

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KNOTTINGLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

Knottingley

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108283

Headteacher: Mr A. Hutchinson

Reporting inspector: Mr T. Parish  
15465

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April – 4<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 193424

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Middle Lane  
Knottingley  
West Yorkshire

Postcode: WF11 0BZ

Telephone number: 0197 772 2560

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Graham Clarke

Date of previous inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15465	T. Parish	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	Information about the school The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further
9504	S. Gurney	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15396	R. Bulman	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
27503	M. Foulds	Team inspector	Science	
31100	G. Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
28101	A. Lagden	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
20192	T. J. McDermott	Team inspector	Physical education	
30901	S. G. Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design	
30648	B. Skelton	Team inspector	English	
30128	S. Stanley	Team inspector	Music Religious education	
27407	W. Stoneham	Team inspector	History Vocational education	How well are pupils taught?
21806	P. Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology	
20497	V. Williams	Team inspector	Geography Provision for pupils in Key Stage 4	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Knottingley High is a mixed, 11-16, comprehensive school. With 956 pupils on roll it is of average size. The school serves the local community, some parts of which have very significant social problems. The school is part of an Education Action Zone. Just over 30 per cent of pupils, almost twice the average, are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also well above average and the number with a statement of specific needs above average. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

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

This is a good school with significant strengths and some weaknesses. The current, acting, headteacher is a very good leader. He is efficiently and logically tackling the problems he inherited in September 2000 including a large financial debt, insufficient teachers and too few resources. Teaching is good and due to the hard work of teachers, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, within school, are also good. Pupils' attainment in GCSE examinations is well below the national average, but in line with that achieved by pupils in similar schools. Their attendance is currently around 90 per cent, a few per cent below the national average. The school receives more money per pupil than most and the value for money it offers is satisfactory.

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

- Most pupils achieve well by the time they leave school.
- The standard of pupils' work is above average in music, physical education and religious education and work seen is consistently good, compared to similar schools, in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, modern languages and child development.
- There is very good teaching in music, physical education and religious education, and most often good teaching in English and drama. Very good lessons also occur frequently in geography and ICT.
- Promotes good behaviour and good relationships so that work can proceed at a good pace.
- Monitors and supports pupils' academic progress so that pupils are clear about how well they are doing.
- Personal, social and health education is well planned and taught, and generally well received by pupils.
- Administration and support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Extra-curricular activities are wide ranging and support both academic work and other interests.
- Work experience in Year 10 is very well managed and is very useful to pupils.

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

- Standards of work in science, particularly in Years 7-9 and that relating to experiments and investigations.
- The attendance of pupils.
- Design and technology: consistency in the quality of teaching; management; the curriculum in Years 7-9.
- Mathematics: consistency in the quality of teaching.
- The use of computers in many subjects and the number of pupils gaining some form of accreditation in ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- The amount of time given to some subjects, including religious education, in Years 10 and 11.
- The number of teachers, as there are fewer than average and class sizes are often too large.
- The number of books and quantities of resources in many subjects.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. From then until 2000, GCSE standards at grades A\*-C have risen a little, but overall standards have slowly declined. Pupils' attendance has remained fairly static. Teaching is better now. The work of departments is better monitored: there is a good system set up to help heads of department review their work. Form tutors are involved more in monitoring pupils' development. Spirituality is well developed in religious education but still needs further development within the school. Music is now very good. The quantity and quality of books and equipment remains poor. Since September 2000, the school has acknowledged weaknesses and improvement is poised to be more rapid. The impact of improvements on standards is yet to be seen and so improvement since the last inspection is no better than satisfactory.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	E	D	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Year 9 test results have slowly declined in recent years. In 2000, overall results were below the national average, but above those of similar schools. English results were best, well above those of similar schools; mathematics results were above, and science results below. Pupils' work, from Years 7-9, shows a similar picture; English and mathematics work is average and science work is below average. There is insufficient time for science and resources are inadequate; consequently pupils' practical science skills are a particular weakness. Pupils' work in Years 7-9 is above average in music, religious education and physical education; average in art and design, ICT and modern languages; below average in design and technology, geography and history.

The table above refers to average point scores. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more A\*-C grade at GCSE, in 2000, was below average compared to all schools, above average compared to similar and in line with expectations. Targets for 2001 and future years are generally appropriate and, if met, will see the school approaching the national average in about three years. In 2000, too many pupils were not entered for any examinations and pupils capable of grades D-G did not do well enough. This year, 2001, all pupils are entered for courses they have taken. Some pupils take GNVQ, for example in ICT, and these pupils did well in 2000. A significant minority of pupils do work that does not lead to GCSE or GNVQ but is worthwhile. Standards of pupils' work, from Years 10 – 11, are above average in German, music, physical education and religious education; average in English, mathematics, design and technology, ICT, and French; below average in science, art and design, geography and history.

Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well by the time they leave school. A significant minority, who do not attend often enough, do not. This problem needs to be addressed further.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils want to attend and work. Litter is dropped by a few.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave very well. Some are temporarily excluded for good reasons. A few cause some nuisance and smoke when in town at lunchtime.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Plenty of opportunities to take some responsibility, for example on the school council. Pupils get on well together and with most teachers.
Attendance	Below average overall. Poor in some lessons during the inspection.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

One hundred and sixty seven lessons were observed. Ninety-six per cent were satisfactory or better, 69 per cent good or better and 28 per cent very good or better. Five lessons were excellent and seven lessons unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory lessons were seen in mathematics, design and technology and ICT. There are a handful of outstanding teachers, some new to the profession, who bring excitement to the classroom. Teachers' knowledge and understanding and management of pupils are particular strengths in all years. The use of homework is a corresponding weakness, mentioned by parents and persisting from the last inspection.

Teaching in both English and science is good overall, with more good or better lessons in English. On balance, teaching is satisfactory in mathematics though there are numerous problems associated with recruitment difficulties. Teaching is very good in music, physical education and religious education. Some religious education and geography lessons are of an exemplary standard. The drama teacher enthuses pupils so that most want to join in. Teaching in art and design, history, ICT, geography and modern languages is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology and staffing difficulties contribute to weaknesses.

Literacy and numeracy are both taught satisfactorily. There is no school policy for numeracy but it is tackled appropriately in many subjects. The provision for pupils with significant special educational needs is very good. Gifted and talented pupils are not yet identified. Strengths in pupils' learning include: learning new skills and knowledge; the interest they show in their work; the effort they make, and their understanding of how well they are doing, so that they can make progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The opportunities available are good. Design and technology is too narrow and inconsistent in Years 7-9 and does not meet statutory requirements. Though vocational and college link courses enrich opportunities in Years 10 and 11, most pupils do not receive their ICT entitlement and there is insufficient time for a range of subjects, including religious education which does not meet statutory requirements. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Well administered and managed. Education support assistants are first rate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Personal development is well monitored and provided for. Spiritual development is satisfactory, much better in religious education but not in most lessons or assemblies. Moral and cultural development is good and social development very good, particularly in drama.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Academic monitoring is relatively recent but very good. Good behaviour is encouraged. Child protection procedures are in place. Health is well promoted. Monitoring of pupils at lunchtime is not good enough.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works very hard to involve parents in the work of the school. Those that do get involved are invaluable.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the acting head teacher is very good. He is efficient, good with people and thinks first of the pupils. There are too many senior managers and their roles need rationalising and focussing. Management by heads of department is good overall. ICT needs to be used more efficiently and extensively in administration, monitoring and record keeping. There are not enough teachers so some classes are too large and some teachers have to teach too many classes. There is insufficient technical support. Accommodation is generally good but class sizes are too large.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well indeed and their effectiveness is, on balance, good. The chair of governors has high expectations of all concerned with the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Though recent evaluation is very good and the school knows where it stands, action has yet to result in improved standards.
The strategic use of resources	Money is currently used satisfactorily. Needs have been prioritised and are being tackled, for example the inadequate money provided for resources in recent years has just been increased considerably. Best Value criteria have yet to be applied to the whole school. Provision of books and equipment is poor and this adversely affects standards in many subjects.

## 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>• Teaching</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Progress pupils make</li> <li>• High expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Information about pupils' progress</li> </ul>

Less than 10 per cent of parents replied to questionnaires and very few attended the parents' evening. Consequently views expressed here do not represent parents as a whole. Pupils' behaviour is good in school. Some pupils do cause a nuisance when in the town at lunchtime. The quality and regularity of homework needs some attention. A new style of pupils' reports is very good, though the content is sometimes unhelpful.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils achieve well and the standard of their work is satisfactory.
2. Overall, the attainment of pupils when they enter the school, at the beginning of Year 7, is below average. There is a wide range, a long 'tail' of low attainment and relatively little high attainment. Tests show pupils' mathematical abilities to be best and scientific knowledge weakest. English results are on a par with mathematics at lower levels of attainment, but below them at higher. Around a third of pupils with well below average levels of literacy contribute to this picture. If the intake of 'similar' schools is considered then the Year 7 pupils at Knottingley are very like their peers elsewhere. When they leave school their GCSE results should be at least as good as those of similar schools and, in the main, they are.
3. The end of Year 9 test results in 2000 were below the national average but above those of similar schools. English results were much better than science and those in mathematics fell between them. The English results reflect the above average time given to English lessons and the emphasis, correctly, placed on raising the standards of literacy. There is also, most often, good or better teaching. Mathematics results rose steadily from 1998, in line with the national trend. This may not be continued in 2001, as there have been significant staffing problems since September 2000. Science results were well below average in 2000. The time available for science lessons is below average and resources are poor. There has also been some inconsistency in staffing. In 2000, boys' results and girls' results were very similar. This is different than the national picture where girls do better than boys. There is no indication that boys suddenly improved so girls may well have underachieved in 2000. Over a three-year period, girls have done better than boys, particularly in mathematics. The school's trend in Year 9 test results is a little below the national trend of gradual improvement but this includes a dip in 1999 that seems to have recovered. To improve and become closer to national averages, staffing difficulties will have to be carefully monitored and time and resource problems in science resolved.
4. The statutory target for 5 or more GCSE A\*-C results in 2000 was reached whilst those for 1 or more A\*-G and average points score were not. Targets for 2001 are realistic but the average points score target is modest.
5. At the time of the last inspection, April 1997, the school had enjoyed a steady rise in GCSE results. From 1996 until 2000 there was actually a decline in the average points pupils achieved compared to the national average points score; the national average rose whilst the schools' results hovered around 30 points per pupil. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades also declined, relative to the national picture, from 1996 – 1998. It suddenly surged to close to the national average in 1999 and then declined to below this level in 2000, returning to a similar position to 1996. So, during the management of the school between 1996 and summer 2000 no real gains were made. Results in 2000 were particularly weak in the proportions of pupils gaining 5 or more A\*-G grades or 1 or more A\*-G grades. These proportions were well below national averages and expectations. A significant reason for this is the relatively high proportion, six per cent, of pupils who were not entered for any examinations. This has been recognised by the school and the new management is now entering almost all pupils in the courses they follow. There is also a positive reason why some pupils, potentially weaker in formal examinations, did not figure in GCSE and GNVQ statistics; they followed innovative work-related courses linked to

local colleges. Consequently and also due to the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational need, the high proportion of boys in the 2000 cohort and adverse social factors, overall GCSE results in 2000 were in line with those of similar schools. Since 1997 girls have done better than boys, the difference widening a little, but staying in line with the national picture. The decline in girls' results in 2000 is due principally to their smaller numbers.

6. Comparing the GCSE performance of different subjects in 2000 is not simple as some departments chose to not enter high proportions of pupils whilst others entered most. The high proportion of boys in this cohort is also a factor, tending to make comparisons worse. In broad terms, pupils in English, mathematics and science should have done a little better and those in geography and history a lot better. Pupils taking GCSE physical education did well compared to their performances in other subjects whilst those taking ICT did not. However, the ICT group did get well above average numbers of A\*-C grades.

7. The standard of pupils' work seen in English is average and they make very good progress between Year 7 and Year 9. Standards are consolidated in Years 10 and 11 and pupils make good progress. Pupils can listen well and speak satisfactorily. Their reading ranges from average to below average, but their writing is more consistently sound. Girls do much better than boys by the time they leave school. Standards in drama are above average in Key Stage 4. In mathematics, standards are average by the end of Year 9 and 11 and pupils make satisfactory progress across all years. Pupils show a satisfactory grasp of principles and are able to follow mathematical rules. Higher attaining pupils are in line for good GCSE results. Girls do better than boys. Standards of work seen in science are below average by the end of Year 9 and 11. On balance, pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 7-9 though this is not the case in investigative science due to lack of time and resources. By the time they take their GCSE examinations pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge, as results are not far below national averages and well above those in similar schools. This difference, between results and standards seen, is again attributable to weak investigative and experimental skills and understanding.

8. In art and design, pupils make good progress between Years 7-9 and achieve satisfactory standards. At Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory but standards are below average. This is attributable to insufficient time for those pupils attempting a full GCSE in half the time others have. Significant weaknesses include limited understanding of how to develop ideas and undeveloped technical skills. GCSE results in 1999 were above the national average but boys' results in 2000 declined significantly. Standards in design and technology are below average by the end of Year 9 and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils have not covered all that they should from the National Curriculum and do not understand the design process. Poor funding and a lack of resources contribute significantly to this position. By the end of Year 11 standards are average and pupils have made satisfactory progress. Large classes, a difficult course structure and too little time in lessons do not help matters improve further. GCSE results in 2000 were close to national averages, but a third of pupils were not entered. Pupils who take child development make good progress and achieve well.

9. In geography, pupils are making good progress by the end of Year 9 and satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11, but standards are below average. GCSE results were well below average in 2000. Pupils' recall of facts is better than their understanding of them. Standards are improving due to the positive impact of a new teacher. In history, pupils make good progress by the end of Years 9 and 11. Standards at both times are below average and GCSE results in 2000 were well below average. Insufficient time and resources contribute to this position. Teaching is good and pupils learn how to interpret facts as well as remembering them.

10. In Years 7-9 pupils make very good progress in ICT lessons and their standard of work is average. For the third that take an examination at the end of Year 11, progress is good and standards, on balance, satisfactory. It is not possible to judge the standard of work of the remaining two thirds, as there is no mechanism in school to do so. Individual pupils were seen competently using computers, but as most examination courses do not require ICT this observation was infrequent. Within ICT lessons pupils have appropriate skills in publication, databases, spreadsheets and control. They cannot gather and interpret scientific data due to a lack of resources.

