many carefully planned activities that enrich pupils' experience. Provision for ICT is a significant strength. Cross-curricular links are very effective. The work related curriculum for Key Stage 4 pupils is very good including the provision for careers education. However, taught time is still short, particularly for Key Stage 4 pupils. At the same time, sessions for younger pupils are inappropriately long leading to some inefficient use of time, and there is a lack of balance in some classes. The school makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and this is well supported by additional funding. However, at present, annual assessment of individual need is not being carried out. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good in all aspects. The school cares very well for its pupils, there are very good procedures in place to support their health, safety and well-being. Assessment and monitoring are satisfactory and improving and some individual target setting is very good. However, this is inconsistent across the school, and unsatisfactory where targets are too vague or do not change from year to year.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is agreement about the direction for the school and management structures are effective in promoting this.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body meets its statutory obligations and is becoming increasingly effective in guiding and monitoring the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall and improving.
The strategic use of resources	Generally good. Financial planning is secure and priorities for expenditure are appropriate.

The school is very well led by the headteacher, who has a clear vision, and key staff play an effective part in supporting her. The effectiveness of the senior management team in monitoring the curriculum is impaired by the fact that key stage managers do not have curriculum responsibilities. The school has introduced a range of structures to assist in establishing how well it is doing; these are, in many cases, still being developed, so that self-evaluation is satisfactory and improving well. Performance management has been very well implemented. The additional teaching space at the Mirfield site is well used, but there are significant shortcomings in facilities there, including a poor external environment. Where possible, resources are shared between the two sites, but the school has been unable to make appropriate provision for experimental science in Key Stage 4. Application of the principles of best value is satisfactory overall, but there are shortcomings in the extent to which the school consistently compares its performance with other schools. This has been identified by the school and is a target for the headteacher's performance management.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like the school.• The school has high expectations.• The teaching is good.• They are made to feel welcome and are comfortable in approaching the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework offered.

The inspection confirmed the very positive views parents have of the school. While the amount of homework varies, the school policy is appropriate and generally followed so that homework contributes well to progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

1. **Good teaching inspires good learning across the school, especially for students at post 16.**
2. The quality of teaching, which was satisfactory overall at the time of the last inspection, has improved significantly so that it is now good overall. It is very good in nearly half of lessons and is only unsatisfactory in one lesson in twenty. It is very good for students at post 16, where teachers work alongside students acting as facilitators, offering a mature working environment. Students are encouraged to enter into negotiation about work, supported by careful and sensitive guidance. The positive relationships which these approaches promote, encourages students to routinely ask for clarification and to feed back their learning to check that they have understood correctly. Carefully structured activities, relating tasks to the real-life context of mini enterprises, enable students to develop transferable skills in handling and calculating with money.
3. Teaching is also very good where specialist teachers work within their own subject as in science at Key Stage 3 or, in the case of primary aged pupils, where teachers have a secure basis of knowledge and understanding of the needs of the age-group they are working with, based on successful mainstream school experience. This is particularly true when teachers support the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). In these lessons, teaching is good overall and often very good. In the best lessons, as in science, where teaching is consistently very good, a fast-moving but careful exposition prepares pupils well for practical tasks and generates a high level of interest. The high levels of teachers' knowledge and skills enable any unexpected results to be explored and ensure that pupils can receive support that is tailored to their individual needs and enables the higher-attaining pupils to be offered work at a more challenging level. Teachers make very effective use of cross-curricular planning to ensure that pupils' understanding is increased by applying the skills and knowledge they have acquired to work in other subjects. This contributes well to pupils' rounded understanding of the links between areas of knowledge and provides good practical opportunities for testing theoretical knowledge as when they make a working lighthouse in art and design, following work on circuits in science. Good use is made of ICT to support work in other subjects. Homework is effectively used to support learning and ranges from regular reading activities in which parents are encouraged to share, to more advanced work at Key Stage 4 where pupils are following accredited courses. While the amount varies, homework makes a good contribution to progress overall.
4. In the great majority of lessons, teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils with different needs and levels of attainment are equally able to benefit. This is particularly evident in the careful use of questions to encourage pupils to think, or to check their learning. Questions are directed to individual pupils and posed at an appropriate level so that all pupils can feel part of the activity. Where pupils have additional communication needs, these are well supported by the work of outside professionals such as speech and language therapists and teachers ensure that the strategies they suggest are consistently implemented. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), teaching is good whether the subject is being directly taught, or issues within the subject are being addressed

through work in other subjects or tutorials. Teaching is very good where secure subject expertise and high levels of understanding of special educational needs are brought to bear to ensure that planning is very well focused, assessment is used well to set tasks and the pace is brisk, allowing pupils to proceed without distraction. In these lessons, teachers ensure that pupils with additional special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language are well supported, enabling them to take part on an equal basis with other pupils and achieve at a level that is appropriate for them as individuals.

