

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRAPPENHALL HALL SCHOOL**

Grappenhall

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111501

Headteacher: Angela Findlay

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax  
25439

Dates of inspection: 3 - 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 193427

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	5 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Church Lane Grappenhall Warrington
Postcode:	WA4 3EU
Telephone number:	01925 263895
Fax number:	01925 860487
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Walker
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
25439	Katharine Halifax	Registered inspector
9188	Jane McHugh	Lay inspector
22695	Ray Cardinal	Team inspector
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

*PkR* Educational Consultants Ltd.  
6 Sherman Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 3JH

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grappenhall Hall is a residential community special school. The school is registered for pupils from the ages of 7 to 19, but admits boys as young as five years old. Following local authority changes the school transferred from Cheshire to Warrington Education Authority. Cheshire pupils already at the school remained there and no more have been placed since. This has led to a reduction in the number of pupils who board. Thirty-three pupils are resident on a 14-day programme. Some other pupils board if family circumstances require. There are 121 pupils on roll. All but two pupils are of white British heritage. Though both these pupils have Urdu and Punjabi as their first language, both are fluent in English. There are no travellers or refugees. Forty-four day pupils qualify for free school meals. This is high. All but 11 pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. These 11 pupils are at Stage 4 of the Code of Practice and are undergoing an eight-week assessment period. A small number of boys have moderate learning difficulties. The majority have emotional and behavioural difficulties. An increasing number of boys have more complex needs. Pupils arrive having experienced many failures. Many have been out of school for long periods of time, some as long as two years. As a result attainment on entry is low. During the inspection there was a high number of temporary staff covering permanent staff with long-term illnesses. Because of the timing of the inspection, there were very few Year 11 pupils.

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

This is an effective school. The quality of teaching is good and this is reflected in the quality of learning. Pupils of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of learning experiences. Older pupils achieve nationally recognised qualifications in most subjects. The school is led and managed in a cost effective way and gives good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. Staff are successful in motivating boys who have given up on education to want to learn, to gain nationally recognised qualifications and to take part in all activities.
- The headteacher and senior teachers provide strong leadership for the school. Despite significant staffing problems and pupils with increasingly complex needs, they have kept morale high and have created a cohesive team.
- Primary age pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that meet their academic and social needs in a stimulating environment.
- Opportunities for pupils and students aged 14 to 19 are outstanding and make a significant contribution to their personal development, and in preparing them for the world of work.
- The school is successful in helping a significant number of boys to return to mainstream education.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This helps boys come to terms with their difficulties and to become independent, responsible citizens.
- The 24-hour curriculum, including opportunities for day boys to take part in evening activities, contributes significantly to boys' progress.

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

- Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are not as high as they should be.
- Not enough emphasis is given to the way literacy is taught in the secondary department and its use in other subjects.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Whilst the school has made good improvement in many areas since the last inspection in February 1997. Improvement overall is judged to be satisfactory. Despite numerous efforts, the key issue to improve standards in information and communication technology has not been fully remedied. Results in national qualifications have improved with a higher number of merits and distinctions, though some of this is because the school now takes brighter pupils. The quality of teaching has improved. There is less unsatisfactory teaching and a higher percentage of good and very good teaching. The issue to improve evening activities for day pupils has improved tremendously with 24 day boys now attending. Account is now taken of the skills of classroom assistants and these are matched carefully to the needs of the pupils. The computer suite is scheduled for most of the day. Teaching time is used appropriately for junior age pupils. Though information about financial matters is included in the Governor's Annual Report to Parents, the report still does not meet legal requirements in the effectiveness of its special educational needs policy. There has been good improvement in provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key
Speaking and listening	B	B	A	
Reading	B	C	B	very good      A
Writing	B	C	B	good            B
Mathematics	B	B	B	Satisfactory    C
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	Unsatisfactory D
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	Poor             E