11. Pupils make good progress in all years within modern languages and standards are average. GCSE results in 2000 were in line with the national average. Boys did better than girls, relative to national results. By the end of Year 9 attainment is better in French than German as the latter is begun later and has fewer lessons. Pupils quickly acquire sound language skills and are able to respond appropriately when speaking and writing. More lessons than average provide time for work to be consolidated.

12. In music, physical education and religious education, pupils make good progress in all years and standards are above average. Over 200 pupils perform well in bands and groups, both within school and in public. Few pupils, as yet, take GCSE music, but the numbers taking external instrumental examinations is increasing, with 100 currently receiving tuition. In physical education, pupils perform skilfully and show a good understanding of games. GCSE results were in line with the national average in 2000. In religious education pupils have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of religion and older pupils can apply their knowledge to moral issues. GCSE was taken for the first time in 2000 and results were in line with expectations for higher grades, with most pupils achieving at least a pass grade.

### ***Special educational needs***

13. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress, in line with other pupils, in both mainstream classes and in the learning resource centre. This enables most of them to complete GCSE courses successfully. There are examples of individual pupils making very good progress; a Year 7 hearing impaired pupil responded very well to the additional support given in English and was observed skilfully reading aloud in class. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified across the school and no judgement was made about their overall achievements. However, talented pupils in music and physical education certainly have opportunities to demonstrate their prowess, which is substantial.

### ***Literacy***

14. Standards of literacy are below average for a significant proportion of pupils when they enter the school. The school has identified poor language skills as a factor impeding pupils' progress. National Foundation for Educational Research tests and re-tests show improvement, which indicate: generous curriculum time for English, the National Literacy Strategy and effective support for less able pupils are paying off. The difference between the attainment of boys and girls is not as great in oral work as it is in written work. Oral skills develop well in Years 7-9 and pupils are good listeners. They work well in pairs and groups. They answer questions readily, but a significant minority do not use Standard English in formal academic discussion and, for some, this spills over into their written work. During the inspection, Year 7 pupils struggled to read a version of Beowulf with rhythm and fluency. A Year 11 pupil, in a class of middle ability, experienced similar problems. Standards of reading observed in history were ponderous, lacking fluency and confidence whilst media studies pupils, in a mixed ability option group, were reading very sophisticated materials to do with marketing and sales techniques. Pupils studying English literature are practised in quoting textual proof and do it well.

## **Numeracy**

15. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory use of numerical skills in their work across the curriculum. In design and technology, measuring and weighing skills are satisfactory in all years and pupils show that they can use pie and bar charts to present their research findings. In science, Year 9 pupils cope adequately with calculations related to force, pressure and area. In geography, analysis of fieldwork involves successful application of the Spearman Rank Coefficient at GCSE level. In ICT, pupils show very good use of number in spreadsheets, databases and control systems by the end of Years 9 and 11. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils struggle in their subjects because of poor numerical skills.

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

16. Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning and many show interest and involvement in the very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils persevere and work hard and co-operatively. They are well motivated and concentrate well. Where the teaching is very good pupils' attitudes are often excellent. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful to visitors. Behaviour in lessons is usually good and often very good. There are a few cases of bullying and instances of silly and immature behaviour. A few pupils behave poorly but most of these respond well to the strategies employed by teachers. Last year no pupil was permanently excluded but there were over 50 instances of pupils being excluded for fixed periods, though the number of pupils involved was rather less. This year the number of fixed term exclusions has been considerably reduced.

17. Pupils' relationships with the staff are good. Many of the pupils interviewed praised teachers and said how they appreciated their help. Relationships between pupils are also good. They are very supportive of their peers and celebrate their achievements. Good personal development is also a strong feature. School councillors are given genuine responsibility and a sense of ownership of the school. For example, they devised the popular uniform. Prefects undertake a range of monitoring duties and help younger pupils. A group of Year 10 pupils have had comprehensive training from teachers, the school nurse, the police and the education welfare officer. They are known as 'peer educators' and are available at lunch times to help fellow pupils. These pupils formulated a questionnaire to ascertain where bullying problems arose and they have done valuable work in raising awareness that bullying is unacceptable. They have also visited local primary schools to allay any fears about transfer to Knottingley High School.

18. Pupils identified as having special educational needs display good attitudes to learning in mainstream classes and in the learning centre. They work co-operatively and their good behaviour enables them to respond well to the opportunities offered by the school, including the extra help given by education support assistants and others. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties often respond well to the strategies employed by staff.

19. To date, attendance rates are around 90 per cent this year, which is below the national average. Last academic year attendance was reported as just above the national average with unauthorised absence just above average. During the week of the inspection attendance was poor in a significant minority of lessons, particularly within lower sets. This badly affects pupils' levels of attainment.

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

20. The quality of teaching is good in all years even though there are fewer teachers in this school than in many comparable schools. Teachers have to work harder, often in relatively large classes. One hundred and sixty seven lessons were seen. Ninety six per cent were at least satisfactory and 69 per cent were at least good. Just over 25 per cent were very good or excellent. Seven lessons were unsatisfactory. The quality of pupils' learning is also good. One particularly noteworthy feature of teaching is that a cohort of teachers appointed to the school relatively recently taught many of the better lessons. Many are comparatively young and their lessons are characterised by a range of enterprising and effective strategies that succeed in attracting the attention of pupils. A newly qualified teacher teaches exceptionally well. In English and science, teaching is good, and in mathematics satisfactory. Teaching is very good in music, physical education and religious education. It is good in art and design, drama, geography, history and modern languages. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology.

21. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, and better within English. Teachers make good use of discussion work in drama and media studies. In food technology, pupils are required to discuss and plan their projects together. Schemes of work in English refer to hot seating, role-plays and other techniques, but during the inspection oral work was predominantly question and answer. In English lessons, time is set aside for reading and teachers include short activities developed from the National Literacy Strategy to introduce key words, to extend vocabulary or to check spellings; good practice was seen in Year 7. Displays of key words and concepts are used in most subjects, very extensively in physical education and they are frequently referred to in French lessons to prompt pupils. Teachers regularly test spellings of key words in science, but reading progress in the subject is hampered by the lack of texts books in years 7 to 9, which means that pupils can not support school work with private reading or revision. Some teachers offer good opportunities for pupils to read aloud, for example in geography, but in other subjects, like design and technology, opportunities are missed when teachers tend to read to the class. Some geography lessons are held in the library to promote reading for research, but often pupils scan inappropriate materials; better resources are needed with more editing of them by teachers in advance while materials from the Internet should also be edited and put on to a school intranet for pupils' use. Educational support assistants are very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs to read texts, exercises and worksheets so that they can understand them. Schemes of work in many subjects indicate a commitment to teach writing skills, but the teaching of them is inconsistent. Good note making and drafting skills are taught in English, media studies, design and technology and religious education. In history, teachers use writing to help low attaining pupils structure their work, but other pupils experience only a narrow range of writing tasks and there is little extended writing. In design and technology and in religious education teachers require pupils to write in a range of styles appropriate for different purposes and audiences. Teaching in religious education gives a strong emphasis on neatness, accuracy and corrections, but in other subjects teachers do not always note errors or require corrections.

22. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall, and better in mathematics. Teachers in history make pupils calculate population changes and use graphs to present data. In modern languages teachers present pupils with opportunities to use percentages

related to social issues, such as race and immigration. Teachers in physical education encourage lower attaining pupils to use heart monitors to measure the effects of exercise and so enable them to make very good use of technical and mathematical language. For further improvements to occur in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills the school needs to review its provision and ensure that there is consistency in practice across all departments.

23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and in some lessons it is at least good. This is especially the case in lessons where educational support assistants give pupils additional help. The school benefits from having a number of educational support assistants who work in close co-operation with class teachers across all subjects of the curriculum; learning is at least good and is often very good where teachers have suitably briefed them. In such lessons, special educational needs pupils are given specific tasks and their learning is enhanced because of the individual attention they receive. Excellent practice in the use of a pupil's individual education plan was observed in a Year 7 English lesson where the teacher's constant up-dating of the plan enabled a pupil's needs to be very closely met. Teaching and learning in science are considerably helped by audio tapes, for pupils with dyslexia, made by an education support assistant. In the learning centre, good classroom management skills and detailed monitoring of pupils' progress create a stimulating and purposeful place for pupils to learn. There is also good practice in history. In other lessons, though sensitive and caring support is offered, learning is less effective as lesson planning is less detailed and tasks tend to be set for the whole class rather than reflecting individual needs.

24. In most areas of the curriculum there is insufficient awareness of gifted and talented pupils and teaching does not take sufficient account of their needs. However, in music and physical education the standards of work are often high and this is reflected in the success of extra curricular activities. The school offers many opportunities for talented musicians and sports players to excel. Talented pupils in design and technology are offered an opportunity to extend their interests through the study of a GCSE in graphic products and may be entered for the examination in Year 10 rather than Year 11.

25. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. Many examples were seen where this helped to enliven lessons through the way that ideas were presented. For example, in a Year 7 art and design lesson, pupils' abilities to draw were enhanced by the teacher encouraging the class to describe some vegetables brought into class in tactile and humorous terms. In music, learning significantly benefits because the teacher is a most competent performer with very good knowledge of methodology and how ICT can be applied to music. In many other subjects, opportunities to enhance the quality and pace of learning through the application of ICT were lost. Many teachers do not have sufficient confidence to apply this skill to their classroom teaching.

26. A feature of many better lessons is the quality of planning. Where lessons are well and thoughtfully planned, pupils are challenged, their interest is aroused, and their behaviour and learning improves. In a well-planned Year 8 science lesson, with many lower attaining pupils, a lesson on friction commenced with the class entering into a knot untying competition involving different types of material. The pupils enjoyed the challenges presented and their observational skills were developed. In a most thoughtful and effective Year 7 geography lesson, pupils working in pairs were required to provide four arguments in support of either the exploitation, or conservation, of the Amazon rainforest. This exercise encouraged pupils to undertake research and draft their ideas and made a valid contribution to developing literacy skills. Good planning is also a feature of better design and technology lessons, but it is not consistently done. Some design and technology lessons were unsatisfactory and, in part, this was due to inappropriate planning leading to insufficient challenge and a slow pace. In one lesson, pupils were engaged in time wasting exercises

involving colouring in. Some unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics was similarly slow. Neither was planning a strength in some art and design lessons; the long term planning of some projects lacked rigour and the brief was too broad, and occasionally inappropriate, for the ability of the pupils.

27. Another feature of better teaching is that pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment, are appropriately challenged and teachers' expectations are high. This is evident in geography, history, modern languages, music and physical education. Pupils, irrespective of their musical ability, cover the same work. They respond well and make at least good progress. Pupils with special educational needs learn particularly well in this atmosphere and their progress in lessons often exceeds what is anticipated.

28. Most teachers employ suitable methods to ensure that pupils behave well and their classes are orderly and this helps pupils to learn. Science teachers make it clear that poor behaviour will not be tolerated and, even though some class sizes are large, good levels of discipline are maintained. In French and German classes, teachers manage pupils well by praising and encouraging good speaking and writing; they apply the school's system of sanctions with consistency. Class management in physical education is always at least good with pupils fully understanding what will, as well as what will not, be tolerated.

29. Many departments have not been well resourced for some years and teaching and learning would benefit if this improved, particularly the supply of textbooks. Though levels of support staff are good, especially in supporting the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs, there is insufficient technical support in science and for food and textiles in design and technology. This deficiency results in teachers having to undertake routine tasks and reduces the amount of practical work pupils do, seriously so in science.

30. The quality of assessment and marking is at least good in some subjects, such as science and physical education, but is less consistent in others, such as English in Years 7 to 9 and history. More consistent marking would enable pupils to identify better how their work might be improved in order to secure higher marks. More consistency should also be applied to the setting of homework. In modern languages, homework is used well to extend and consolidate classroom learning and efforts are made to involve parents in their children's learning. In other subjects, such as science, art and design and in some English lessons, homework could be used with greater effect. There are too many instances of mundane tasks being set, frequently involving finishing work started in lessons. Such tasks do not consolidate or extend learning.

31. The previous inspection concluded that the quality of teaching was generally good, but that some improvements in marking, the quality of homework and the sharing of good practice should take place. Teaching has remained good overall but there are more lessons that are good or better. However, this improvement is due principally to the efforts made by individual teachers. There remains room for improvement in the quality of marking. Homework remains unsatisfactory. The school is fortunate in having a number of accomplished teachers on its staff, many of whom use a range of stimulating and challenging strategies to enliven their lessons and enhance learning. Any sharing of good practice tends to be only within departments and not at a whole school level so opportunities need to be found. There are now better facilities to help teachers use ICT in lessons to help pupils learn, but few teachers do so.

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

32. At Key Stage 3 statutory requirements are met in all subjects of the curriculum except design and technology, where the range of materials pupils use is too narrow. Overall, the Key Stage 3 curriculum offers good learning opportunities to pupils in the school; it has a good breadth, and pupils who have the desire and capability to do well in modern languages are able to study both French and German. The time allocated to English teaching is higher than the national average. This is a good feature of the curriculum given the low prior attainment levels in literacy of many pupils. However, the allocation of time to science is below the national average and has an adverse impact on standards, particularly of experimental and investigative work.

33. The English department is in good contact with feeder primary schools and this ensures that there is good continuity in the development of pupils' language skills. 'Bridging Projects' and three Literacy Summer schools have enhanced this continuity. The appointment of a literacy co-ordinator and the establishment of a literacy working party, with representatives from all subjects, have been important in the development of a school literacy policy, but there is no, for example, system of reading awards, no 'Reading Week' and no system of paired reading. The school could move on substantially from what has been achieved so far. Some preparatory work has been done towards the introduction of a whole school policy for the teaching of numeracy skills, but the school does not yet have an agreed policy for teaching numeracy. This means that subject departments lack a common approach in their teaching and therefore the pupils' learning is less effective than it could be.

34. The Key Stage 4 curriculum does not meet statutory requirements; the locally agreed syllabus is not fully taught in religious education; most pupils do not follow a course in ICT and neither are their experiences of ICT within other subjects monitored. There is an appropriate range of GCSE subjects within a generally balanced core and options provision. However, due to decisions taken some years ago, many subjects are trying to run full GCSE courses in time sufficient only for half courses. This is unsatisfactory and standards of work suffer. In design technology long and short courses are inappropriately taught together due to staffing and organisational difficulties. Media Studies has been introduced successfully into Year 10.