5. The work of support assistants of all kinds is highly significant in enhancing the overall quality of teaching and ensuring that pupils learn well. They are highly skilled, work very effectively with teachers and show good understanding of pupils' needs. They show great flexibility in working, whether supporting the learning needs of individual pupils, managing groups or providing targeted support for teachers in managing the behavioural difficulties exhibited by a minority of pupils. As a result of their work, pupils are often enabled to participate more effectively in lessons or encouraged to sustain the momentum of their learning through being asked appropriate questions.
6. This good teaching has a good effect on pupils' response, which helps them to learn well. In lessons they work hard and show good concentration and this trait is increasingly evident the longer pupils remain in the school. At times their response is excellent as, for example, in guided reading with Year 5 pupils or PSHE with post 16 students. When, as usually occurs, teachers begin lessons with a review of what they have done previously, pupils show confidence in their prior learning and enjoy recalling what they have previously covered. Behaviour in class is good overall often very good and, at times it is excellent. Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions well. Teachers work hard to ensure good relationships that support learning effectively, both in classrooms and elsewhere. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups. They form and sustain appropriate friendships. They are aware of the behavioural difficulties that some pupils experience and have confidence that adults will deal with them effectively so that lessons are not disrupted.
7. Teaching is less successful or becomes unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons where time is not used effectively, where assessment is not used systematically to plan tasks that are suited to the capabilities of pupils and where support staff are insufficiently used to support learning. This is a particular risk for the youngest pupils where the undifferentiated structure of long unbroken sessions does not provide an effective context for meeting their age-related needs. At other times, teachers do not respond well to pupils whom they see as a problem, so that pupils who actually could contribute well do not participate sufficiently in the lesson and, as a result, become more disaffected.
8. **The school promotes pupils' personal development very well and achieves very good attitudes and mutually supportive relationships.**
9. The school sets considerable store by its provision for all aspects of pupils' personal development and is highly successful in achieving its aims. At the time of the previous inspection, provision for pupils' social development was very good, and there was good provision in a number of other areas. Since that time there has been significant improvement so that the school makes very good arrangements to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, as a result, pupils have very good

attitudes to the school and one another and their personal development, including the extent to which they are able to take responsibility, is also very good.

10. Assemblies and religious education lessons, which offer experiences and knowledge carefully matched to the level of understanding of pupils, make a significant contribution to the very good provision for spiritual development. Pupils develop an awareness of the importance of special places and special times in providing a context for worship and reflection as when a school choir joined with pupils from all over the city in *The Promise* at the Birmingham Christian Centre. The concept of 'awe and wonder' is very well fostered by teachers both through planned activities and by seizing incidental opportunities to direct pupils' attention to events and contexts that inspire reflection and respect for spiritual values and the beliefs that support them. This is seen across the school and is particularly evidenced through pupils' work in art and design and music or when younger pupils reflect on 'Spring' and produce poems that record their own understanding and response.
11. The school achieves a very high level of success in promoting moral development as a result of the excellent support both from the direct work of staff and the highly moral climate that they create. The very good PSHE programme provides opportunities for pupils to explore moral concepts and apply them to situations both real and imaginary to test their understanding. This is developed in work in other subjects, including literacy, where, for example, pupils are exposed to a range of traditional stories that have a strong moral content and write their own moral fables. Staff provide excellent role models, both in their behaviour and in the way in which rules and expectations are explained by reference to the effect of behaviour on other people and the school community. Pupils have a clear awareness of right and wrong; they generally choose to do what they know to be right and offer appropriate support and advice to one another.
12. Very good arrangements to support social development ensure that pupils have good opportunities to examine the basis for successfully living together through taking turns and sharing. At Key stage 4 and post 16, arrangements for work experience are designed to steadily and securely develop students' social confidence and this is further enhanced by the planned encouragement to develop independent travel skills. The decision to create a distinctive ethos for older pupils and students on the Mirfield site has improved their social development through providing greater scope to demonstrate maturity as well as enabling younger pupils to take responsibility within the main school building. Key Stage 4 and post 16 students report that they value the opportunity to work in a distinctive setting and feel that it improves their self-esteem as well as providing them with a more adult climate within which to work. The school makes very good use of visits, both those directly linked to the curriculum and those that broaden pupils' awareness and understanding of different contexts. In particular, residential visits such as the primary visit to the Stansfield Residential Centre, the Year 7 visit to the Malverns, the Key Stage 3 visit to Brittany, and the stay at Ogwen Cottage for Key Stage 4 pupils, provide very good opportunities for experiencing social living. In particular, the rural experience in France is in contrast to most pupils' experience of living in the city. For post 16 students, personal and social development is well promoted through the leisure and recreational programme as well as the annual residential visit to the Bilberry Hill Centre. The school promotes social responsibility and care for those less fortunate through participation in charitable fundraising as with the recent Comic Relief appeal, which raised £111.

13. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils to experience their own and other cultures. Music, art and design and drama are well used within the school to enhance pupils' awareness and understanding. Regular visits to the Art Gallery result in works of great artists being used as models for pupils of all ages, who explore the techniques of painters such as Van Gogh, Klee and Magritte, as well as the less well-known work of Penrose, Morris and Gear. In drama, pupils are exposed to a range of traditions, visiting Stratford to participate in workshops run by the Shakespeare Theatre Trust, performing traditional mummings' plays and developing cross-curricular work on cats drawing on Eliot's poetry and the musical by Lloyd Webber. In addition, they explore the medium of puppetry when developing and presenting the story of *The Wolf and the Pancake*. Music is well used, and pupils benefit from the opportunity to sing in the school choir where they learn many different kinds of songs. Assemblies reflect traditional cultural pursuits and pupils participate in Morris dancing as well as the traditional maypole dancing for the beginning of May.
14. There is very good provision to promote pupils' awareness of other cultures particularly through work in religious education, which offers a very good range of cross-cultural experiences and supports a carefully developed awareness of a range of faith communities. Younger pupils have explored the traditions of Islam and have made representations of prayer mats. Key Stage 3 pupils explore the impact of racism in their study of World War 2, and through looking at the experience of Jews in Germany and elsewhere, are helped to consider the role of values and beliefs in the face of persecution. Books, including, for example, mathematics textbooks are carefully chosen to reflect a range of ethnic contexts and traditions and these are well represented in the school library. Pupils have an excellent opportunity to experience French culture both through the way it is taught and also from regular visits to Brittany, where they also exchange urban living for a spell on a smallholding where culture and lifestyle are very different from that which they are used to. The school ensures that pupils have access to a wide range of religious and secular artefacts, including musical instruments that reflect a good range of cultural traditions.
15. The effect of this very good provision is to ensure that pupils develop and sustain very good attitudes to the school. They are proud to belong, they enjoy coming and they, as well as their parents, speak highly of what the school is doing for them. Around the school, they are polite and friendly and show increasing maturity in their dealings with adults and each other. Pupils generally respond well to the behaviour management structures in the school and, although there is significant use of exclusion as a sanction, this is appropriately used as part of a response to a small number of pupils whose challenging behaviour temporarily cannot be managed within the school.
16. Pupils develop well in terms of their maturity and ability to take responsibility. From an early age they show enthusiasm for carrying out routine tasks such as delivering registers to the office and, in a number of classes, pupils take turns to be responsible for other tasks. Post 16 students participate actively and maturely in the Student Council and make appropriate decisions about matters affecting their lives at school.
17. Attendance is satisfactory; for most pupils it is good but overall figures are reduced by regular non-attendance by a few pupils and by the number of days on which pupils are

excluded. Once at school, pupils attend lessons punctually and move between classes and buildings without significant loss of time.