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

Taking account of previous knowledge and skills, pupils between the ages of 5 and 11, the primary department, achieve well. They make good progress in speaking and listening, in reading and in mathematics. Pupils between the ages 11 and 16 make good progress in speaking and listening and in mathematics. Their progress in reading and writing is only satisfactory because teachers do not have the skills to help them improve their reading, nor do they provide sufficient opportunities for them to write independently in other subjects. Progress by the age of 19 is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Students in this age group make very good progress in speaking and listening because of the opportunities given to them. Boys in all age groups make very good progress in personal, social and health education because of the high quality scheme of work and very good teaching in this subject. Progress towards targets set in individual education plans is very good in all three age groups, especially in improving behaviour. Standards in design and technology are far higher than would be expected in a school of this type in all age groups. Though boys of all ages do not do as well as they could in information and communication technology, all have made good progress in the subject since the appointment of a short-term teacher. Students achieve well in nationally recognised qualifications. The number attaining higher levels in General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and those achieving distinction and merit in Certificate of Educational Achievement, is increasing.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Many pupils have not enjoyed going to school in the past. Most have a much-improved attitude joining in all the activities the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils show very good improvement in their behaviour in school, in the residential unit and when on trips out.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Staff and pupils have a mutual respect for each other. Relationships are especially good with staff who have been at the school for a long time. As pupils take responsibility for their actions and learning, they become more understanding of the needs of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory for this type of school. Most boys make very good improvement in their attendance. Much of the absence can be attributed to a small number of boys. The school works hard to improve attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons. The six per cent of unsatisfactory teaching represents two lessons, taught by two different teachers in different departments. Both of these teachers also taught satisfactory lessons. Teaching was good or better in 72 per cent of lessons, and very good or excellent in 34 per cent of lessons. Very good teaching was seen in all age groups. The teaching of design and technology is very good in all age groups. Communication, numeracy and literacy are taught well in the primary department. However, whilst the teaching of English is satisfactory in the secondary department, teachers do not have the skills to teach pupils how to read and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. All pupils have individual education plans and most teachers set individual targets in each subject. Many teachers, especially in the primary department, plan work at different levels for pupils of different abilities. This allows the needs of all pupils to be met well. In a small number of lessons, where teaching was less effective, the pace of the lesson was slow, and pupils lost concentration. In these lessons noise levels rose and there was some inappropriate behaviour. Nevertheless, pupils' learning is good overall. As pupils improve their attitude and behaviour and grow in confidence, they apply themselves to their work, concentrate well and make good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted well for pupils in the primary department and make a significant contribution to progress. However, not enough emphasis is given to how literacy is taught to pupils in the secondary department. Pupils and students between the ages of 14 and 19 achieve a wide range of nationally recognised qualifications. Pupils of all ages have very good opportunities to take part in a wide range of out of school activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Two pupils have English as an additional language. Though their first language is Urdu in one case and Punjabi in the other, both boys are fluent in English. Nevertheless, staff check both pupils understand what is being said regularly.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good in all aspects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Staff know pupils well and respond to them appropriately. Pupils are well supervised at work and in their leisure time. Additional work with counsellors and in anger management helps pupils come to terms with their problems. Parents hold the school in high esteem and feel comfortable when their son is at school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is particularly strong and is helping the school to move forward. Subject management is good overall but, because of long-term sickness, some subjects are managed by teachers who are in temporary posts.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. All legally required policies are in place. Governors visit the school regularly and use their individual skills well to help the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Governors and staff know the strengths and weakness of the school and how it can be improved. The principles of best value are applied well when setting targets for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used effectively. The converted surplus residential accommodation is used well and is contributing to standards in the performing arts.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The improvement in their sons' behaviour and attitude to school.</li> <li>The progress their sons make.</li> <li>The dedication of staff.</li> <li>The range of activities available to pupils.</li> <li>The flexibility of the school in meeting boys' needs.</li> <li>The support given to boys and their parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework given to pupils.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the strengths identified by parents and carers. In response to their concerns, many pupils do not get enough homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**The quality of teaching is good. Staff are successful in motivating boys who have given up on education to want to learn, to gain nationally recognised qualifications and to take part in all activities.**

1. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection with a smaller percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and a much-improved percentage of good and very good teaching. Staff have adapted well to the changing pupil population and are coping well with the wide ability range and with extreme behaviours in the same group. Despite the high number of staff on short-term contracts, relationships are very good and the management of pupils' behaviour is consistent. This results in an orderly community that is conducive to learning. Support staff work well with teachers and are used effectively to support the less confident and for small group work. They work especially well with pupils with more complex difficulties. The practice of support staff moving round with each class provides consistency for pupils and makes for a disciplined change-over between lessons.
2. Teachers plan their lessons well. They use their knowledge of pupils effectively when planning activities and respond well to their needs, for example teachers know how long pupils can concentrate and plan tasks which will build on success. Because pupils have difficulty working with others, teachers plan for work in pairs or small groups to improve social interaction such as sharing ideas in art and design, or working together plotting coordinates in mathematics. Activities are planned where pupils have to learn to trust others as when canoeing, climbing or working with the parachute. Teachers organise activities to increase pupils' confidence, for example, in science older pupils used the Internet to research information about the planets in the solar system. They prepared overhead projector slides and gave a short presentation on their chosen planet, an activity which the boys agreed they would not have had the confidence to do when they first arrived at the school. Teachers of mixed ability groups endeavour to match tasks to pupils' abilities, and provide additional work for more able pupils. Teachers of older pupils plan to meet the needs of different abilities and to challenge the more able. They are trailing more subjects leading to General Certificate of Secondary Education and extending mathematics to intermediate level from foundation level.
3. Teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting and to maintain pupils' interest. They try to provide activities which are meaningful, for example pupils in Year 6 improved their skills in letter-writing by writing to two pupils who are now at other schools re-integrating into mainstream education. In a Year 8 careers lesson, pupils were curious as to why they had been given a chocolate biscuit. After being told to read the ingredients, a lively discussion resulted about the number of jobs involved in the production of the biscuit. Pupils tried hard to 'outdo' each other in their suggestions, reasoning jobs such as dairy farming for milk for the chocolate, sugar refining, transporting, packaging, designing the label and selling the product. Teachers use humour well to maintain pupils' interest, for example as part of their study of Shakespeare, pupils in Year 9 chuckled as they realised words such as 'bubble' and the phrase 'seen better days' were coined by Shakespeare.

4. Most lessons have a good structure and a good level of challenge. Where teaching is more effective, pupils are told what they will be learning, lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency and end with a review of what pupils have learned. In these lessons pupils say what they have found difficult and what parts they enjoyed most. This helps their teacher when planning further work. Teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and further their knowledge. Questions are also used well to encourage pupils to take an active part in lessons.
5. Staff expect pupils to behave appropriately and consequently behaviour is good overall. Behaviour is managed consistently by all staff and in line with school policy. Where strong relationships have been established, a meaningful glance is often all that is needed to denote displeasure. Individual behaviour targets are agreed with pupils to help them take responsibility for improvement. Targets are realistic, though some boys still struggle to meet them. However, a gentle reminder from staff such as, "remember your target is to stay in your seat this lesson", often provides the required prompt. Targets are reviewed consistently at the end of every lesson. Staff and pupils are realistic as to whether or not targets have been met and the number of points that should be allocated. Pupils appreciate and respond well to the rewards awarded for points gained, as was the case when a pupil who achieved 'Boy of the Week' was bursting with pride. In addition to individual behaviour targets, pupils are set targets in each subject, for example, in science 'to identify five common fossils by the end of the unit'. This contributes to pupils' progress.
6. When necessary, for example after a boisterous break-time on the yard, or after outburst of inappropriate behaviour, teachers remind pupils of classroom rules and the reasons for rules. This settles pupils well. Staff use knowledge gained from their valuable training in 'de-escalation' effectively to avoid confrontation with pupils who are the 'wrong way' out, thus maintaining a calm classroom and preventing the pupil who is upset from overreacting. As a last resort, when pupils become a danger to themselves and others, staff use physical restraint appropriately to remove the offending pupil. Such incidences decrease as pupils build up relationships and become more confident. One pupil needed calming down 19 times last half-term for his own safety, but has only needed such intervention once this half-term. Following such incidents, designated members of staff who are not taking classes at the time talk to pupils and try to sort out the cause of the outburst. Very good strategies are used to help pupils manage their anger.
7. Pupils are encouraged to face their problems, come to terms with their difficulties and are challenged to face the future, for example by class slogans such as 'No hill is too hard to climb'. They respond well and the quality of learning is good. Pupils show increased concentration. They apply themselves to their work and want to take part in activities. Boys cope well with new situations and with circumstances that might previously have caused outbursts, for example, pupils in Year 10 coped particularly well when the computer system crashed towards the end of lesson, at a time when they had almost completed their task. The incidence of pupils running away from class decreases as they gain confidence and build relationships. Pupils report they are much less anxious and have greater self-esteem. Some pupils discover talents they did not realise they had, for example one boy was convinced he was 'rubbish at art' but with gentle persuasion and good teaching now draws thoughtful portraits. Boys are proud to show visitors round the school and discuss their work. Teachers are very successful in giving pupils confidence and making them realise the need for formal qualifications. Boys who have been rejected and written-off in their previous

schools realise that they are capable of achieving qualifications and most work hard to be successful.