35. The school's provision for vocational education in Years 10 and 11, including careers education and guidance, is good. The provision for work experience in Year 10 is very good. Though some staffing and financial constraints exist, good efforts have been made to broaden the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to offer pupils an opportunity to choose options that are more work related. For example, certificated vocational courses are available in both business and ICT. Links have also been established, with Wakefield College and the Construction Industry Training Board, to offer a National Vocational Qualification in building trades to small cohorts of pupils in years 10 and 11. Suitable plans are in place to extend the NVQ provision next year. Vocational provision features other innovative initiatives such as the Bridge Project. This is a scheme designed to help some disaffected pupils whose attendance and academic progress are in need of improvement. This scheme, which is in its second year, offers pupils extended work experience placements and some amendments to their school timetables. Though the pupils may study fewer subjects, the scheme is successful in boosting confidence, improving attendance and enhancing self-esteem, thereby improving their chances for employment. This scheme and a similar venture, World Challenge, are successful enhancements to the curriculum. Their success owes much to the enthusiasm and dedication of the member of staff who has responsibility for the management of them.

36. A key feature of the school's vocational provision is the Year 10 work experience programme. This is very well planned and organised. It suitably complements good careers education and guidance that starts in Year 9. Planning for work experience is thorough and

all pupils are issued with a helpful and informative booklet that also serves as a work experience diary. It contains useful hints about conduct in a work place and Year 10 form tutors reinforce essential messages.

37. The school recognises the shortcomings of the current Key Stage 4 curriculum and is substantially dealing with them from September 2001. However, as yet there are no plans to ensure Year 11 (current Year 10) will receive their ICT entitlement and some pupils will continue to have insufficient time for some subjects. Due to the innovative range of courses currently offered and to the imminent changes, the quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory.

38. The school makes very good provision for pupils on the special educational need register. All on it have full access to the National Curriculum. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs meets the needs of their statements and these are regularly monitored and reviewed twice yearly. Pupils benefit from good support from a range of external agencies. The recently installed specialist computer software provides effective support for the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified as a group and provision for them is limited to a few subjects; music and physical education largely through extra-curricular activities, and design and technology via a graphics products "express group" in Year 10.

39. The personal, social and health education course is currently taught to all pupils by their form tutor in Years 7 to 9 and by specialist teachers, through the liberal studies course, in Years 10 and 11. The provision is very good and lessons seen were good or very good. The overall programme is well planned with health education, including the national Healthy Schools project, and careers education programmes providing good examples of progression and continuity of learning over the key stages. Pupils interviewed during the inspection most often presented a very favourable view of the course and generally felt that it was informative and beneficial to their personal, social and vocational development.

40. Extra curricular provision is very good, with that in physical education and music outstanding. A wide range of sporting activities for both boys and girls is offered through clubs that involve significant numbers of pupils. In music, strong community links are made through many school bands and choirs that perform regularly at concerts. A number of pupils participate in drama productions. Some subjects including science, modern languages and ICT make their facilities available at lunchtimes and after school. There is an Easter holiday revision programme that is well attended by many pupils. There is a varied programme of educational visits in many subjects; there are visits to theatres, museums, art galleries, field trips, residential courses in geography and overseas visits to Europe. The school participates in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and is involved through the Education Action Zone initiative in World Challenge, an opportunity to travel far across the world. The extra curricular enhancement activities programme is extensive and offered by almost all departments. It provides opportunities for all pupils whatever their interest.

41. Curriculum links with the community are good. The school has very productive links with its contributory primary schools and an excellent induction programme for new pupils that fully involves parents. These help to contribute to a generally smooth transition and ensure good continuity of education. The school works in partnership with neighbouring secondary schools and the local tertiary college at Wakefield and there are joint initiatives in place. Links with local industry, which were particularly strong at the time of the previous inspection, have declined as initiatives have waned. However, the school has recently received funding from a local chemical firm to support links between local schools through a programme designed by the University of Liverpool. The alternative 14-16 curriculum programmes have also developed productive links with many local community activities.

### ***Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision***

42. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual education is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Some subjects such as religious education, history, geography, physical education and music include spiritual provision in their lesson planning. The school appreciates the need to further develop this aspect of the curriculum. Assemblies set a positive atmosphere in which praise is used to encourage and reward good work, but the school does not meet the requirement to hold a daily act of worship for all pupils. The personal, social and health education course also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

43. There is good provision for pupils' moral development. Behaviour is generally good and pupils learn self-discipline and know the difference between right and wrong. Moral attitudes are well reinforced in the personal, social and health education course, assemblies, and within many subjects of the curriculum, particularly English, geography, history and drama. In geography, pupils consider moral issues such as the conflicting views on land usage within the national parks and the impact of open cast mining on existing coal-mining settlements. In history, moral issues associated with the slave trade are studied and in drama issues such as bullying are explored through role-play. Pupils also show generosity in their support of a range of charities.

44. Provision for pupils' social education is very good. The school establishes a clear code of conduct and rewards and sanctions are considered by pupils to be fairly applied. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils and staff are good role models. Pupil representatives meet regularly on the School Council and pupils feel that their views are important in the development of the school. Work experience in Year 10 promotes good social skills. Pupils' maturity is evident, particularly in Year 11 when pupils take on responsibility as prefects. Pupils learn to work together in groups in many subjects such as drama, music, physical education, geography and religious education. A range of residential activity weeks, excursions, activity days and other extra-curricular involvement also promote good social interaction and development. Lunchtime concerts are a very pleasant social occasion and are well supported by pupils and staff, giving all an appropriate sense of pride in the school.

45. Provision for pupils' cultural education is good overall. In music and religious education it is very good; music from many cultures is studied; five major religions are investigated. In English, other cultures are studied through literature and the use of language. In geography, pupils learn how modern developments affect traditional cultures and their way of life, for example in the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. A range of educational trips, including visits to the West Yorkshire Playhouse enhances cultural studies. The music department gives regular concerts and is performing in France in the summer of 2001. Foreign travel is strongly promoted through the modern languages department and history pupils visit French and Belgium battlefields. A party of pupils recently trekked in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. There are missed opportunities to promote pupils' cultural awareness in art and design.

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

46. Pastoral care is good and parents and pupils agree that they almost all like the school. A good programme of personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils appreciate the help and guidance given by teachers. Putting children first is central to the school's ethos and a good example of this is when teachers gave up Easter holiday time to help Year 11 pupils with their revision. There is good pastoral and academic provision for pupils with special educational needs. The

induction procedures for children entering Year 7 are very good and enable them to settle happily and easily. Each class has its own classroom support assistant for the first two weeks, so pupils always have extra help if they are lost or worried.

47. The school has gathered a significant amount of data on the attainment of each pupil which is well used to set academic targets for subject departments and for pupils. Pupils are aware of their likely, and potential, examination grades in each of their subjects and are set targets to help them in achieving these. In Years 7 – 9, teachers stick a yellow label in each pupil's book, summarising their achievement and adding targets for improvement. This is very effective and encourages pupils to do better. Regular testing takes place in all subjects, with especially good procedures in science, music and religious education. Teachers use what they learn from these tests to adjust their lesson plans and teaching. The results are also used to determine how pupils are grouped in subjects such as mathematics.

48. The school shows a good level of care and concern for those pupils with special educational needs. The procedures for placing pupils on the special educational needs register are applied consistently. Individual education plans are developed for all pupils who are at stage four and above on the register; staff make good use of them and many teachers make them more specific to the subject they teach. The learning resource centre cares very effectively for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties.

49. Behaviour is very well managed. The system of rewards and sanctions is effective and pupils consider it to be fairly applied. The learning support unit is proving beneficial in modifying anti-social behaviour and improving the attendance of some of those with very poor attendance records. The isolation unit is very effective and has enabled the number of fixed term exclusions to be significantly reduced. Parents and pupils agree that known bullying is very well dealt with.

50. The deputy headteacher deals competently with child protection issues and ensures that procedures are well known to the staff.

51. Considerable attention is paid to health issues and the school is working towards an award from the new Healthy Schools initiative. To this end, drama pupils have combined with the art and design department in launching an anti-smoking campaign and they have taken the message into junior schools. However, this has not stopped significant numbers of pupils from smoking and pupils interviewed did not like the smell of smoke emanating from some of their peers' clothes during lessons.

52. All the health and safety issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with. However, due to relocation, there are some health and safety issues in the design and technology department. The number of pupils going off site at lunchtime also gives cause for concern. Not only do a number of them smoke quite openly, but there is also a safety risk, as the school does not know how many pupils are on site over the lunch period.

53. Attendance is well monitored by senior teachers who value highly the work put in by the new education welfare officer. The school follows up a target group of pupils with poor attendance on their first day of absence. However, this good practice does not percolate down to all teachers. Lesson registers are often not taken and some teachers are unaware how many pupils should be in a lesson. The introduction of an electronic registration system should make overall monitoring more rigorous. There is sometimes too much leniency in the authorisation of holidays taken in term-time.

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

54. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school makes a considerable effort to improve this further.

55. Only five parents attended the pre-inspection parents' evening and less than 10 per cent responded to the questionnaire. Of this relatively small sample, almost all said their children liked school; teachers had high expectations; pupils made good progress and teachers respond quickly and well to parents' questions and concerns.

56. The school tries hard to strengthen its links with parents but many are reluctant to become involved. Those who respond find some of the initiatives very worthwhile. For example the 'Share' scheme is aimed at showing parents how to promote their children's learning at home. Year 9 parents respond well to 'Compact', a scheme that encourages pupils to continue with further education. Parents with questions or concerns are promised a response within 24 hours. Parents say this really works and they appreciate it.

57. Parents are thoroughly involved in the induction process for Year 7 pupils. They are invited to participate with their children in sample lessons. Their response is very good and they clearly enjoy the experience and have the opportunity to meet other 'new' parents. Some parents become involved in Saturday morning music making. Response to concerts, productions and prize giving is very good. However, response to consultation evenings, which is carefully monitored, drops after Year 7 to around 50 per cent. There is no parent teacher association and no formal fund raising for the school. As in many schools, parents tend only to contact the school when problems arise.

58. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved in the reviews of statements with most of them attending annual review meetings. Parents appear to be pleased with the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and the easy access they have to teachers.

59. A few parents feel they are not well informed about their children's progress but inspectors felt information to be satisfactory. Pupils' annual reports have an excellent format but subject comments do not always say clearly what pupils can do or what progress has been made. Pupil planners have a good format and can be used as a channel of communication with parents, but their use by pupils and monitoring of them by teachers are both inconsistent. The governors' annual report to parents and the regular newsletters are clear and informative. The prospectus fails to meet statutory requirements as it is unclear to which year GCSE examination results refer and they are not compared with national results.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The leadership of the acting headteacher is very good. His vision for the school is clear with strong emphasis on serving the local community and providing all pupils with a quality education and opportunities for life. He has introduced an open, participative style of management that has increased the confidence of the staff, while enlisting the support of the governors and large majority of parents. Supported by his senior colleagues, he has tackled decisively those problems previously caused by excessive and occasionally unproductive spending. Typically, he has maintained staff morale and co-operation, while eliciting strenuous efforts from his colleagues to improve standards of teaching, learning and pupils' behaviour.

61. The Education Action Zone is a useful organisation for the school to work with and very good relationships now exist between the new director and the acting headteacher. Significant developments are under way.

62. Responsibilities are well delegated and the quality of senior and middle management is good overall. The senior management team is over-large, allowing greater participation by some staff, but presenting a correspondingly diffuse organisation to teachers. Senior managers execute many of their responsibilities well, although their line management of departments is of variable quality.

63. The school is strengthened by talented middle managers, in modern languages, ICT, music, physical education and religious education. Elsewhere, management is most often good. In science and design and technology, managerial problems arise from a lack of staffing, books and equipment. Management is unsatisfactory in design and technology.

64. Special educational needs is well managed by the professional assistant working in partnership with the learning resources centre manager. They provide very good administrative arrangements and liaise very effectively with the team of education support assistants. A clear development plan, together with targets for future action, has been established. Effective working links exist with curriculum and pastoral managers. There has been good progress in the leadership and management of special educational needs since the last inspection.

65. The governing body is stable, well informed and committed to the welfare of the staff and pupils. The Chair and many of the governors have long-standing personal or professional connections with the school. They know its strengths and are open to advice about what is needed to improve. They meet regularly and are well represented at extra curricular events. Several governors come into school to observe the work in departments, but only a few have formal links with subject areas. The governors work hard to fulfil their statutory duties and, living in the community, are receptive to local comment about the school's performance. The school prospectus does not quite meet requirements and the daily act of collective worship needs further refinement. Statutory breaches in the provision for ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11 are largely being addressed in September 2001. Weaknesses in design and technology at Key Stage 3 will be addressed as staffing permits. Though financial awareness and management are now good, past leadership allowed a large financial debt to accrue and some misdirection of funds that were available. This has contributed to too few teachers, overlarge class sizes, and poor resources. All these are adversely affecting standards and it is to the credit of current teachers, managers and governors that the school is currently in good heart. Best value criteria of compare, challenge, consult and compete are not fully considered in all areas of

the school's work, though comparing the school with others and challenging current provision is becoming stronger.

66. The current evaluation of the school's performance is very good and there is a refreshing honesty about standards that indicates the headteacher and governors intend to improve them. However, the effectiveness of most actions taken, or yet to be taken, to improve the school cannot yet be determined.

67. The headteacher shares the benefits of his expertise in data analysis and target setting with his staff. Several departments and some pastoral staff are becoming adept in planning and target setting using statistical evidence to predict what might happen. The school's plans for medium and long-term development are entirely appropriate, though severely hampered by a chronic shortage of money and resources. The use of ICT for administrative tasks, such as financial planning and monitoring pupils' attendance, is insufficiently developed, owing to delays in the delivery and installation of suitable equipment. There is lack of access to computers in many departments, and their use across the curriculum is not co-ordinated at all.

68. Teachers are well deployed and appropriately qualified in the areas they teach, except in mathematics and design and technology where recruitment of staff has proved difficult. The school provides guidance to support temporary and supply teachers employed, but there is still an adverse impact on how well pupils achieve. Clear guidance, rigorous monitoring and effective supplementary support must be ensured so that the quality of education is the best in these trying circumstances.