18. **The distinctive provision for post 16 students is very effective and its successful implementation is enabling the Key Stage 4 curriculum to develop similar strengths.**
19. Provision for pupils at Key Stage 4 and at post 16 is located in separate premises about half a mile away from the main school building. The school has set out to make a distinctive range of provision for students who stay on after age 16, which combines high quality in-house teaching with a very good variety of opportunities offered by other further education providers. This enables students progressively to take responsibility for their own education within a supportive environment that also gives them good opportunities to demonstrate their increasing maturity. In the process, their personal and social development are significantly enhanced and they come to relate realistically what they have done to what they intend to do in the future. As the programme has developed, the Key Stage 4 curriculum has been adapted to incorporate successful practices, particularly in Youth Award work, and pupils benefit from the more adult approach to teaching and learning provided within this environment.
20. While the exterior environment is of an unsatisfactory standard, the provision within the building is well thought out and considerable care has been taken to ensure that the furniture and fittings reflect the adult status of the students. There is a good balance between informal social areas and workspaces where students can work individually or in groups. Resources are very accessible so that students are able to conduct their own information search when working on a project. This provision has a significant, positive impact on students' work habits. They are self-motivating and display increasing independence in their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are adult-to-adult and highly successful, demonstrating high levels of mutual respect.
21. Students are encouraged to exercise considerable self-determination, including control over their own learning opportunities through the Student Council in which they participate enthusiastically. As a result, they develop the ability to participate in debate, develop skills for self-advocacy and discuss concerns appropriately. They negotiate their own personal IEP targets and participate in the Landmarks Programme which effectively and progressively develops confidence and capability for independent travel. The unit has a clearly defined code of conduct to which all members of the community subscribe. Students in the upper years (12-13) present very good role models to younger pupils and transfer to the post 16 unit has, on occasion, been successfully used to encourage a failing Key Stage 4 pupil to attend regularly and engage well with the course. Taking responsibility for their personal and social development is also well promoted through the leisure and recreational programme.
22. Within the curriculum there is considerable emphasis on vocational studies and students are well supported in managing their files, which they do very well. All work is carefully monitored and the system to support their work towards the Youth Award certificate includes opportunities to review and redraft work, in particular to improve presentation, which students welcome and make good use of. They combine good use of word-processing with careful and legible handwriting. The emphasis on vocational studies with a very strong practical basis is appropriately and successfully extended to basic skills

teaching, where work in mathematics is related to necessary calculations in managing mini enterprises, for example, in costing materials and processes for 'Flower Power' and 'Shoe Clean'. The very good support for careers education and guidance lower down the school continues to benefit post 16 students.

23. Within the unit, sensitive counselling and a high level of awareness of individual needs ensures that girls (who are in a minority) and students from minority ethnic backgrounds are very well supported. The unit is developing an appropriate range of vocational certification. In addition to Compact 2000, which is the major feature, students follow a range of other courses such as Wordpower, or locally accredited courses. This year, there are several entries for GCSE in art and design. Where students are judged to be able to benefit from more mainstream accreditation, they are encouraged to achieve this by transfer to a further education college.
24. In addition to what is provided at the school, all students have access to an excellent variety of activities in a wide range of further education colleges. The multiplicity of links which have been developed enable students to tap into a very wide range of courses and tasters which they choose for their relevance and interest. For example, students attending a framing course at City College are enabled to frame and present their own work to a very high standard. The excellent flexible individual programme planning ensures that students are able to take advantage of these link courses without disruption to their own or other students' learning in that they are smoothly assimilated into activities when they return and there is no loss of momentum. The school makes good efforts to overcome the logistical difficulties that arise when pupils are not independent travellers, and for the most part is successful in this. Where this is not possible, or parents have requested that students do not travel independently, good alternative arrangements are made.
25. One significant benefit of the fact that post 16 provision shares accommodation with Key Stage 4, is that the curriculum for each is effectively linked and successful innovations and practice developed at post 16 are being extended downwards. This includes increasing levels of external accreditation, including the Certificate of Educational Achievement and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Key Skills and Key Decisions. In particular, this is enabling the development of appropriate alternative programmes of study to be offered which ensure that Key Stage 4 pupils are prepared for adult life through the development of the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding. This integration of approaches is, however, being achieved without detriment to the National Curriculum entitlement of Key Stage 4 pupils, where, for example, Compact 2000 challenges are identified and accredited via work undertaken within discrete subject planning. Careers education and guidance are very well provided for and form a coherent part of a very good overall work-related curriculum. This includes work experience arrangements that have been accorded the Level 3 Recognition of Quality Award as well as the work-tasters event and the mini-enterprises undertaken within the school. As a result, the weaknesses in planning and content identified at the last inspection have been addressed and the curriculum at Key Stage 4 is now good.