**The headteacher and senior teachers provide strong leadership for the school. Despite significant staffing problems and pupils with increasingly complex needs, they have kept morale high and have created a cohesive team.**

8. The headteacher is extremely hardworking and has a very high profile around the school. She is well-known to all pupils and has built up very good relationships because of her work in the classrooms and in the residential units. Not long after her appointment, when she was beginning to establish herself, she had to cope with difficulties following the sudden dismissal of a senior member of the care staff and the resulting backlash which necessitated re-organising residential supervision. This she did with enthusiasm, with the result that the provision is managed well and runs smoothly. The headteacher is not afraid to challenge teachers who are not performing effectively. The example she sets as a teacher and her willingness to be a 'hands on' headteacher has gained the respect of staff and brought them together as a team.
9. The senior management team, comprising the two deputies and a senior teacher from each of the primary and secondary departments, work effectively together and complement each other's skills. Members of the team are all very good teachers and are a good example for other staff. Productive team meetings held twice each week make for effective communication between departments and promote a common goal. Team members know all staff and pupils well and use their knowledge effectively, for example, when compiling the groupings and staffing for the new timetable. Because all of the team takes their turn working in the residential units on an evening and during a weekend, there is good communication between care and education staff which contributes considerably to the well-being of the boys.
10. The headteacher and senior teachers provide very good support for all staff. Staff training has been carefully thought out to match the needs of individuals as well as the school. For example, training to deal with the extended age range and training to meet the needs of pupils with more complex difficulties, including those with psychiatric problems and those who have been in secure units. Managers provide supportive phased return to work for staff who have been absent for a long time through illness. The planned return to a full teaching commitment allows returning staff to work alongside other colleagues before gradually taking up their full timetable. This is managed well, keeping a suitable balance between concern for the member of staff and need to provide for pupils. Staff who have returned by this path report they feel well supported and it has helped them regain their confidence and skills. Some teachers have improved their skills by being observed in the classroom and working towards their targets. Whilst most staff are confident and appreciate the advice they receive, a small number have been disadvantaged as they have refused to be observed because of outside influences. In most cases these are the less effective teachers who would have benefited from the process. All staff benefit from the training of others through reporting back at staff meetings. The commitment to staff training has been recognised by the school being awarded Investors in People status in September 1999 and retaining the award at re-inspection in January 2001.

11. Governors are very supportive of the school and indicate they feel part of the management partnership. The work of the governing body is good and contributes to school improvement. For example, each subject manager meets with the curriculum committee annually to report on how standards have improved and how the subject will develop. If governors are not satisfied by the report, or feel there has been insufficient improvement, the manager is expected to report back within a given period. Governors attend staff training, for example on physical intervention, and so are in a position to judge its value and use around the school. Governors use their skills well to support the school in a practical way. One governor, who is on the Board of Visitors at a local prison, plans to talk of her experiences to pupils who are in danger of getting on the wrong side of the law. A second governor, who has a wealth of experience in teaching literacy, uses her skills in her role as Literacy Governor. Others, who have held positions in social services or who are members of the education committee, use their contacts to cut across bureaucracy in times of need. Governors share the vision with the headteacher and staff that the school will continue to improve and to strive for excellence.
12. Though the nature of the pupils has changed, the amount of money the school receives is based on historic formulas that do not reflect the increasing complexity of pupils' needs. Despite this, finances are managed well and funds are used creatively to provide the best possible for the pupils. For example, staff identified the need for a counsellor for boys with particularly severe problems. Careful budgeting has allowed the services of a counsellor to be bought in. Five boys are now seen on a regular basis and are coming to terms with their problems. Day-to-day administration by an extremely well-organised bursar and efficient office staff allows the school to run smoothly.

**Primary aged pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that meet their academic and social needs in a stimulating environment.**

13. Since the last inspection, the school has admitted pupils under the age of seven. A successful infant department has been established for these pupils. Pupils between the ages of five and eleven, the primary department, are taught all the required subjects. Boys feel secure because of the size of the department and because they quickly build relationships with their class teachers and classroom support staff. Because the school caters for all ages and has subject specialist teachers, pupils in this age group also benefit from specialist teaching in art, games and religious education. The use of subject specialists contributes well to the standards pupils achieve in these subjects. Pupils especially benefit from music therapy and relaxation where, because of the outstanding teaching in this subject, they relax, are at ease with themselves and begin to put their trust in others. The key issue from the last inspection to improve the use of teaching time for junior age pupils has been fully remedied.
14. Teachers of this age group place great emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. National strategies have been adopted well and are contributing to pupils' progress in these areas. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall, being very good on occasions. Classroom support staff have received suitable training and contribute significantly to pupils' progress in these aspects. The practice of grouping pupils according to ability for these subjects means that they are working with others of similar ability and so teaching moves on quickly because teachers spend time less time explaining to those who learn at a different rate. Staff are very confident and use their knowledge of literacy and numeracy well in other subjects, for

example, when pupils are reading worksheets in other subjects they are expected to use their knowledge of reading to help them recognise new words. Pupils improve their writing because they are expected to write independently, for instance when recording their findings in science. Staff make sure pupils do their neatest writing and use full stops, capital letters and paragraphs as they would in their English books. High quality displays that support learning and celebrate boys' achievements are neatly labelled to help pupils improve their reading.