69. Class sizes have generally increased since the last inspection. Teachers also have less non-teaching time for preparation. Effectively, there are too few teachers. Despite this pressure, teaching is currently good due to teachers' hard work and some young teachers with plenty of energy. Heads of department have insufficient time for management. It is commendable that so many teachers and managers continue to do such a good job, but this may not be sustainable. Newly qualified teachers currently teach for longer than regulations state. A good programme for their induction is in place, with procedures clearly set out. Newly appointed teachers find them helpful and supportive. The school trains student teachers well and, in response to parents' comments, now monitors how frequently they teach pupils.

70. The professional development of teachers is a high priority in the school and is largely though not exclusively linked to the school's development plan. The educational support assistants have a wide range of experience supplemented by training in areas such as counselling. This contributes to their effectiveness as a valuable resource to the school. Teachers place high value on their presence in lessons. The daily administration by office staff is first class. The cleaning and catering staff join the site managers in making a strong contribution to the school. In some subject areas, technical support is inadequate; in science there is only one technician and the provision is insufficient to deliver investigative science; in design and technology there is no provision for food technology or textiles.

71. Resources in the school are poor. Books are often old and inadequate in number. Equipment for practical work in science is minimal and this makes it impossible for standards to rise to an appropriate level. Design and technology has to use scrap rather than the variety of materials it should. Though computers within specialist rooms are good, there are insufficient in subject areas and appropriate software is often not available. In design and technology the software is available, but the computers are not. The library is an attractive area with a growing number of good resources but it receives insufficient funding to develop properly.

72. The school's accommodation is good overall, and generally well maintained though over-large classes are cramped in many classrooms.

73. The picture of management painted in the last report was very positive, standards were rising and resources being channelled more effectively into teaching and learning. The present management have inherited standards that started declining immediately after the last inspection. Financial constraints present at the last inspection still hold true today and are worse. Resources were unsatisfactory then and are poor now. Class sizes were too large then and are frequently so now. There were insufficient computers within departments then and that is still true. However, since September 2000, problems have been recognised and such action as can be taken has been, for example significant increases in departments' capitation (money for resources). There are also a significant number of very good managers and teachers who are taking the school forward. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection is deemed satisfactory. The capacity of the school to improve further is very good providing the large debt, incurred in the past, can be set aside until resources are adequate for present and future pupils, and teacher shortages can be overcome.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Raise the standards of work in science, particularly in Years 7-9 and of a practical nature by:
  - Increasing the teaching time available in all years.
  - Entering more pupils for a higher tier GCSE paper so that they can get A\*-B grades.
  - Increasing the quantity and improving the range of resources.
  - Increasing the number of technicians.
  - Increasing the use of ICT.(Paragraphs: 3, 7, 32, 103, 105, 108, 110)
  
- (2) Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics by
  - Appointing sufficient full time teachers as soon as possible.
  - Ensuring temporary, newly qualified and unqualified teachers are rigorously monitored and supported.(Paragraphs: 68, 92)
  
- (3) Increase the attendance of pupils by:
  - Ensuring all teachers have up to date class lists, take registers every lesson and follow up absences as soon as possible.
  - Installing the electronic registration system available to the school as soon as possible and using it effectively.(Paragraphs: 19, 53, 145)
  
- (4) Increase the use of ICT, computers, in most subjects and ensure the ICT curriculum for all Year 10 and 11 pupils meets statutory requirements by:
  - Ensure that the arrangements for pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum are adequately co-ordinated and monitored
  - Moving forward rapidly with New Opportunities Fund training for all teachers.
  - Improving the quality of computers within subject areas and installing them where there are spare network connections, for example adjacent to the geography and history rooms.
  - Increasing the total number of computers within the school.
  - Purchasing an appropriate range of subject software and ancillary devices, such as sensors.
  - Monitoring the forthcoming 'Key Skills' module within citizenship in Year 10, from September 2001.
  - Providing an ICT curriculum for Year 11 from September 2001.(Paragraphs: 25, 34, 37, 80, 95, 107, 110, 116, 124, 137, 146, 147, 150, 151, 153, 159, 181)
  
- (5) Improve design and technology by:
  - Ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching.
  - Improving the Key Stage 3 curriculum so that it meets Curriculum 2000 requirements.
  - Ensuring more effective management.(Paragraphs: 26, 32, 63, 68, 119, 128)
  
- (6) Balance the time given to subjects in Years 10 and 11 so that they all have a fair chance of being taught appropriately and religious education meets statutory requirements by:

- Ensuring the proposed curriculum plan that starts in September 2001 provides sufficient time for all courses.  
(Paragraphs: 34, 113, 116, 140, 146, 162, 176)
- (7) Bring the pupil teacher ratio in line with the national average for similar schools by:
- Continuing to increase the number of teachers as funds allow.
  - Ensuring temporary teachers receive clear guidance, rigorous monitoring and effective supplementary support so that the quality of education provided is the best in the circumstances.  
(Paragraphs: 20, 65, 68, 69, 92, 106, 116, 119, 128, 139, 165)
- (8) Continue increasing the number of books and quantities of resources very substantially by:
- Auditing departments, including the library, to determine exactly what they need, when, and at what cost.
  - Prioritising needs.
  - Allocating funds as early as possible, so that departments can plan forwards.  
(Paragraphs: 29, 65, 67, 83, 99, 103, 110, 112, 116, 118, 124, 130, 137, 139, 146, 150, 158, 173)

In addition to the main issues above the headteacher and governors should consider addressing the following lesser points in the action plan.

- The monitoring and management of pupils who leave the site at lunchtime.  
(Paragraphs: 52, 67)
- Newly qualified teachers should teach less. (Paragraph: 69)
- The adverse effects of pupils missing lessons due to regular musical instrument practice and fairly frequent Monday school closures need to be reduced. (Paragraph: 148)
- ICT needs to be used more effectively and extensively in administration, monitoring and record keeping. (Paragraph: 67)
- Gifted and talented pupils need to be identified and better provided for.  
(Paragraphs: 13, 24)
- The daily act of worship needs to be more spiritual. (Paragraph: 42)
- There needs to be more consistency in provision for literacy and numeracy.  
(Paragraphs: 21, 22, 33, 103, 104, 107, 136)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	167
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	25	41	27	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	956
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	187

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	27
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	254

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	92.7
National comparative data	91.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	1.3

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	92	104	196

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	52	52	42
	Girls	73	60	44
	Total	125	112	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (52)	57 (51)	44 (36)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (15)	33 (24)	16 (13)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	46	54	43
	Girls	69	61	48
	Total	115	115	91
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (62)	59 (51)	42 (38)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (21)	35 (25)	16 (14)
	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

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	93	70	163

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	31	79	84
	Girls	32	59	64
	Total	63	138	148
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (45)	85 (89)	91 (93)
	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	29
	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	21
	National	N/A

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	950
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	56	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	506

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.8
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	27.2
Key Stage 4	21.5

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2 459 879
Total expenditure	2 417 068
Expenditure per pupil	2 537
Balance brought forward from previous year	(168 190)
Balance carried forward to next year	(125 379)

*Figures in parentheses indicate negative values*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	900
Number of questionnaires returned	75

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	47	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	33	17	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	32	24	5	0
The teaching is good.	51	31	9	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	33	17	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	39	5	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	37	41	9	8	4
The school is well led and managed.	45	40	7	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	47	9	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	24	8	0	12

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

### **ENGLISH**

74. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school in Year 7 is below average, but by the time they reach 14, pupils have made very good progress. End of Year 9 test results have fluctuated over the last four years, but in 2000 they were above average and well above those in similar schools. Pupils' attainment at GCSE was below average in 2000. Girls did significantly better than boys. Girls results were very close to national expectations, but the school's overall proportion of A\*-C grades was brought down by boys' results which were significantly below average. In English Literature, standards were also below average

75. Standards of pupils' work seen are satisfactory in all years. Standards are better in years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. The relatively high proportion of boys adversely affected examination results in 2000.

76. Pupils' listening skills are good and their speaking skills are satisfactory at all ages. Pupils listen attentively and volunteer relevant answers. Although enthusiastic, they do not call out, but patiently respect the views of others. The most able have the confidence to use language to test ideas and to volunteer opinions. Discussion lessons are brisk and pupils respond well. However, follow-up questions are often directed at the next volunteer or a more able pupil so teachers do not always push pupils adequately for a more detailed answer, proof of evidence or better expression. Pupils use technical terms accurately, for example in the discussion of literature and in GCSE media studies, where the use of highly specialised vocabulary, like "market fragmentation", was well taught and well understood. By age 14, pupils have the skills to manage their own discussion groups effectively. A significant minority of pupils, predominantly boys, do not use standard English appropriately in formal contexts or for academic work. In some cases this carries over into formal written work.

77. Standards of reading in lessons range from average to below. Standards are low on entry but many pupils make good progress. Lesson time is set aside for reading and methods from the National Literacy strategy are effectively used to teach reading skills. Pupils with special educational needs receive good help with their reading and make good progress. Teachers offer good examples, but students have few opportunities to read aloud. In one very good example, Year 7 pupils were asked to read key sentences several times until they had the sense and intonation correct. Such an insistence on quality was rare and, too often, halting, insecure reading was praised and not corrected. During the week of the inspection, library lessons were discontinued, which meant that there were few opportunities to observe pupils reading for research. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure and to log their reading with critical comments in a reading diary. From the work inspected it is evident that, without regular encouragement, this good practice quickly lapses.

78. Most pupils produce written work of average quality. Standards of grammar, spelling and punctuation are consistent with expectations for most pupils and some high quality writing was seen. Pupils are enthusiastic and creative writing is fluent at Key Stage 3; a Year 7 girl has written an impressive fantasy story of about 5000 words. Pupils in all years benefit from being set a wide range of writing activities. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. Written work is usually well presented and a good number of pupils word-process their work competently. Written tasks are well prepared in lessons. Good teaching ensures that pupils are clear about the nature and purpose of their writing and understand the criteria by which it will be marked. Thorough teaching on GCSE courses is helping pupils to make good notes. Drafting and redrafting skills are

taught as pupils work from notes towards a finished essay. The best quality GCSE work is well structured with arguments that are well developed. However, it was clear that a significant number of pupils still have problems planning their work and essays begin with large sections of accurate, but irrelevant, biographical background about the author, delaying the effective start of their answer.

79. Standards of literacy in other subjects are discussed in the “Standards” section of this report. A very good example of collaboration with parents is the “Share” project in which parents train in school to teach their children literacy skills at home

80. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in three quarters of the lessons teaching was good or very good. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject. Basic skills, including literacy skills, are well taught, especially to pupils of low prior attainment in Years 7 to 9. Resources and lesson time are well used so lessons are brisk, productive and have a sense of purpose. Teachers manage groups of pupils very effectively and no time is lost through disruption or misbehaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes and respond well to effective teaching. Teachers employ a good range of styles, although no evidence was observed of ICT skills being taught to support reading or writing. Teachers work effectively with educational support assistants so that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The best lessons include a range of activities to develop all English skills: listening and speaking, reading and writing. Most English classes contain a wide spread of ability and learning activities are often insufficiently varied in difficulty and do not always provide suitable challenges for the more able pupils. There was evidence in pupils’ written work of reading for research and of extended writing, but during the week of the inspection all homework routinely required pupils to consolidate or complete work begun in class.

81. Teachers have developed admirable sensitivity and skill to build good relationships with pupils and a sense of mutual respect is evident in well-managed discussions. As a result pupils have the confidence to volunteer opinions and ideas on a variety of challenging issues. Pupils’ work is marked well and graded consistently across the department. Praise is used effectively to encourage pupils. Teachers’ personal responses indicate that they read pupils’ work carefully and with interest. In Years 7 to 9, grading relates to National Curriculum targets and levels, so that pupils understand precisely the quality of their work. There is little evidence that pupils are being required to correct the errors carefully noted in the marking and an opportunity to emphasise the importance of accuracy is being missed. At GCSE, marking is very closely related to examination requirements, with comments that explain clearly what needs to be done to move towards a higher grade. Marks for GCSE coursework have been accurately compared and standardised across the department.

82. The curriculum is broad, balanced and coherent, offering equality of access and a broad range of educational opportunities. The generous allocation of curriculum time and effective use of learning support staff contribute to pupils’ good progress. In Years 10 and 11 all requirements of GCSE syllabuses are met. Choice has been extended by the introduction of media studies as an optional GCSE course. The curriculum is taught through effective schemes of work that are appropriate to the needs of most pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for. Gifted pupils are not identified and only have general provision through the organisation of classes into groups of similar ability. Pupils word-process assignments at home, but ICT skills are not being taught within the English curriculum and this is recognised as an important area for development. Projects involving research skills are included in the curriculum of Year 7 and Year 9, but insufficient use is made of the library as a resource for developing pupils’ independent learning. A valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is made through encouraging discussion of topical issues. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. There is a

library club and a writing club existed until recently. English contributed to the revision programme for Year 11 pupils over the Easter holidays. Performance poets have visited the school and pupils have attended a poetry day at the Grand Theatre in Leeds. The Manchester Theatre Company has performed a version of "Macbeth" in schools for Year 9 pupils. Theatre visits are arranged when appropriate opportunities occur to support the study of curriculum texts.

83. The English department is competently managed. Aims and procedures in line with school policies are clearly set out in the departmental handbook, and in evaluation and planning documents. There is a clear sense of educational direction. Teachers are well deployed and led and the quality of their work is monitored. Day-to-day management of the subject is time consuming due to the lack of a second in department. Resources in English are not adequate for a school of this size, but steps are being taken to correct some years of under-funding. The resources available are well used and well cared for. To ensure continuity in the development of reading and writing skills the department has good contacts with feeder primary schools and with parents. English has played a major role in the development of the school's literacy policy. Assessment procedures are well managed and are used effectively in the organisation of teaching groups and in setting appropriate targets for pupils. Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved and measures have been introduced to tackle boys' low achievement. There is a strong team of specialist English teachers whose evident enthusiasm and commitment suggest the capacity for further improvement is good.

### ***Drama***

84. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations at the end of Year 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Some very good work was seen from Year 11 pupils preparing group performances for their GCSE examinations. GCSE results in 2000 suffered a little from staffing difficulties, but pupils did well and 53 per cent achieved grades A\*-C, against a national figure of 69 per cent.