- 26. The successful development of strategies for literacy and numeracy is enhancing learning and improving the confidence with which pupils apply basic skills in other areas.**
27. Although the school had previously placed an appropriate emphasis on basic skills teaching, the enthusiastic, committed and consistent approach to introducing school-wide approaches based on the strategies developed nationally for literacy and numeracy has resulted in their successful introduction as well as significant additional benefits to pupils' learning in other subjects. The introduction of the literacy strategy was carefully planned with the lessons from a successful pilot programme in Key Stages 1 and 2 being applied to develop a whole-school strategy. A similar approach to numeracy has ensured that both literacy and numeracy are securely established and regularly timetabled across the school. At the same time, while there is an appropriately strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, the curriculum for mathematics and English within classes is sufficiently broad to ensure that all aspects of the subjects are covered, including a good emphasis on drama within English.
28. The training that teachers have received has ensured that they are confident in the planning and delivery of lessons and have a very good understanding of what they are doing. This results in good teaching that, at times, becomes very good. It is, however, unsatisfactory on occasion for younger pupils when sessions are too long and there is insufficient variety of activity to stimulate and sustain interest. In the best lessons, good planning ensures that work is well matched to pupils' abilities, drawing on the information in their IEPs, but is also sufficiently difficult to ensure that pupils have to think about their responses. Short and varied activities ensure that pupils' attention remains focused and they learn at a brisk pace. There is a very good balance between new learning and reinforcement of what pupils have learned previously to ensure that they move forward from a secure knowledge base. In both literacy and numeracy sessions, pupils use their individual white boards very well, for example, to record information, write the answer to mental arithmetic questions or write sentences that have been dictated to them. The emphasis on real texts, particularly non-fiction, in literacy extends pupils' knowledge in other subjects and, by giving them the necessary vocabulary, increases their confidence in those subjects. For example, in a guided reading session in a Year 5 class, pupils listened to a story and answered questions about the rain forest, showing considerable in-depth knowledge about the habitats of the creatures that live there, drawn from previous lessons in science. Similarly, in a Year 9 science lesson, pupils confidently tackled the new vocabulary necessary for work on circuits, using the structures they have developed in literacy lessons.
29. Achievement in literacy and numeracy is good; a significant number of pupils attain Levels 1-3 of the National Curriculum. Many become functional readers and use their reading to develop analytical and research skills as when Year 10 pupils study the longbow and the legend of Robin Hood. Year 11 pupils use pictures as a stimulus to write simple stories, making effective use of adjectives within their sentences to provide detail and interest. Handwriting is generally legible although unlinked, and there is good regard for relative letter sizes, use of upper and lower case letters and simple punctuation. Because the strategies have been in place longer at the lower end of the school than for

older pupils, there are examples of younger pupils achieving at a higher level than older pupils which is an indication of the positive effect the approach is having.

30. Pupils acquire the numeracy skills necessary for later life. They recognise and use simple fractions and learn the relationship of a fraction to the whole. They use appropriate units of measurement for a particular task and describe the differing functions of kitchen scales and personal weighing scales. They read the time from digital and analogue clock faces and convert from one to the other. They use money confidently, identifying the change from £1 for various amounts and using coins to make up the appropriate sum.
31. Displays of work in all subjects include a very good focus on literacy and numeracy, indicating an integrated approach to learning on the part of teachers. As an example of this, a display of puppet making in Year 6, in addition to being based around pupils' stories, had the literacy objective of 'giving and following instructions'. In lessons in other subjects, teachers have successfully adapted the structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies in planning the shape of lessons so that there is a predictable and consistent pattern that contributes well to the pace and variety of learning within those lessons.
32. The approach to literacy and numeracy is also contributing well to the quality of assessment in the school. In these sessions assessment is used very well to set personal targets, both for academic and personal progress, which are very focused and highly relevant to individual development. In literacy, assessment makes effective use of the structures provided within the reading scheme in use, in particular recording sight vocabulary and relating progress to the Key Words list. In numeracy, precise targets are set following baseline testing and these are used as the basis for assessment. The development of a common format across classes provides a good basis for ensuring that assessments are consistent from year to year. These practices are being extended to work in other subjects, so that increasingly teachers plan work on the basis of secure knowledge of what pupils know and what their future learning targets are. As a result, although practice is variable across the school, there are examples of very good assessment practice, particularly in Key Stage 2 and at post 16.
33. **The school looks after pupils very well, their health, safety and welfare are very well promoted.**
34. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils and works very successfully to promote their well-being. Carefully planned admission arrangements build confidence and establish good relationships from the start with both pupils and parents so that pupils feel secure and happy from the time they arrive. Pupils are warmly welcomed on their arrival in school each morning and staff work hard to ensure there is a calm atmosphere at all times. Teachers pay meticulous attention to individual personal needs and pupils know they can trust staff to look after them. Parents appreciate very much the quality of support and advice they receive.
35. Procedures for supporting and monitoring pupils' personal development are very good and there are increasingly effective structures for assessing academic progress. The use of assessment information in planning is satisfactory and improving overall and there are examples of very good practice, particularly in Key Stage 2 and at post 16. The progress pupils make is closely monitored through pupils' individual education plans and is