15. Special importance is placed on personal, social and health education. Weekly lessons are planned to give pupils the opportunity to discuss topical events and matters of concern to them. This successfully raises their awareness of spiritual and world-wide issues. Daily assemblies form an important part of pupils' personal development. Topics such as honesty and trust are discussed at a level pupils understand and are made relevant by including anecdotes, such as a market stall holder giving incorrect change on a recent school camp. Pupils are familiar with the routine of prayer and reverently bow their heads when joining in the Lord's Prayer. They are helped to improve their social skills at mealtimes. Meals are taken in the dining hall in 'family groups'. Because staff expect pupils to be well-mannered and eat correctly, they are well-behaved and mealtimes are pleasant, social occasions.
16. Very good links have been established with the local village. Pupils build up good relationships with a number of adults from outside the school community who come to hear them read. In addition to improving reading, this allows pupils to improve their speaking and listening by relating what has happened since they last worked with their volunteer. In addition to pupils who are preparing for transfer back to mainstream education, others are given the chance to link with pupils at the local primary school. This helps build their confidence and widen their horizons

**Opportunities for pupils and students aged 14 to 19 are outstanding and make a significant contribution to their personal development and preparing them for the world of work.**

17. Teachers of pupils students aged 14 to 19 recognised some while ago that the courses on offer did not match the demands of modern employment and did not assist boys in making the transition to further education, training or the world of work. In order to remedy this, staff devised a programme which, in addition to allowing students to achieve nationally recognised qualifications, would develop their career potential and raise their confidence and self-esteem. The course that has been developed has been extremely successful. The school has been recognised as a Centre of Excellence for work in General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in art and design and manufacturing. The quality of teaching for GNVQ is very good and on occasion excellent. Classroom support staff use their talents well, teaching new skills such as glass painting and contributing significantly to the progress students make.
18. Students are justifiably proud of their course work for GNVQ. In addition to acquiring a very wide range of skills in design and technology, and art and design, they have made very good gains in their understanding of running a business, costing materials, planning production lines and calculating profit margins. With the help of teachers and support staff, students have set up a company, 'Crafty Creatures', and have produced an abundance of high quality merchandise. Examples include handmade gift cards using 'decoupage', glassware and china decorated in the style of Tiffany, William Morris and Charles Rennie MacIntosh, and printed silk cushions, ties and

waistcoats. The business has raised substantial sums of money, which have been donated to various local charities and has been recognised by Warrington Business Link receiving an Outstanding Initiative Award. Students' portfolios demonstrate a wealth of techniques, for example printing, including dry print etching, observational drawing, slip moulding and modelling, using royal icing. Students working towards GNVQ manufacturing have designed and manufactured educational toys for the children's ward at a local hospital. Following consultation with patients, they designed and set up a production line resulting in colourful, appealing trains with 'counting' trailers. Other students have designed and manufactured products for teenagers. After 'brainstorming' ideas, they have produced quality storage racks for compact discs, a box for fishing equipment, a display cabinet for model cars and a cash box with an alarm. In producing their work they have considered the most suitable materials and methods of joining. They have used their mathematical skills well to accurately draw their designs and measure the materials.