85. Teaching in drama is always at least good in both key stages. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject, manage their pupils very well and enjoy excellent relationships with them. In addition to their teaching role, teachers also act as directors or examiners and they frequently perform in role alongside their pupils. The curriculum is good and schemes of work are well planned. A strength of drama lessons is that all pupils are actively engaged in a range of challenging activities. The three aims of exploring issues, of developing pupils' self expression and of teaching drama skills are well balanced in good teaching. Pupils are taught appropriate skills, like 'freeze', multi-role play or the importance of timing. At GCSE, pupils also learn to support others in performance by controlling lighting or sound systems. The subject teaches other technical skills, such as the use of video and digital cameras. Pupils are challenged and respond well. They are confident and effective when performing. Understanding of specialist vocabulary is incorporated into lessons and pupils are at ease with the terminology and the concepts. Pupils are able to explain what they had intended and to judge the impact of their performance on an audience.

86. A strong feature of work in drama is the constant emphasis on evaluating one's own contribution and that of others. The socialising aspect of the subject is something rightly valued by parents. Through issues explored, for example, bullying, citizenship, smoking, the abuse of power, and through the pressure to present personal viewpoints in a dramatic, open way, often in groups, the subject makes a very important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. An artist in residence was employed to stimulate billboard art and poster work in support of an anti-smoking theme in drama. Through clubs, performances, theatre visits and participation in festivals like 'Splat',

organised by Leeds Playhouse and Yorkshire Police, the subject contributes to the extra-curricular opportunities enjoyed by pupils.

### **Media Studies**

87. Aspects of media studies are taught as part of the National Curriculum in English for all ages. Groups of Year 8 pupils, for example, were seen working very maturely to make a promotional video about the school. Work on advertising and journalism forms an important element of the GCSE English syllabus. Media studies is also a separate subject offered as an option at GCSE. It attracts pupils of a wide range of abilities. The work seen involved elements of business studies, of design and of ICT. Teaching in the few lessons seen was very good and the pupils make very good progress individually and in groups. Pupils demonstrate strong enthusiasm for the subject. Work on the marketing of pop music was rigorous and focused because of very good teaching which maintained a critical, business sharpness to the concepts being learned. The language skills and the discussion skills of the group work were of a high level and pupils of all abilities responded well to the challenge. Written projects are evidence that pupils are achieving well in this subject, often above what might have been expected from their relatively low prior attainment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. End of Year 9 test results in 2000 were below national averages and this is consistent over several years. Boys do less well than girls. Overall results were also below average when compared with those from similar schools, though many pupils achieved well. In recent years mathematics results have been lower than those achieved in English but higher than those in science. Standards have risen slightly faster than the national trend of gradual improvement. Pupils' results at GCSE in 2000, for grades A\* - C, were broadly in line with national figures, but for A\* - G were well below. Boys performed less well than girls. The A\* - C results represent a substantial improvement since 1997 although a fall from 1999. Compared with results for similar schools the proportion of A\* to C grades are well above average. Overall, pupils who took their examinations in 2000 made good progress from when they were in Year 9.

89. Up to the age of 14 pupils' mathematical skills show satisfactory improvement. Their attainment is below national expectations at the age of 11 and improves so that it is broadly in line with expectations when they are 14. This is better than test results in recent years indicate. The work of around one third of higher attaining pupils in Year 9 showed them capable of grade six or better in the coming tests. They display a good grasp of mensuration, including the area of compound shapes incorporating rectangles and circles. They can solve simultaneous linear equations. Algebraic manipulation is satisfactory although many find some difficulty with algebraic fractions. Middle attainers show that they are on line for level 5. They have competent algebra and are secure in their understanding of the angle properties of a triangle, and of angles at a point. Lower attaining pupils recognise number patterns and can find the  $n$ th term of a simple sequence given its associated rule. They can use a calculator to find the square and cube of a number. Basic numerical work is of a satisfactory standard.

90. Work in Years 10 and 11 is broadly in line with national expectations, reflecting satisfactory improvement. There are six classes, each reflecting a different narrow range of ability. All the pupils in the highest ability class are working at a level equivalent to a GCSE grade B or better. They produce good work on vectors and on finding the mean and standard deviation of frequency distributions in statistics. They are developing a very good understanding of loci. Pupils in middle ability classes use Pythagoras' theorem and the trigonometry for right-angled triangles capably. In algebra, they can expand brackets and factorise. Lower attaining pupils can relate compass directions to the use of a map and can

recognise which fraction of a shape is shaded but do not always give their answer in its simplest form. Pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in all years, in line with their peers. The use of special computer software with Year 7 pupils plays a part in this respect. Good classroom work by educational support assistants and teachers is also a feature. The school has not identified any pupils as being gifted or talented. As intimated above, higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in all years.

91. Standards in numeracy are also described in the “Standards” section of this report.

92. Teaching was satisfactory or better in twelve of the fifteen lessons seen and satisfactory overall. More experienced teachers have very good knowledge and understanding, plan lessons effectively, and have high expectations of what the pupils should be achieving. They use a range of strategies to ensure pupils are learning in their lessons and manage pupils well, so no time is wasted. The lessons seen in which teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory were taught by teachers who are new to the profession. In each case planning lacked the necessary depth to provide appropriate challenges for pupils. In two lessons a teacher was insufficiently aware of how to relate the content of the lesson to what pupils already knew and understood, kept inadequate records of their work and did not address them by name.

93. When teachers mark pupils’ work they correct most mistakes. There is some very good practice within the department in this respect. In addition to indicating whether the work is right or not teachers comment fully on how it might be improved. Teachers’ use of ‘yellow stickers’ to set the basis for pupils’ targets for academic improvement are effective in Years 7-9. Whilst much of the marking, particularly that done by more experienced teachers, is thorough, there are examples of perfunctory marking with little more than a series of ticks and some cases where work has not been corrected at all.

94. Good training provision is made for post-graduate and trainee teachers. Those currently in school speak very highly of the support and advice available to them from the department and from the senior management.

95. Planning for the use of ICT and computer-aided learning is incorporated within the schemes of work in all years. However, access to the school’s computer network is restricted because it is heavily used. Furthermore the department is poorly equipped in this respect. There is a limited number of out-dated computers and only two modern ones.

96. Standards of behaviour and the quality of relationships seen in lessons are mostly good. This is especially true for high attainers in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are able to be taught at an appropriate pace and pupils learn satisfactorily. The most able pupils show a high level of motivation, together with the ability to think independently and be self critical, all contributing to successful learning. Three lessons were seen in which the pupils’ behaviour and commitment to their work was unsatisfactory. In two of these there was misbehaviour in spite of good or satisfactory teaching. Relatively poor attendance is also a factor affecting progress in some lower sets.

97. Departmental leadership is good. The head of department is a very talented and hard-working teacher. He is extremely well thought of by his colleagues and pupils. He makes a significant contribution to the running and organisation of the school as a whole. The department is going through a difficult time temporarily; attempts to find a replacement second in department have so far proved in vain. This has meant a heavier teaching commitment than is ideal for the two new members to the teaching profession in the department. It has also left a substantial burden of extra work for other teachers. In spite of this, morale remains good. The teacher who is effectively filling the role of second in

department is making a substantial contribution to the day-to-day running and general organisation of the department's work. More rigorous monitoring of teaching is needed to raise standards further.

98. Since the last inspection the money provided for books and resources has been poor. This has just been increased but remains inadequate. The department is short of textbooks. Blackboards in classrooms need to be replaced. More computers are needed.

99. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Test and examination results have improved. Special educational needs pupils' work is better integrated. Presentation of pupils' work is better. Higher attaining pupils make better progress in lessons. However, recent changes in staffing mean that weaknesses in some teachers' knowledge and understanding still remain and lesson preparation and recording of pupils' marks is not always satisfactory.

## SCIENCE

100. Pupils' attainment in Year 9 tests in 2000 was well below average when compared with all schools and below average when compared with similar schools. Pupils performed less well in science than in English or mathematics. Since the last inspection results have fallen slightly when compared with the national trend of gradual improvement. Although the girls' results in 2000 were poorer than in the previous year, average results since the previous report show no significant difference between boys' and girls' performances.

101. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - G grades was below average, and the proportion gaining the higher grades A\* - C, a little below average. When compared with similar schools the proportion of pupils achieving A\* - C grades was well above average. Whilst girls attain more of the higher grades, overall there is no significant difference between girls' and boys' attainment. Although the numbers of pupils gaining higher grades has fluctuated over recent years, the general trend has been one of improvement. However, few pupils achieve A\*-B grades as most pupils are entered for foundation level at GCSE (*the lowest level – high grades cannot be reached*).

102. Standards of pupils' work in years 7-9 are below average, but the picture is more positive than Year 9 test results suggest. By the end of Year 9, most pupils have secure knowledge of a range of basic scientific facts though their understanding is often superficial. Pupils of higher prior attainment can describe how to make an electromagnet and explain the process of distillation, but struggle to explain how to separate the components of unfamiliar mixtures. They know many ways in which living organisms relate to their environment, but confuse the concept of respiration with the process of breathing. Those with lower prior attainment have more limited knowledge but can, for instance, describe electrical circuits and accurately label the reproductive systems in man and in the flowering plant.

103. Investigative skills of predicting, planning and evaluation based on scientific understanding are underdeveloped and reflect too little time and far too few resources being available for practical work. In two lessons in Year 8 for example, pupils were being introduced to skills of prediction that should have been established in Year 7. Presentation of work is generally good but weak literacy skills, especially amongst lower attainers, impede pupils' performance in written tests. Teachers recognise the need to raise standards at this key stage and in lessons, there is a clear emphasis on improving spelling and English expression. In addition, initiatives introduced recently, to make pupils aware of how to improve their work, together with the introduction of the new curriculum in Year 7, are having a positive impact.

104. Standards are below average in Years 10 and 11. Whilst pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of biology, chemistry and physics, their work lacks depth and sophistication and reflects the fact that most pupils take foundation level at GCSE. By Year 11, pupils of higher prior attainment do appropriate calculations and graph work in topics such as velocity and force, and have a good knowledge of the different types of radiation and their effects on man. They understand how chemicals react with each other and can write and balance simple chemical reactions. Those with the lowest prior attainment find much of the work at GCSE level beyond their scope. They take simple readings from graphs and answer questions that require single word answers on topics such as plant adaptation. However, under test conditions, they have little ability to apply their knowledge. Investigative skills are better developed at this key stage but many pupils still show below average ability to plan a fair test. Poor literacy skills continue to impede standards, especially amongst the middle and lower attaining pupils.

105. Pupils' attainment in science, on entry to the school is well below average. From Years 7 to 9 they achieve satisfactorily overall, but too little time is allocated to teaching the subject. They make better progress in Years 10 and 11, though the time allocated for lessons remains below the national average. The shortage of time reduces the opportunity to do practical work and hence contributes to unsatisfactory progress in investigative skills. Pupils with special educational need progress at a similar rate to their peers, especially when extra support is given. For example, one special needs pupil has benefited from a series of audio tapes that have been specially prepared by an educational support assistant.

106. Teaching in the department is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and almost two thirds is good or better. The good subject knowledge of teachers and good planning of lessons enables pupils to learn appropriately. Lessons almost always begin with good question and answer sessions that effectively review previous work, and end with a consolidating review of the new work. Management of pupils is very good and good levels of discipline are maintained. Poor behaviour is not allowed to impede pupils' learning and teachers cope well with larger than average class sizes. In the better lessons, teachers' methods capture pupils' interest and focus their attention, so that learning becomes a pleasure. For example, in one year 8 class of low attainers, a lesson on friction began with an exciting race to undo knots from three different materials. The pupils rose to the challenges of the teacher, learning to make valid observations and effectively developing the concept of a fair test. In a number of lessons, however, expectations are not high enough; these lessons are too teacher-led and give insufficient opportunity for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. More attention needs to be given to ensuring that the whole ability range in any one class is sufficiently challenged.

107. In all lessons teachers are taking positive steps to raise standards in literacy. Regular spelling tests, emphasis on terminology and expression, and the opportunity in classes of lower attaining pupils, especially to read aloud, are woven into the teaching of science. A numeracy policy is not as evident, though pupils do have the opportunity to measure, do calculations and draw graphs of different types. There is insufficient use of computers in lessons because of the lack of appropriate equipment.

108. The quality of on going assessment is good; most teachers mark constructively and the recently introduced system of 'yellow stickers' benefits pupils by making them aware of the standards of their work, setting targets, and indicating how they can best move towards those targets. Homework is given regularly but needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is useful and challenging and not just the 'finishing off' of classwork. Technical support is valued, but is insufficient for essential practical work. Throughout all year groups, positive attitudes and good behaviour of pupils in class contributes to their learning. Most co-operate willingly with teachers, showing interest and sustaining concentration. The newly established science club is proving to be popular and provides an opportunity to extend the work done in the classroom.

109. Leadership and management of the department are sound. Assessment procedures are very good throughout both key stages and the performance of the subject is monitored very well. There is a need to continue reviewing the curriculum at both key stages to integrate more investigative work and more use of ICT. The department should also consider the benefits of other qualifications for those pupils for whom GCSE is not appropriate. The monitoring of teachers' work and pupils' work needs to be more rigorous to ensure consistency of content and standards.

110. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved. There is better monitoring of pupils' progress and effective target setting has been introduced. There is better access to the ICT suite and there has been some improvement in the use of computers. Health and safety issues raised in the last report have been dealt with satisfactorily. Resources in science remain poor. There are no class sets of appropriate textbooks at Key Stage 3, there is little appropriate ICT equipment, for example sensors, and there is a lack of larger scientific apparatus as well as day-to-day materials. There is insufficient time allocated to science on the timetable. The issues of resources, time, and technical support are hindering the teaching and development of science and hence impacting on standards. The teachers are an enthusiastic team who want to move forwards and who have the capacity to succeed.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

111. Pupils' attainment by the age of 14 is at or close to the standard expected nationally. This is reflected in teacher assessments in 2000 and is an improvement from the last inspection. Girls do better than boys. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\*-C has risen until 2000. In 1999 it was 75 per cent and above the national average for all pupils and both boys and girls. In 2000 girls maintained this, but boys' performance was well below the national average. Overall, 35 per cent of pupils gained the higher grades. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A\* - G has been consistently above the national average. Pupils' achievement was good in 2000; they performed slightly better in art and design than in other subjects.

112. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with a wide range of experience and skills, many below average. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are given the opportunity to draw from observation, express ideas and feelings and use art terms appropriately. Their analytical and observational skills are soundly developed and progress is good. For example, in Year 9, pupils can explain what proportion and scale mean, apply it correctly to compositions and use tone competently to create a sense of depth. Throughout the key stage, pupils gain experience of formal elements and develop skills in as wide a range of materials as resources permit. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. Opportunities for three-dimensional work, textiles and printing are limited due to insufficient resources and large class sizes; pupils' skills in these areas are less well developed. Inadequate funding has severely restricted the use of sketchbooks. In Year 7, where they have been issued, they strongly support learning and reflect the pride shown by pupils in their work.

113. By the age of 16 most pupils' work is below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils, working on a project on 'relationships', produced a good standard of research and investigation on Hieronymus, Bosch and Christianity, linking it through to heaven and hell. However, a significant proportion of pupils showed a limited understanding of how to develop an idea. Many were locked into the use of imagination without sufficient investigation of artists' styles and techniques. A wider range of medium is used at this level and a number of pupils had produced innovative three-dimensional work. For example, in a project on 'identity', pupils had constructed heads from found metallic objects and resin dribbled to resemble wax. In the short course, where pupils are completing a full GCSE course in half the time given to others, pupils make sound progress in lessons, but their achievements over the whole course are not as good as they might be. There is insufficient time and the standard of their work suffers. The work of pupils in this group shows a lack of developed technical skills in some of the materials chosen.

114. Teaching is predominantly good. One third of all lessons were satisfactory and two thirds were good. In the best lessons staff give very clear explanations and manage pupils well, using a variety of techniques to involve pupils. For example, in a Year 7 class of lower attaining pupils, the teacher encouraged the interest of pupils by pulling out a variety of vegetables from a paper bag and encouraging them to describe them in tactile and humorous terms. The pupils' analysis of the fruit heightened the level of observation when they drew them. Where teachers plan and structure schemes of work to ensure continuity and progression, pupils' progress is good. For example, in Year 10, pupils working on a project on 'faces' demonstrated a good ability to review and modify work. This was less evident in the long term planning of some projects where the instructions to pupils were too loose and broad and at times inappropriate for their ability. Teaching encourages pupils' problem solving in practical activities, but planning does not sufficiently include research of techniques and artists in projects. Artists presently incorporated into work are mainly European and more should be included from other parts of the world. Homework is presently underused; teachers lose valuable opportunities to further encourage pupils' research and independent learning.

115. Teachers have a good relationship with pupils and offer a high level of individual support, which raises pupils' self-esteem and fosters good learning. Pupils respond well to effective teaching and this contributes positively to their achievement in all years. Most pupils are lively and their enthusiasm and energy is channelled constructively into learning. In discussion, teachers diversify on points that appeal to pupils and encourage them to build on personal aspects that motivate and interest them. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are given the support and encouragement to respond confidently. The organisational skills of higher attaining pupils in examination classes are good. Projects

started by lower attaining pupils are often unfinished. Many pupils are well motivated and the art and design club held by art and design teachers after school is well attended.

116. The management of the department is satisfactory and given the limitations of the budget, the head of department has used well what resources he has. The lack of resources, large classes and insufficient time in school for organisation and planning have all had an adverse impact on the department's ability to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. This was an issue in the last inspection and has not been solved. The art and design department has moved rooms in the last eighteen months and is in a period of redevelopment. Although the accommodation is spacious there has been no funding for refurbishment and teachers have done the best job they can. ICT is currently underused and that aspect of the art and design curriculum in Key Stage 3 does not meet National Curriculum requirements. 'Artists in residence' have been used to support areas of learning in the past and this is an area that could be developed further to provide specialist teaching where it is weak.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

117. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 in 2000 was well below the national average, with boys' performance significantly below that of girls. The 2000 GCSE results show the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C and A\*-G improving from previous years and close to national averages, but a third of those who studied design and technology courses were not entered. When this factor is taken into account the results are much less favourable. Boys perform less well than girls and not as well as they do in their other subjects. Variation in results occurred between the material areas. Pupils did better in food technology, graphic products and resistant materials than in systems and control and textiles.

118. By the end of Year 9, standards are well below expectations. Pupils have not acquired a good knowledge of the design process and have not covered all the requirements of the National Curriculum. A number of factors have affected standards. Funding is inadequate. There is no provision for working appropriately with metals. Pupils cannot work with medium density fibreboard, a popular material in schools, because a dust extraction system has not been funded. Pupils have a very limited choice of fabrics with which to work in textiles; this limits creativity. Another consequence of poor funding is that many projects have been planned around scrap materials that the department has acquired for cheapness from industry, rather than for educational reasons. Textbooks are scarce throughout the department.

119. Many ways of teaching the Key Stage 3 curriculum have been tried, including a model for the current Year 9 that has proved unsuccessful. These changes have resulted in uneven coverage of the work that pupils must do and different groups of pupils are having widely different experiences. In addition, staffing problems and shortages have resulted in pupils being taught what teachers know rather than what the National Curriculum requires, and there is a gap between the two.

120. The department moved to a new location in the school a year ago. This movement was inadequately planned and funded; many pupils were taught out of specialist areas, sometimes being accommodated in the gym. This caused considerable disruption to their work, adversely affected their achievement, and is contributing to lower standards now.

121. Pupils are much better at making than they are at designing. They enjoy practical work and use tools and materials with ever increasing confidence and with a good attention to health and safety. Some good examples of practical work include the plastic cutters that

are made in Year 9 and used to shape food products. Pupils in Year 7 develop good practical skills when making a pencil box that is then decorated to their own design using another material. The best work was observed in food technology when a group of Year 9 boys achieved very high standards in a module of work based on scone production. They demonstrated proficiency in all elements of the design process and were observed carrying out investigative work with different types of flour. They worked co-operatively in-groups to simulate industrial production.

122. The weaknesses in design skills are shown when pupils do not understand the sequential nature of the process and begin making their products before the designing and planning are finished. Drawing skills and presentation are a weakness, with many pupils wasting considerable time on meaningless colouring in. Pupils do not evaluate their work well and very few refer back to an original specification. A significant number of pupils fail to complete their work and this has a negative effect on future projects.

123. Standards at Key Stage 4 are satisfactory overall. All pupils who have studied courses will be entered for GCSE this year. Factors, which have had an adverse affect on standards in addition to those already, mentioned are as follows. Long and short course GCSE pupils are sometimes taught together; this includes working at the back of another teacher's lesson. This will no longer be the case when the current Year 10 have left. Some pupils, mainly boys, are disaffected because of the extensive written component of coursework. Pupils in some very large classes can only receive minimal teacher attention in lessons of fifty minutes; this is a contributory factor to pupils' work remaining unfinished.

124. Using computers is beset with problems; space provided for them is cramped and most machines cannot run the software needed. Some of the newer computers are not yet up and running. Some school initiatives like the 'Bridge' project have taken pupils away from examination lessons and they consequently do not catch up.

125. Some very good examples of completed work exist in all material areas. The educational toys made in resistant materials are quality products generated from sound design ideas, but not all pupils achieve the deadline for the completion of folios and this lowers standards. Pupils are better at task analysis, research and planning than they are at drawing, lettering and evaluation.

126. Pupils of all abilities do not achieve as well as they should at Key Stage 3, partly due to inconsistencies in teaching, but mainly to the inadequacy of the curriculum. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress because they are well supported as individuals in lessons but only a few modified materials exist to help them. A group of gifted and talented pupils in graphic products have been identified and have studied the subject out of hours and will sit GCSE a year early. At Key Stage 4 pupils achieve appropriately except for a significant number of boys who underachieve and a few pupils of both sexes who are disaffected.

127. Most pupils enjoy the subject. They are well motivated and form good relationships with their peers and with teachers. Some pupils are keen and very creative. They come into the department at lunchtime and after school to pursue their interest.

128. On balance, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years, though there is some considerable variation between teachers. A small number of both good and unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The best teaching was in lessons which had clear aims, shared with pupils. These lessons moved at a brisk pace and pupils made significant gains in knowledge and understanding. In weaker lessons the aims were less well defined. The pace was slower and pupils were engaged in time wasting tasks, for example pupils spending two lessons in

the production of a title page. Currently there is a temporary teacher, supply teacher cover, a teacher on maternity leave and a student. This level of disruption affects standards. The department has very good technician support that has a positive affect on standards. There is however insufficient support for food and textiles resulting in teachers having to waste their time carrying out cleaning and maintenance.

129. There are shortcomings in the leadership and management of the department. Relocation of the accommodation to better, but yet unfinished facilities, the absence of a second in department, and the other issues already identified, have created difficulties for the head of department. Although teachers work together amicably they do not function as a team and there is no shared departmental ethos. Many systems and initiatives have been planned or tried but few are thoroughly organised or fully operational. The Key Stage 3 course does not meet statutory requirements and there is no commonly agreed policy for teaching the design process. This is crucial to raising standards. Strategies need to be developed to tackle issues that have been identified as weaknesses, like the underachievement of boys and failure to comply with deadlines. Some health and safety issues have been discussed with the department.

130. The department has made some improvements since the time of the last inspection, but provision is not good enough and improvement is unsatisfactory. Progress has been made in assessment and pupils are well aware of where they are and what they need to do to improve further. The use of ICT has been developed, even with inadequate provision, but there is still a need for further staff training. The accommodation is improved by relocation. There is still a significant shortage of books and equipment, which restricts attainment. A good feature is the displays of pupils' work, which have been put up throughout the department to celebrate achievement and to increase pupils' awareness of what constitutes good work.

### ***Child Development***

131. This is a popular GCSE choice taken up by girls. GCSE results are good with most pupils achieving a grade higher than they do in other subjects. It is set against German in the options and this mitigates against higher ability pupils opting for it. Teaching is good and pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils take a pride in their work and produce coursework that reflects the positive commitment they are prepared to make to the subject. During the inspection pupils were observed carrying out revision in groups. They were proficient in finding out answers for themselves when gaps in their knowledge became apparent. Pupils were capable of discussing sensitive issues in a mature way and made good progress in acquiring new knowledge and understanding. Pupils were less confident when required to suggest a range of criteria for a given product, in this case a drinking cup for a small child, and could only state the most obvious answers.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. The proportion of pupils attaining GCSE A\*-C grades in 2000 was below average and has been consistently so in recent years. Few pupils attain the highest grades. Girls consistently perform better than boys, significantly so in 2000. There is no overall trend of improvement. The proportion of pupils attaining A\*-G grades has been in line with the national average in recent years. Overall, geography results have been weaker than many other subjects in the school. The subject is much more popular with boys than girls. As boys tend to do less well in GCSE examinations than girls, this partly accounts for the lower than average results.

133. Standards of pupils' work are below average at the end of Years 9 and 11, but a recent staff appointment has led to a significant improvement in the amount and quality produced. By the end of Year 9, pupils of all attainment levels have a sound grounding in geographical skills. Most can use and interpret basic maps satisfactorily, but more practice is needed in the presentation and analysis of graphs and this should be done earlier in the course. High and average ability pupils' knowledge of location is generally satisfactory. However for pupils of all abilities, understanding of spatial patterns is weak and underdeveloped. By the end of Year 11, pupils of average attainment, have a sound knowledge of the main physical and human processes, but their level of understanding and application of this information to new situations do not match this. The independent study projects produced by high attaining pupils for GCSE are of high quality, but more emphasis is needed on this element of the examination for some average and lower attainers who currently underachieve in it.

134. All pupils progress well between Year 7 and Year 9; given the poor knowledge they have of geography when they enter the school. However, variations exist between classes with some making noticeably more progress than others. Better progress is made in response to some very good teaching that identifies what pupils need to learn and understand and provides support through careful and instructive marking of their work. Pupils with special educational needs, when provided with educational support assistance, make good progress. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is currently satisfactory for pupils of all attainment levels but the syllabus is very factually based and does not allow them much scope to develop skills.

135. Teaching is good in all years. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. The best teaching is raising pupils' sights and they are likely to achieve better in the near future. Teachers are committed and caring and supportive of pupils in their charge. Classroom management and control, built on a foundation of very good relationships, are of a very high standard. The very good and excellent teaching is a model of good practice and is exceptional in that the teacher is recently appointed and new to the profession. This teaching has clear and manageable aims shared with pupils and tested at the end of the lesson to ensure that learning is effective. It has detailed and imaginative planning which seeks to stimulate interest, challenge pupils and make lessons exciting. A variety of work ensures that something is appropriate for all pupils. The teacher has a very secure knowledge of subject matter, teaches at a good pace and with appropriately high expectations. In the best lessons teaching is well structured and focused; there is a strong practical and enquiry element with pupils involved in their own learning and this helps their understanding. This was evident in a Year 7 lesson where pupils, working in pairs, were required to provide four arguments in support of the exploitation or conservation of the Amazon rainforest depending on the role pupils were given. These included, for example, the government, tribal people prospectors, and environmentalists. Pupils used a range of sources to establish the likely perspective of their role and, using written guidance, drafted their arguments.

136. When teachers use visual aids, such as photographs, video extracts, maps and graphs, not only do they add variety but also learning is noticeably more secure. This was evident in a Year 10 lesson when pupils, using the Burgess and Hoyt models, compared them against photographic evidence to establish and explain the differing characteristics of urban land use zones in British cities. Teaching in the subject would be further enhanced by greater visual consolidation and re-enforcement of main teaching points on the board. The lack of a standing, world display map in each specialist room prevents pupils gaining a greater understanding of geographical patterns and place. Too little use is made of Ordnance Survey maps and actual maps that are within the pupils' experience. Literacy skills are generally taught satisfactorily with key geographical words regularly used. However, there is no overall strategy evident that all teachers use. There is some good practice in Year 7 classes when pupils are given opportunities to read aloud and use worksheets that help to develop their written work. Numeracy skills are satisfactorily taught.

137. Fieldwork provided at Key Stage 4 greatly enriches pupils' studies but it is inadequate at Key Stage 3, where there is need of more study within the local area and an opportunity to study an area further afield. The use of ICT in teaching has been little developed since the last inspection due partly to the restricted access to suitable computer facilities and limited staff expertise. The department needs now to establish a coherent and workable programme of ICT skills to ensure that requirements over both key stages are met and build on the good practice seen in a Year 7 lesson.

138. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly positive and many display a real interest in their work. They are attentive, work conscientiously and respond well to teaching. Behaviour is invariably good and often very good. Relationships with teachers are constructive and often a real rapport is evident, especially at Key Stage 4 and this contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Boys and girls relate very well to each other when undertaking paired or group work. Pupils' individual responses to questions are generally satisfactory and in some lessons good.

139. The subject is currently organised within a combined history and geography department. This arrangement shows an improvement in overall management from previous practice, but the curriculum leadership and development of geography is still unsatisfactory. There is currently no separate subject development plan. Teaching is inadequately monitored and teachers, for example in the quality of day-to-day marking, operate inconsistent practice. There is no programme of curriculum development. Accommodation is in specialist rooms, but large classes of over thirty pupils cause them to become cramped. There is insufficient space for practical work and this hinders investigative learning. Resources are poor and there are many serious shortfalls, for example, no overhead projector, whiteboard, video monitor, standing display maps in specialist teaching rooms, modern computers, up to date textbooks or atlases.

140. The department has not been successful in improving below average standards at GCSE that have been generally declining since the last inspection. Given such results the decision to offer some pupils the full GCSE course in inadequate short course time is ill advised. However, due to recent recognition of weaknesses by the school and the undoubted abilities of a new teacher, there is now a good capacity for geography to improve.

## **HISTORY**

141. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were above average, with girls doing better than boys. At GCSE, results for both boys and girls for grades A\*-C

were well below average. For grades A\*-G, the results overall were below average, but boys results were better and in line with the national average.

142. For present pupils, attainment in all years is below average, suggesting teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 last year were generous. Most pupils are enthusiastic and progress in lessons is often good. Pupils do achieve well by the end of Year 9; they start, in Year 7, from a below average position. Pupils in all years can identify basic historical events. For example, Year 7 pupils know about the Domesday Book and the death of Becket. Pupils achieving higher standards can draw parallels between the Domesday Book and the recent UK Census. Year 8 pupils are developing their understanding of the slave trade and they know that the slave trade was part of a trade triangle involving England, Africa and the Americas. More able pupils understand the concept of the 'middle passage' and can identify some of the economic factors that motivated the slave trade. Year 9 pupils are developing an understanding of how Hitler's policies contributed to the start of the Second World War. Higher attaining pupils are able to identify that his actions were in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles. The main weakness in the work of many pupils in Years 7 – 9 is that their analytical skills are under developed. This can be largely attributed to the little writing of any significant length they are set.

143. In Years 10 and 11, a significant minority of pupils are achieving a standard of work that is at least in line with GCSE grade C, or above. All GCSE pupils are developing their factual understanding and they can identify basic events. For example, Year 10 pupils know that the Chinese government, post 1944, wished to upgrade the economic role of women. Year 11 pupils have an understanding of the conditions in the American 'Wild West' in the nineteenth century and they can distinguish between the myths perpetuated by film directors and the reality presented in contemporary source material. Higher attainers can explain why certain events occurred. They realise, for example, that a prime motive for emancipation in China was to overcome labour shortages that were constraining economic development. Higher attaining pupils in all years have better analytical skills and are more adept at offering critical answers to source material questions. Other pupils tend to provide answers containing sufficient facts but less understanding.

144. The previous inspection report highlighted the quality of teaching in the department. This strength remains. Ten lessons were seen. All were at least satisfactory, with seven being either good or very good. Such good teaching is helping all pupils to learn well. Many strengths can be identified. Teachers plan their lessons well, they are knowledgeable and all groups are well managed. The variety of teaching methods employed helps to maintain the interest of the pupils and enhances their learning. Another strong feature is the co-operation that exists between teaching staff and the education support assistants who help pupils with special educational needs. The quality of these relationships, which are based on good planning, contributes to the learning of many lower attaining pupils. Where teaching is particularly good, all pupils learn and make good progress. For example, in two very good Year 9 lessons on the causes of the Second World War, pupils were given effective research tasks to undertake. These enhanced their literacy skills and enabled them to identify a number of features of Hitler's policies that were seen as aggressive and threatening. Though teaching is good, there is room for improvement. In some lessons the pace is pedestrian and the tasks set should contain more challenge. This could be achieved by placing more emphasis on writing at length. Though pupils do undertake tasks that require written answers of some depth, such tasks should be set more frequently. Many pupils are not confident writers and their standards need improving. More challenging work could also serve to improve pupils' analytical skills. At present, too much emphasis is placed on factual recall; the pupils can explain what happened, but are less confident in explaining why. More consistency is also needed in marking. Good assessment procedures have been established since the last inspection, but the quality of day-to-day marking is variable. There

is no consistency in the correction of grammatical and spelling mistakes and some work is marked highly on the basis of effort rather than content. While it is desirable to acknowledge effort, some of the marking seen does not indicate to the pupils how they might further improve their work.

145. In lessons pupils behave well and their conduct is often very good. This is a reflection of the good quality teaching that successfully captures the pupils' imagination and interest. However, in many classes, pupils do not attend regularly. In lessons seen, absence was a key feature with attendance averaging below 85 per cent. Such poor levels of attendance, especially from pupils in lower ability groups, are having an adverse effect on standards.

146. Since the previous inspection a new head of department has been appointed. The quality of the management is good, with clear plans for future developments. The department has had to endure some difficulties. The funding made available to history, though now improving, has been unsatisfactory. This has led to restrictions on resources, especially textbooks, and has constrained progress. The amount of lesson time made available to GCSE teaching is similarly unsatisfactory. There is insufficient time to cover the examination syllabus in sufficient depth. Pupils do not spend enough time analysing source material. This limits their analytical skills and attainment. Some of the teaching rooms are also too small for the size of classes studying history. All rooms are lively and stimulating with good displays of work, but when the teacher struggles to move around a crowded classroom, the progress of some pupils suffers as the opportunities for informal assessment are reduced. The previous report highlighted the lack of use of ICT in the teaching of history. This issue remains. There are no computers based in the department and pupils are offered few opportunities to use ICT in their studies of history. Improved access, using Internet sources, for example, would enhance pupils' research skills. The use of computers would also offer pupils opportunities to prepare more detailed and varied written work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

147. To meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, pupils may be taught how to use computers in special lessons and are expected to make appropriate use of them in every subject. This school is good at providing sufficient time in special lessons in Years 7 – 9, but pupils do not experience appropriate ICT in most of their subjects. Around a third of pupils choose to follow GCSE or GNVQ courses in ICT in Years 10 and 11. These pupils are quite well served. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not taught and do not experience the ICT work that is nationally expected.

148. By the end of Year 9 pupils' standards of work in ICT lessons are average. Considering the mixed, but generally well below average standards they have when they start at the school, this shows very good progress. Generally good and often very good teaching enables this to happen. The head of department has planned a very good scheme of work that is shared with pupils so that they mostly know what to do and can get on with it. Teachers support individuals in a structured way and use their time efficiently, particularly in large classes of 33 pupils or so. More able or talented pupils can progress a little faster than others and ask for help only when they need it. Educational support assistants help pupils with special educational needs to cope with any difficulties in understanding instructions and are also skilled in ICT so can assist pupils to learn new skills. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress. Pupils with statement for specific and severe learning difficulties learn alternative, but appropriate work, within ICT lessons; computers, software and support ensures their similar progress. The progress of pupils can be adversely affected by lessons being 'lost'; Monday of the inspection was the first ICT lesson in four weeks for a Year 8 class due to holidays and teacher training. This

contributed to the lesson being judged unsatisfactory. Lost lessons happen too often and increasing numbers of pupils taking musical instrument practice compounds lack of continuity.

149. During Years 7 – 9 pupils can create posters using publishing software, importing and manipulating images, entering text and choosing point size and background effects. They can create 'PowerPoint' presentations with a variety of appropriate slide effects and incorporate suitable images and other material gleaned from the Internet. They can create and amend databases and spreadsheets; the most able understand and correctly format basic formulae for calculations. Pupils' work shows them capable of using dedicated ICT software to control simple events such as traffic lights. In a number of subjects a significant number of pupils use word processing to improve the presentation of their work. In design and technology pupils have some use of design software and manufacturing software though the computers within the workshops cannot cope well with it, necessitating visits to computer rooms. Pupils' keyboard skills are variable, but generally unsatisfactory. This is also the case in Key Stage 4. It is partly a result of machines being too close together, no way of supporting documents so giving pupils only one free hand to keyboard with, and some sloppy practice. Pupils with good keyboarding generally acquire it from practice at home.

150. Pupils also use break time and after school opportunities to finish work and conduct research on the Internet. Music lessons provide pupils good opportunities to use ICT for composition work. What they cannot do is to use ICT to capture data in scientific experiments and manipulate and present it in graphs and other forms. This strand of the National Curriculum is missing because there is no equipment. The school has recognised this and funding has just been found to purchase it. Neither can pupils access the school network successfully from all curriculum areas. The cabling is in place, but there are insufficient good machines. This is being tackled as and when funds become available. There is no true school 'intranet', a system by which all pupils and teachers can access shared and prepared curriculum resources for all subjects. The school is also waiting for the local authority's 'broad band' project to start up, which will allow faster access to more resources outside the school. Neither teachers nor pupils have their own e-mail addresses (provided within the school), a common practice that allows easy communication inside school and access, with appropriate controls in place, to the wider world. All these weaknesses provide some excuses for the limited use of ICT within lessons across subject areas. However, ICT has been an expectation within all subjects for almost 11 years and more should be evident now.

151. Around one third of pupils follow a GCSE or GNVQ course in ICT during Years 10 and 11. In 2000, these pupils achieved well. GCSE pupils were a little above average overall and well above average in the proportion who achieved A\*-C grades. All GNVQ pupils who entered passed or achieved a merit. Work seen in this inspection shows standards to be similar. Pupils in Year 10 can use databases well though standards vary, as pupils within classes vary in prior attainment; they may have poor literacy skills or be potential 'A' grade candidates. Often generous support, from a second teacher in the class, a student, or both, ensures pupils make at least good progress. However, the support would be better targeted towards over large classes in Key Stage 3. Pupils in Year 11 were consolidating their work before final assessments and those present showed themselves adept with spreadsheets, presentation and control. The progress of a significant minority is adversely affected by poor attendance. Two thirds of pupils have no ICT lessons and teachers in other subjects are not minded to contribute much, except when there is a definite contribution to their GCSE courses, as in design and technology. There is no way of judging the standards of these pupils. Consequently, the Key Stage 4 curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.

152. Teaching is good. There was one unsatisfactory lesson that started badly as pupils had missed lessons for several weeks. The teacher had not taken this into account so the pace was slow and pupils did not learn anything significant by the end. The fact that they were missing the next lesson too, for May day, compounded the complete lack of continuity and progression for this particular class. A good point of the lesson was the prepared teacher demonstration to show what pupils could do, though this came too late. Pupils' attitudes were satisfactory but they were restless, wanted to get on and were a little frustrated. The head of subject does most of the teaching and this is most often very good. His knowledge and understanding of the subject is excellent and he has created a very good curriculum model for Key Stage 3 that provides guidance for pupils and other teachers. This is already partly 'on-line', at least within the school, and could easily be accessible by pupils from home if they have the right equipment. Pupils work at a very good pace, they use the written support they have and ask for help when they need it. They are very well focussed on their work in these very good lessons and know how well they are doing from the help they get. Literacy and numeracy are well taught with plenty of opportunities for working with numbers. Literacy could be further supported as the on-line help develops and pupils have better options to seek help themselves. Expectations of pupils are high and that is why they can do so much by the end of Year 9 and enjoy success at examination level. Pupils in these classes are managed very well. They are kept very busy, know what to do and want to do well themselves. These very good attitudes help teaching and vice versa. Very good use is made of support, particularly at Key Stage 3. On one occasion, when it was not available, it was very difficult to provide sufficient support to the 31 pupils present out of 33. These classes only function due to the very good management in place; they are really too large. The heat from 33 computers and bodies also makes rooms very uncomfortable, particularly when the sun shines. Forced ventilation is still needed, as it was at the time of the last inspection.

153. Leadership of the subject called ICT is very good and academic performance and ICT lessons are well monitored. Very good use is made of resources that are appropriately maintained by a technician. He is also able to lend support in the classroom and does so well. Though the head of department does not have a school co-ordination role, he is supporting New Opportunities Fund training for all teachers and is a key figure in the new Year 10 citizenship course, starting in September, that provides ICT key skills within it. There is no ICT co-ordinator, a common post in many schools, with the role of ensuring all pupils receive their curriculum entitlement, subjects are supported to play their part, and innovations are kept pace with. Consequently, these things are not done.

154. There is little comment in the last inspection report, other than ICT seems to have not been well enough used in most subjects then too. Standards at Key Stage 3 were sound and GNVQ was about to be developed. In that aspect, there have been improvements.

## MODERN LANGUAGES

155. In 2000, GCSE results in French at grades A\*-C were in line with the national average, lower than in the previous year despite a steady rise since the last inspection. Results at A\*-G were in line with the national average. Girls gained higher grades than boys, although their results were below the national average for girls, whereas boys were above the national average for boys. Boys and girls gained higher results than they did in their other subjects. All pupils entering for German GCSE in 2000 gained a grade at A\*-C, well above the national average and well above the same pupils' performance in other subjects.

156. Current attainment in French in Year 9 is in line with the national expectation, corresponding to their teachers' most recent assessments. In German, where pupils start later and have fewer lessons, attainment is somewhat lower. In both subjects, pupils make good progress. In their first few months, pupils learn to exchange greetings and talk and write simply about themselves, their families and their daily lives. Most pupils, including some with special educational needs, soon understand the gist and detail of conversations with partners or recorded on tape. They read captions, brief descriptive passages and short informal letters. Pupils build up a range of vocabulary and structures, including question forms and idioms for telling the time or describing the weather. In French, higher attainers start using different tenses to refer to the past and future by the end of Year 8. Lower attainers acquire grammar more slowly. In both French and German most pupils in Year 9 express their opinions simply on familiar subjects such as leisure and school life. A minority are badly affected by continual absence and have very limited skills.