especially effective in Key Stage 2 and in basic skills. Key Stage 4 pupils have records of achievement that help them to evaluate their progress by keeping a record of awards.

36. The highly appropriate policy for personal, social and health education has been carefully constructed to take account of pupils' needs and circumstances as well as the curriculum suggested by the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA). In successfully addressing the twin aims of increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding, and developing their ability to apply these, the programme covers appropriate areas of study and activities, such as health and hygiene, community work and preparation for citizenship that effectively promote personal development and self-esteem. The school holds regular health promotion weeks and makes good use of wall displays to publicise specific health issues. There are strong curricular links with other subjects across the curriculum and teachers provide very good individual counselling and guidance on matters of, for example, health and hygiene. Good support is given through links with other agencies such as the Police, the Fire Service, the RSPCA and the school nurse.
37. Provision to prepare pupils for life after school, including careers education and guidance is very good. The school developed a cohesive and imaginative careers programme within which the role of the job coach, initially appointed as a result of additional local funding to support careers education, played a significant part. The quality of provision has been underlined by the school's gaining the Level 3 Recognition of Quality Award and, although staff changes and the loss of the job coach have presented difficulties, overall, the provision for careers education continues to be good. For older pupils in particular, the importance placed on accreditation in National Record of Achievement provides a very valuable focus for pupils for reviewing their achievements and planning for their future development.
38. Arrangements to promote and monitor good behaviour are good, with the degree of flexibility needed to take account of the wide range of behaviours presented by pupils, a few of whom have significant behavioural difficulties. Clear ground rules for behaviour are prominently displayed in classrooms, which provide a strong framework to support behaviour management and the development of good work habits. Exclusion, where used, is carefully monitored and care is taken to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed. Although overall figures are high, these relate to a relatively small group of pupils, several of whom have now been transferred to a more appropriate provision.
39. The school also shows a high level of concern for pupils by effective monitoring of their attendance. Levels of attendance and the reasons for any absence are recorded efficiently and the school responds quickly to unexplained absence. Effective systems are in place to recognise good attendance, including recording in pupils' record of achievement. The school works closely with the education social worker to improve attendance, particularly of pupils in Year 11, and the learning mentor works effectively with pupils to agree strategies to ensure their attendance improves.
40. The school goes to considerable lengths to ensure the security, safety and well-being of pupils, and parents are justified in regarding this as a strength of the school. Comprehensive procedures and guidance for child protection are in place. The deputy headteacher is the designated person responsible for such matters and has undertaken appropriate training. There are detailed and very effective health and safety procedures, including good arrangements for first aid, risk assessment and emergency evacuation.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

41. Monitoring the balance of the curriculum and the use of time

42. The school has made considerable improvements in the monitoring of its work since the previous inspection identified this as a weakness. However, there are shortcomings in the present structures for monitoring the overall balance of the curriculum and ensuring that this reflects the school's intentions. Individual subject co-ordinators, supported by key stage subject representatives, are developing effective systems for monitoring the coverage and continuity within each subject. They monitor planning, scrutinise work and are increasingly moderating to ensure that levels of marking and assessment are consistent. However, as the result of an historic pattern of responsibilities, heads of department responsible for each key stage have pastoral rather than curriculum responsibilities and do not closely oversee the actual balance between subjects and the operation of individual class timetables. This means that the senior management team has no direct access to information about the overall balance of the curriculum at each key stage. There is no overall school timetable and there are significant variations between what is described on individual class timetables. During the short period of the inspection there was sufficient variation between what was timetabled and what occurred to make it clear that the present system of monitoring, using these timetables is unreliable. At the same time, this approach does not enable the senior management team to determine what the appropriate subject balance would be for each year group. The senior management team is aware of this anomaly and there are plans to hold a management review before the end of this term, which will, as part of its remit, address this issue.