19. Academic qualifications are given equal importance. More able students work towards General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in mathematics, design and technology, and science. GCSE in English is being piloted for the first time this year with art planned from September. Other students work towards Certificate of Educational Achievement in up to ten subjects, with a good number achieving merit and distinction. Students who have difficulty with reading and number, work towards nationally recognised qualifications at the appropriate level. Adult literacy has been introduced to help students improve their skills. Pupils who are boarders have the chance to take additional qualifications at evening classes at local colleges. A small number have done this and been successful, gaining qualifications in modern foreign languages, first aid, and cake decoration.
20. Students of all abilities make very good progress in their personal development and acquire additional skills through a wealth of other experiences, for example learning to drive a car, working in the 'Coffee Pot' café at the local college, taking part in sporting activities and residential camps in Wales. Link courses at local colleges, such as cookery, have resulted in students embarking on a nationally recognised catering course.
21. Links with businesses are outstanding. Every effort is made to give students an insight into the types of work available through visits, for example, to the Wedgewood pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, a fashion manufacturing company, Fords of Halewood and a canoe manufacturer. Very good links have been formed with the local careers guidance officer who visits the school regularly and knows the boys well. All have the opportunity to experience the world of work by spending two or more weeks working. Care is taken to match the placements with the interests and abilities of students and, where possible, to provide placements near their homes. Very successful work placements have been undertaken as shop assistants, assistant chefs, motor mechanics and working with horses. Some of these have resulted in permanent employment, for example, one boy who left this summer has secured permanent employment working in the stables at Doncaster Racecourse. Other boys recognise the need for further training and so move into further education to gain additional qualifications. Of the students who reached official school leaving age in the year 2000, six went into open employment, three went on to further education, eight to work-based training with the remaining eight transferring into the further education department at the school.

**The school is successful in helping a significant number of boys return to mainstream education.**

22. Staff continuously review pupils' progress and aim, where possible, to return them to mainstream education. The number of pupils returning is increasing, with six boys returning in September. Most pupils return at the age of eleven, when pupils in mainstream schools are transferring from primary to secondary education. Very good links have been established with a number of primary and high schools. The transition for pupils is smooth because the curriculum offered reflects that being taught in mainstream schools and because of their 'transition plan'. Wherever possible pupils are re-integrated into a school in their own locality.
23. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who is also one of the deputy heads, carefully plans a phased return to match the needs of each pupil. Following identification, pupils are prepared by their class teacher and support staff to make their return. A series of visits of increasing length with good support allows pupils who are returning to gain confidence, to make friends and to become familiar with new routines. Staff in the receiving schools speak highly of the systems that are in place and of the support given by staff at Grappenhall Hall.

**Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This helps boys to come to terms with their difficulties and to become independent, responsible citizens.**

24. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is a notable improvement since the last inspection when the provision was judged to be mainly good. Through work in religious education and assemblies, pupils gain a good understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths. Pupils reflect on the meaning of the parables, for example when writing a letter home from the prodigal son. Pupils who are resident have the opportunity to go to church, should they wish to do so. Grace is said each lunchtime and pupils are familiar with the routine of prayer writing their own prayers for the harvest. Older pupils consider the works of the War Poets, contemplating the circumstances that brought about the writings. Teachers plan for pupils to take delight in their learning, for example, the enjoyment and confidence gained in activities like canoeing, with photographs capturing the sheer joy on boys' faces when they do a controlled capsized for first time. Similarly, the feeling of exhilaration after a pupil negotiated an overhang on the climbing wall for the first time. Despite their apparent lack of enthusiasm, pupils are still capable of being amazed. For example, during a lesson when the reactivity of metals in water was being investigated, pupils gasped with astonishment when potassium and sodium moved rapidly across the water and exploded.
25. Pupils make very good progress towards improving their social skills because of the high expectations of staff and because of the high quality personal, social and health education programme. The quality of relationships within the school is very good. All pupils are valued for their individual qualities and treated with respect. This results in very good improvement in behaviour, for example, pupils who have been intolerant and abusive towards others now apologise if they act in an unacceptable manner. Boys who have found it difficult to work with others now work as a part of a group, seeking the opinion of others and taking criticism because staff have built up their esteem and self-confidence. Those who have difficulty dealing with authority figures build up their confidence and understanding through acting out scenes such as making a complaint. Daily routines in the residential units and classrooms contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils gain a good insight into living as part of a community through the routines and expectations of care staff and residential camps. They are encouraged to extend their social skills in the wider

community by joining local groups and evening classes. Staff encourage boys to be aware of the needs of others with the result that generous donations are made to a number of charities for example, Children with Leukaemia, Jeans for Genes, Romania, Love Russia and local hospices. Older pupils and students begin to understand democracy as they consider the merits of candidates for the post of 'head boy' and cast their votes in the election.

26. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Staff are successful in encouraging pupils to abide by the agreed rules and to work towards individual targets for improvement. Teachers and other adults who care for them demonstrate how to behave appropriately. On relevant occasions, they affirm the importance of truth and honesty and help boys consider the impact of their actions on others. Obscene and abusive language, once the norm for many, is not tolerated and pupils accept and abide by the standards expected of them. Pupils take part in many sporting activities during the school day and in the evening. During these activities they are expected to appreciate the need for rules and to play fair. Wider moral issues such as the Holocaust, pollution of the seas and animal rights form an important part of the curriculum. Issues closer to personal experiences are considered in topics such as 'dying for the habit', where boys examine the arguments surrounding smoking.
27. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils have the opportunity to appreciate their cultural heritage through studies in the village, when trips to the stocks and graveyard make for interesting discussion. Visits to Bath, Chester, London and York give them an insight into the history of the United Kingdom. Pupils begin to develop an understanding of other cultures through their trips to France and through a link they have established with a school in Japan, with whom they exchange pictures electronically. Work undertaken in English introduces pupils to the works of Shakespeare and authors such as J. K. Rowling and J. R. R. Tolkien. An appreciation of the work of a good range of artists is encouraged in art where pupils have discussed and worked in the style of Tiffany, Monet and Van Gogh, amongst others. A good awareness of art from beyond the Western World is fostered through units such as African art where pupils appreciate and work in the style of African artists producing face masks, understanding that masks are used on different occasions such as weddings or in time of conflict. Though the school population is mostly white, pupils are encouraged to consider the celebrations and traditions of other cultures, contemplating differences, and how these can lead to racial tension.

**The 24-hour curriculum, including opportunities for day boys to take part in evening activities, contributes significantly to boys' progress.**

28. Though only 33 of the boys who attend the school board full-time, most of whom return home every other weekend, the school has adopted a flexible approach to boarding which supports parents and contributes well to pupils' personal development. Families who are in crisis benefit from emergency and respite care as and when necessary. Many day boys wish to board at the school and this is occasionally offered as a reward for improved work and behaviour. Older pupils and students make very good gains in acquiring skills for independent living, spending a short period in the 'independent flats', cooking, cleaning and organising themselves in preparation for life after school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Staff plan stimulating opportunities for pupils to improve their social skills and to extend work undertaken in school.

29. Following the criticism of the last inspection, most day boys now have the opportunity to take part in evening activities through the Link Club. The success of the initiative has been recognised through a Certificate of Merit awarded by Education Extra National Awards. At the end of the school day, pupils understand the need to shower and change into casual clothes. Following tea, they join in numerous activities aimed at improving their sporting abilities, extending their computer, art and design and technology skills and visiting local places of interest, for example Manchester Airport. Pupils, most of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties, respond well to the trust placed in them and make very good improvement in their behaviour because many of the activities take place in public places where pupils are expected to be polite and courteous and well-behaved at all times. The enthusiasm of staff successfully motivates pupils to take part and do their best. From the age of 16, boarders are encouraged to join the local community. For example, a small number go to evening classes to learn a language or car maintenance.
30. Most pupils eat their meals in the communal dining room, with older ones dining in their residence. Mealtimes are relaxed and friendly. Relationships are particularly good. Boys sit with their friends and share jokes and talk about the day. Pupils are very courteous to visitors, finding them somewhere to sit and drawing them into animated accounts of their experiences. An example was a recent visit to France when pupils had hoped to visit Monet's garden as support for their work in art, but the queues of people waiting were too long.
31. Pupils who sleep at the school respond well to the expectation that they are responsible for their belongings and their own well-being. Pupils appreciate being able to keep personal possessions such as a cassette player in their bedroom. They use display space well for posters and work from school. Two students, conscious that their room needed redecorating, painted the walls and were proud to show their efforts to the inspectors. Pupils complete their allotted tasks with good humour, making toast for each other for supper, watering hanging baskets and clearing away, with the odd grumble about the untidiness of their house-mates. In the late evening, staff encourage boys to relax and chat, winding down in time for bed. Parents report how much they, and the boys, appreciate the efforts staff make to celebrate birthdays and special occasions.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are not as high as they should be.**

32. Whilst some progress has been made against the key issue to improve standards in information and communication technology (ICT) identified by the last inspection, pupils still do not do as well as they could.
33. Following the last inspection a new subject manager was appointed. Unfortunately, persistent ill health has meant she has not been able to do the job she was appointed to do. Though all aspects of the subject have been taught recently, the subject manager had not produced appropriate long-term plans which allow pupils to make progress in the skills they acquire. The recording of pupils' knowledge and skills was inconsistent and not well-organised.
34. A non-specialist, short-term teacher was appointed in January and during the intermittent absence of the subject manager, has done much to develop the subject. The short-term teacher has produced a suitable programme and has worked hard to regain pupils' interest in the subject. She has carefully checked the knowledge and skills of pupils of all abilities and has produced a suitable sheet to record what they know and what they still need to learn. She regained the interest of older pupils and has encouraged them to continue their work towards nationally recognised qualifications. However, many pupils of this age are underachieving. Their attainment by the age of fourteen indicated that many should have been working towards GCSE. Nevertheless, pupils of all ages and abilities have made good progress in the time the short-term teacher has worked with them.
35. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in that pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 are now taught all aspects of the subject. The computer suite is now in constant use during the day, as well as some evenings, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Whilst large sums of money have been spent on equipment, software packages have not been catalogued and so members of staff and pupils are not aware of what is available for them to use. Many staff still lack confidence in using new technology in other subjects because they need more training and because there is insufficient software for their subject.