157. From the age of 14, all pupils prepare for the GCSE examination, a minority of able linguists successfully studying both French and German. Pupils consolidate and extend the language learnt previously in French and those choosing German make more rapid progress with a better allocation of time. Many pupils are able to express their opinions at length, speaking and writing about social issues such as healthy living and the environment. They adapt their written style to various purposes, including CVs and job applications. By the end of Year 11 pupils achieve well and standards are average. Most pupils can competently write a letter describing a holiday or describe their work experience. A small number of pupils, including some with special educational needs, make a fresh start in Spanish, benefiting from individual attention in smaller classes. As in French, lower attainers learn to communicate simply as required for travelling abroad, but some receive extra lessons in school to further develop their skills and knowledge. A minority of pupils uses computers to present written work and displays. Most classes have very limited access to the school's computer equipment so this important communication skill is insufficiently developed.

158. Teaching is good. Lessons are never less than satisfactory. Most lessons in all three languages are good or very good and a minority of teaching in French and German is excellent. Teachers are fluent in the languages they teach, giving their pupils a good model to emulate, although occasionally some use English far more than is necessary. Their expectations of pupils' behaviour and application are high, whether dealing with grammar, everyday conversations or preparing for examinations. Teachers usually manage their classes by praising and encouraging good speaking and writing. They handle any incidental misbehaviour with patient reference to the school's system of sanctions. Most lessons are well planned and structured, providing sufficient variety and interest to sustain pupils' concentration. Teachers draw the basic elements together into practical applications such as surveys and simulations, so pupils learn how the language works in practice. Younger pupils are particularly enthused by games and competitions. They enjoy watching their classmates help the teacher with the presentation and summary of topics such as tourist information or shopping. In German, where some lessons are rigorously formal, many

younger pupils wait patiently for their turn to speak, but others get bored and achieve little. Teachers make the best use of scant resources, often supplementing worn out, dated textbooks and flashcards with lively material they have made themselves. They produce specially adapted worksheets so as to include lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs in the lesson. Teachers assess their pupils' work continuously, advising them, often with written comments, how they can improve. Marking is usually conscientious and regular, with only occasional lapses. Teachers make regular use of homework to extend and consolidate lessons, using realistic strategies to involve the parents of tardy or indolent pupils.

159. The department is very well led and management tasks are well shared out. A combination of established good practice and the recent appointment of lively and imaginative teachers have enabled standards to improve, while the curriculum has developed since the last inspection to include all pupils. Community languages are now included in the GCSE entry. As a result of hard, co-operative work, pupils' interest in languages is growing and the department's suite of rooms is a bright and supportive learning environment. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement is closing. There is still an urgent need to develop research and communication using ICT. All pupils, especially the able and talented linguists, will benefit from current plans to provide enrichment through new contacts and travel in Europe.

## **MUSIC**

160. In 2000, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 showed most pupils to be achieving average levels of attainment. Very good teaching since then has enabled these standards to rise. Results of GCSE examinations are good but the number of pupils taking music is too small to be compared with national results. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

161. Most pupils enter the school with limited knowledge and skills in music. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is above average; they have achieved well and gained a wide range of musical skills. A small minority of pupils are well above average in playing and performing. These pupils are supported in their learning by instrumental lessons and a variety of opportunities to play and perform in extra-curricular activities. The quality of learning, of all pupils, benefits from access to a wide range of music technology. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are able to use computers to compose in a popular style. For example, in one Year 9 lesson, pupils were successful in selecting rhythms, instrumental sounds and melody to produce a composition, which had shape and variation in texture and dynamics. The department has a full set of steel pans, which are used in class lessons by all pupils and in performances by the school Steel Band. In one Year 8 lesson seen, half of the pupils played pans and the remainder played saxophones, clarinets and xylophones. Pupils showed a very good sense of ensemble playing. Standards of playing and performing were above average in this lesson.

162. Pupils at the age of 16 have a range of musical ability, but overall standards are above average. Composition and performing skills are, overall, good whilst listening skills are generally average. Year 11 pupils all receive instrumental tuition. They are enthusiastic, work collaboratively and show a responsible attitude through their regular practice and support for the many musical activities. In one Year 11 revision lesson, the pupils achieved a good standard in listening by demonstrating the ability to identify three different periods of music history and describe distinctive features from each one. There are no Year 10 pupils taking music this year because of timetabling difficulties.

163. The quality of teaching is at least very good in all years and occasionally excellent. The music teacher is a fine practitioner and has a very good knowledge of music methodology and ICT. The emphasis is on integrating all aspects of the National Curriculum. For example, in one Year 7 lesson, pupils listened to a piece of music whilst looking at slides. They were given the opportunity to think about the mood of the music and how it made them feel. For the second part of the lesson they composed sounds and music using a variety of instruments whilst following a block graph. Pupils were successful in recreating sounds that were similar to those that they had listened to. Lessons are planned and prepared in great detail. They move at a brisk pace with a high level of concentration, for most of the time, from pupils and teachers. This makes a positive contribution towards pupils' learning in all lessons. Expectations of what can be achieved are high. For example, all ability groups cover the same work and outcomes from the work of those pupils with special educational needs often exceed expectations in music. Assessment procedures are very good. Pupils in all years are aware of their levels, predicted grades and targets for improvement. The combination of successful teaching and the very good attitudes of pupils ensure good achievement across all years.

164. The provision for instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities is excellent. Pupils who play instruments are encouraged to use them for composition and performance lessons and this has a positive effect on the raising of standards in all years. The peripatetic teachers give valued support to the department by preparing pupils for external examinations and performances. They also take responsibility for rehearsing groups and taking part in concerts. Over one hundred pupils have instrumental lessons and this term, sixteen pupils have been entered for external instrumental examinations. Over two hundred pupils take part in performances in the school and the community during a school year. The Jazz Band and Steel Band are very popular in school and in the community both in Knottingley and Wakefield. Standards of playing and performing are good in all of the groups and care is taken to choose music that appeals to young people. Enthusiasm is bubbling amongst the pupils who are going to be part of the trip to France where the Jazz Band will be playing at various venues and visiting places of interest such as Bayeux and Arramanche.

165. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good at all times. This is reflected in the large number of pupils who take part in musical activities and extra lessons throughout the year. Entry numbers for GCSE are still low and the school and department need to find strategies for increasing the uptake. Smaller class sizes would give pupils additional opportunities for performance and evaluation in lessons.

166. The quality of management of the department is very good. Staff are committed to success and raising standards for all pupils. The department has made excellent progress since the appointment of the head of department three years ago. The whole inspection team enjoyed the wonderful lunchtime performances of the Steel Band and the Jazz Band and congratulate the performers and their teacher. The female vocalists of the Jazz band deserve a special mention and were the icing on a very enjoyable inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

167. Standards of attainment in physical education are above the national average in years 7 to 9, and in years 10 and 11. GCSE results in 2000 were in line with national averages.

168. By the end of Year 9, standards of attainment of most pupils are above average in all activities seen. This represents significant achievement, given pupils' low prior levels of attainment on entry to the school. Pupils perform skilfully in all activities, and show a good understanding of the principles of play in the major games. Pupils use space well, show the ability to anticipate play, and communicate effectively. In athletics, pupils demonstrate good planning and performing skills, and are able to make evaluations of their own and others' work to improve on their previous best. Pupils are given ample opportunities to observe, analyse and comment on performance against specific criteria. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. They know why and how to warm up prior to strenuous activity, and can name the muscles that they are stretching. Impressive display panels, in and around all indoor teaching areas used by the department, ensure that pupils' literacy develops well in all lessons, particularly in respect of the use of the technical language of the subject. Numeracy and ICT are supported by the use of heart rate monitors to generate comparative fitness data, which is then displayed graphically. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in an unobtrusive manner, and are able to make good progress. There are no discernable differences in the rates of progress of boys and girls.

169. By the end of Year 11, standards achieved in physical activities by both girls and boys are above average in terms of both performance and understanding. Most pupils build on the strong foundations for planning and evaluation in Years 7 to 9 to continue to develop their physical repertoire. Progress and learning is always at least good, and pupils work consistently hard to improve individual and team standards. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able effectively to apply their specific knowledge, their performance skills and their understanding of rules, tactics and principles, in full games. As tactical awareness develops alongside technical skills, pupils are able to make effective decisions in offensive and defensive situations. The overall standard of written work of pupils studying GCSE reflects an above average knowledge and understanding of the theoretical aspects of the subject. The involvement and commitment of pupils right up to when they leave school is particularly noteworthy. The wide range of pupils who attend extra curricular clubs and groups make very good progress in their chosen activity, and this supports the high levels of success of the representative teams, and the general level of attainment in lessons.

170. Teaching is good in Years 7 – 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In all lessons, teaching was satisfactory or better, in 94 per cent of lessons good or better, and in 25 per cent of lessons very good or better. All teachers have secure knowledge, and are enthusiastic. They have high expectations of pupils and maintain a brisk pace throughout lessons. There are detailed schemes of work in place for all activities and curriculum planning is based on accurate assessments made with the active involvement of pupils. Lessons are well structured and curriculum organisation is clear, learning objectives are shared and crisp, explanations are lucid and helpful, and demonstrations are of high quality. All lessons have opportunities for observation, analysis and discussion. The strongest teaching challenges pupils with a demanding pace of learning, uses probing questions to make them think, and enables pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning. Class management is never less than good. The potential for higher attaining pupils to progress is exploited well in many lessons, through extension tasks and responsibilities matched to their abilities. The department works hard to ensure that basic skills are taught,

and pupils are given many opportunities to develop numeracy, ICT and, in particular, literacy skills. These factors ensure continuity and progression in learning for all pupils.

171. Pupils respond well to the stimulating and demanding environment created by the purposeful but sympathetic approach used within the department. They are positive about the subject, pay close attention to teacher guidance, and work with enthusiasm and commitment in lessons. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities offered to work independently and collaboratively at both key stages, and confidently assume responsibility in different roles, such as coach or official. Relationships between pupils and staff are good, and pupil behaviour is also good. This contributes significantly to good progress in lessons, and to social and personal development. Schools teams compete successfully in local, regional and national competitions, with rugby union for boys being exceptionally strong in all age groups. Many individual boys and girls gain representative honours in a range of sporting activities. The wide range of extra curricular provision for all pupils provided by specialist staff, extends opportunities for personal success and raises pupils' attainment.

172. Strong leadership by the head of department is at the heart of a very effective and highly committed team, who are all involved in managing the successful teaching of the curriculum. They work well together with a shared sense of purpose. Impressively detailed schemes of work combine with a good system of assessment to underpin the drive to raise standards. The high quality documentation and displays, shared with the pupils, gives a clear educational direction that supports the school's aims and policies. The extensive end of module assessment arrangements provide accurate information to pupils about their performances, and give staff objective data for measuring how well pupils have learnt, and for planning appropriate curriculum developments. This has facilitated the implementation of kinaesthetic teaching in Year 11 to successfully address the twin issues of pupil disaffection and drop out. Thoughtful deployment of staff, including a one day per week commitment to specialist teaching in feeder primary schools, ensures even coverage across all groups to secure higher standards.

173. The department makes good use of extensive fields, a floodlit all-weather facility, sports hall, gymnasium and fitness centre, though some specialised equipment is in short supply or in need of replacement. This is particularly evident in the stock of athletic throwing equipment. The subject is well provided for in terms of travel to competitions or events. Relationships within the department are very good, and the knowledgeable all specialist staff makes a well balanced team who have a clear commitment to improve on previous best in all respects. They are mutually supportive, work with strong commitment to the pupils and to the subject, are consistent in their challenge and high expectation, and contribute strongly to the work, life, and ethos of the school.

174. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Aspects judged to be strengths have been developed and further extended, and those areas noted for improvement have been successfully tackled. Standards of attainment are now above the national average for pupils aged 11 to 14, and 15 to 16. GCSE results are predicted to improve again in 2001.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

175. Standards at the age of 14 are above the expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country and how their lives are shaped by their beliefs. They have a very good understanding of religious language, symbols, festivals and ideas. Their skills in applying religious insights to their own experiences and to that of others are particularly well developed. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

176. The 2000 GCSE results are the first since religious education has been taught as an option on the timetable. Relatively few pupils taking either the short or full course makes comparison of school results with national results difficult, but they appear to be in line. There is no significant difference between the grades of boys and girls. The school is aware that it does not fully meet the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Years 10 and 11, primarily due to insufficient time.

177. By the end of Year 9, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have achieved well, both in lessons and over the key stage. Work becomes increasingly challenging year on year and their skills develop accordingly. Pupils are encouraged to recall knowledge acquired in previous years and use that information to help with contemporary schemes of work. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils were able to recall facts about Moses and Ramasees. They then built on this knowledge by preparing questions and answers, which they acted out in a 'hot seat' situation. Throughout the week, pupils in Year 8 were enthusiastic about experiencing the Jewish Feast of the Passover by preparing and eating a similar meal. All pupils in Year 9 are given taster lessons from the GCSE course in preparation for next year when all pupils in Year 10 will study the short course.

178. Year 10 pupils were not seen during the inspection week because of timetabling arrangements. In lessons and work seen, Year 11 pupils are reaching standards expected of their age and ability. They make good progress and achieve well, building on and extending the gains made in Year 9. For example, they are able to apply religious insights into a range of moral issues such as those surrounding the sanctity of life.

179. Pupils in Years 7-9 and in the GCSE class make good progress. This is a reflection of both very good teaching and the high standards of response of the large majority of pupils towards the subject. In both key stages pupils are well motivated and come to lessons keen to learn and sustain concentration well. Both boys and girls are enthusiastic in asking and answering questions. They listen with respect to one another's views and opinions in discussion. They behave very well in lessons seen and are provided with opportunities for independent learning through regular homework and collaborative group work in lessons. They have a clear understanding of their attainments and of their individual targets for improvement.

180. Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have a very good grasp of their subject. They communicate their aims clearly to pupils and have high expectations. They make very good use of questions to extend pupils' understanding and encourage them to be curious. Pupils are given the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways. This leads to calmness amongst pupils, especially during meditation sessions, and liveliness in lessons where there are practical activities, for example discussion and role-play. In written work pupils expressed their thoughts in many different ways, through a diary, extended writing, a spreadsheet and diagrams.

181. Management is very good. This is reflected in the clearly defined direction for the further development of the subject, especially in Years 10 and 11. There is a high commitment by teachers for the success of the department and the raising of standards. Resources are generally satisfactory. However, a working area that would enable pupils to take additional responsibility for their own learning and use ICT better is needed.

182. Since the previous report, the department has made very good progress in the standards of pupils work in Years 7 to 9 and the progress of pupils with special educational needs has improved from satisfactory to good. Teaching has also improved and the department has maintained all other high standards indicated.