43. The structure of the day does not represent the best use of time. For the youngest pupils, the unbroken two hour sessions are too long, leading to a falling off in concentration and learning, particularly when they are devoted to one or, at most, two lessons, as when the entire morning is split between numeracy and literacy. At this age, pupils would benefit from a break, either through organised physical activity or playtime. For the oldest pupils, the amount of taught time is still below that recommended for Key Stage 4 pupils as it was at the time of the previous inspection. This means that the time available both for National Curriculum subjects and the enrichment activities that support pupils' learning is less than would be available for pupils without special educational needs in mainstream schools. While there are difficulties in altering the length of the day in terms of transport, the school is aware that meeting the recommendations for older pupils could reasonably be combined with providing the opportunity for the younger pupils to enjoy the physical and social benefits of playtimes.

44. Target setting in IEPs and to support individual subject development.

45. At the time of the previous inspection, there were significant concerns about the quality and consistency of target setting particularly in pupils' IEPs. In some areas and classes there has been considerable improvement, especially in Key Stages 2 and 3, where well focused literacy and numeracy targets are being used effectively and, where appropriate, behavioural and social targets have specific objectives and measurable criteria for achievement. This approach is being extended to make effective use of improving assessment techniques to provide targets for individual achievement in work in other

subjects. However, the pattern is still insufficiently universal or consistent. In some classes targets are too vague to provide a secure basis for planning or evaluation of success and, particularly at Key Stage 4, targets are so general that they remain substantially unchanged from year to year. The school is aware of this problem and has identified the improvement of consistency in IEP targets as a priority in the current school improvement plan. However, this is an area in which insufficient progress has been made since the previous inspection.

46. Facilities for science at Key Stage 4 and the external environment at the Mirfield site.

47. When the school was previously inspected, attention was drawn to the fact that science facilities at the Mirfield site were lacking so that the full science curriculum could not be delivered. Since that time, the existing facilities, regarded by the school as unsuitable, have been converted to meet the general curriculum needs of the growing numbers of pupils and students at the Mirfield site. Science has been taught in Key Stages 3 and 4 in identified rooms and in the environment. There are no suitable facilities for experimental and investigative science, which limits the curriculum for all secondary aged pupils, especially those at Key Stage 4. As a result, pupils' progress in this aspect of science is significantly impaired, as learning opportunities are restricted to those experiments that can be conducted without laboratory facilities. The school has identified the provision of appropriate facilities as a priority target in the current school improvement plan.

48. The Key Stage 4 and post 16 provision is located in the upper floor of a former comprehensive school. The extensive site has had a variety of uses and, in consequence, shows a lack of overall planning for the care and upkeep of the site. While the internal arrangements contribute well to pupils' self-esteem, being well furnished and pleasantly decorated, the overall environment, including the approach to the building and the internal staircase is of an inadequate standard to reflect the school's ethos and are in sharp contrast to that at the Hallmoor site. There are no suitable areas outside the school premises where pupils could relax or play and the general sense of dereliction engendered by visiting the premises does not reflect well on the school or convey any sense of the quality of the work being undertaken.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to improve further the quality of education and the progress pupils make, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve monitoring to ensure that the balance of the curriculum is appropriate for all classes and that time is always effectively used.
- Ensure the consistency of target setting both in IEPs and to support individual subject development based on secure assessment data.
- Improve the facilities for science at Key Stage 4, and the external environment at the Mirfield site.

50. PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	47	26	21	5	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	234
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	141

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	75

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	4
Pakistani	66
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	131
Any other minority ethnic group	18

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	21	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	47	4
Other minority ethnic groups	13	-

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.4
Average class size	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y1 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	709

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,541,902
Total expenditure	1,552,633
Expenditure per pupil	6552
Balance brought forward from previous year	94,502
Balance carried forward to next year	68,411

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	22	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	38	2	2	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	28	6	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	28	13	9	6
The teaching is good.	68	22	4	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	26	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	22	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	62	30	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	17	2	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	32	4	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	26	6	2	13