**Not enough emphasis is given to the way literacy is taught in the secondary department and its use in other subjects.**

36. Though teachers are confident when teaching English and achieve creditable results in national examinations, the teaching and use of pupils' literacy skills is barely satisfactory in the secondary department. Many pupils in this age group have poor reading skills because they have missed a great deal of lessons at their previous schools. Teachers of pupils in this age group do not have the skills to help them catch up on their reading and so boys do not make the progress they should. This limits their chances as they get older. For example, pupils with good practical skills cannot be entered for GNVQ or for the higher levels of GCSE in design and technology because they do not have the necessary levels of reading and writing.

37. In order to gain time, teachers tend to read worksheets and texts instead of letting pupils work out new vocabulary for themselves, thereby improving their reading. On occasions teachers hear this age group of boys read, but do not have the skills to help them improve. Some miss obvious examples such as drawing attention to the punctuation to help boys understand the meaning. Few have the knowledge to help pupils 'build up' words and little use is made of context to give clues. When writing, teachers provide too few opportunities for independent writing in many subjects. In one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils researching individual topics were allowed to copy text out of a book without putting it into their own words. This makes their progress unsatisfactory. Though many teachers write neatly, not all write using a neat joined-up style. Poor handwriting by teachers does not help pupils improve the appearance of their written work.

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

38. In order to maintain the good provision and to improve standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) further improve standards in information and communication technology by:

- securing the management of the subject;
- continuing with the planned training;
- improving the range of software;
- improving the way in which pupils' knowledge and skills are recorded;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects.

(paragraphs 32, 33, 34 & 35)

- (2) Improve the way literacy is taught in the secondary department by:

- providing suitable staff training;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects.

(paragraphs 36 & 37)

The school had identified both these issues in their development plan.

***In addition to the key issues above, the following weaknesses should be taken into account in the governors' action plan:***

- Clarify the age range of pupils for whom the school caters with the Department for Education and Skills.
- Provide more homework to allow pupils to make greater progress and achieve even more.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	28	38	22	6	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	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	121
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	13	School data	4.5

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	119
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	21	3
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: Y1 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.8
Average class size	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	355

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1,576,945
Total expenditure	1,574,528
Expenditure per pupil	13,812
Balance brought forward from previous year	132,310
Balance carried forward to next year	134,727

## Results in nationally recognised qualifications 2000

### Year 10

	No. entered	No. passed
GNVQ Art & design Part 1 Units 1 & 2	5	5
GNVQ Manufacturing Units 2 & 3	2	2

### Year 11 GCSE

	No. entered	No. passed	Grades
Maths	7	7	2xD, 2xE, 3xF
Science	7	6	1xD, 1xE, 2xF, 3xG
Design and technology	5	5	4xC, 1xD

### Certificate of educational achievement

	No. entered	No. passed	Grades
PE	15	15	8M, 7P
D&T	8	8	5D, 3M
Art & design	9	9	5D, 2M, 2P
English	15	14	1D, 10M 3P
Maths	6	6	6D
Geography	13	13	1D, 6M, 6P
Science	12	12	6D, 6M
Lifeskills	3	3	1D, 2M

### Years 12 and 13

	No. entered	No. passed
GNVQ Art and design foundation level		
Unit 1	5	5
Unit 2	5	5
Unit 3	5	5
Full award	5	2
GNVQ Manufacturing, foundation level		
Unit 1	3	3
Unit 2	3	3
Unit 3	3	3
Full award	4	4

### NVQ Courses (taken at Warrington Collegiate Institute)

Painting & decorating (PT) leading to NVQ level 1  
 Art and design GNVQ foundation  
 Manufacturing GNVQ foundation  
 Bricklaying (PT) leading to NVQ level 1  
 Joinery (PT) leading to NVQ level 1

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	34

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	36	9	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	38	3	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	44	6	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	32	24	9	12
The teaching is good.	78	19	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	82	6	12	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	76	21	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	16	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	24	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	82	9	6	0	3