

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HIGHFIELD SCHOOL**

Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield M.D.C.

Unique reference number: 108311

Headteacher: Mr A. Spalding

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax  
25439

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 195480

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gawthorpe Lane Ossett West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF5 9BS
Telephone number:	01924 302980
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. Christine Johnstone
Date of previous inspection:	20 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Registered inspector	French Religious education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught. How well the school is led and managed. What the school should do to improve further.
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils. How well the school works in partnership with parents.
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	English Art and design Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30243	Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	
22178	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	Science Geography Special educational needs	
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	History Physical education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Highfield is a community day special school for pupils 11 to 16. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties, though an increasing number have more challenging and complex needs. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. With 121 pupils on roll, it is larger than many special schools. There are twice as many boys as girls. Most pupils are white. Six pupils of Pakistani origin do not have English as their main language, though none are at the early stages of speaking English. Four pupils are in public care. Fifty-three pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is high. The school moved to its present site in January 1999. The Local Education Authority is re-organising its special schools and, from September, the school is to become the sole secondary provider for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. This will see an increase in numbers, with an anticipated roll of 180 by start of the next school year. Prior to attending the school, most pupils have attended special schools for pupils up to the age of eleven. On leaving, some pupils go straight into employment though the majority continue their education at Wakefield College. A small number of pupils remain at home.

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

This is an effective school. Pupils have very positive attitudes and are very well behaved. The quality of teaching is good with very good teaching being observed in a high percentage of lessons. As a result pupils' achievement is good. The school is very well managed, and critical of its performance, knowing its strengths and weaknesses. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection with systems in place to help the school continue to improve. Staff and governors are very well prepared for the challenges presented in admitting a large number of pupils from a closing school. The cost of educating pupils is average for the school's population and so the school provides good value for money.

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

- Leadership and management are very good and help the school to improve at a good rate.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make learning interesting and challenging so pupils enjoy coming to school and achieve well.
- Behaviour management is excellent. As a result pupils are very well behaved. This creates a good climate for learning.
- Support staff are very skilled and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Lunchtime clubs, very good links with the community and with other schools and colleges provide pupils with a very wide range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities.
- Staff know pupils well and provide well for their needs and personal development. Day-to-day care is of a high standard.
- Teaching in physical education is very good. This allows pupils of all abilities to make very good progress in their personal development and in the very wide range of activities provided.

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

- The way teachers plan what pupils will learn and how they record pupils' achievements.
- The way subject managers monitor what is happening in classrooms.
- The teaching of reading and how pupils' knowledge of literacy is developed 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

Good improvement has been made since the school was last inspected as Roundwood Hill School in January 1997. There have been many changes since that time when the number of pupils was falling rapidly. Numbers are now increasing. The school has been re-sited in a different area in very good accommodation and many new staff have been appointed. The leadership has changed and is now very good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. This has resulted in improved standards in many subjects. Pupils are offered a far wider range of learning opportunities and the chance to gain nationally recognised qualifications in most subjects by the age of sixteen. Of necessity, some aspects of school development have not had the attention that had been planned because of the change of date for accepting pupils from a closing school. Urgent planning and measures have been required to meet the new date which has been brought forward by one year. Nevertheless, satisfactory improvement has been made in the way teachers plan what is to be taught and how they assess pupils' knowledge and skills. However, they recognise there is room for further improvement. Satisfactory progress has been made in providing homework to help pupils make greater progress and in providing more opportunities for pupils' cultural development. All pupils now have individual education plans with targets for English, mathematics and social development, though staff recognise some of these need to be more precise. There has been significant improvement in pupils' attendance and a remarkable drop in the number of pupils excluded for bad behaviour.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 9 (age 14)	by Year 11 (age 16)	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	C	C	good	B
Writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

Pupils of all abilities in both age groups achieve better than would be expected in a school of this type in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history, music, and religious education. Standards in reading, whilst satisfactory, could be improved. Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory. Pupils' achievements in food studies and physical education are very good and they achieve standards well above those expected. The school has set challenging targets for fourteen-year-olds in national tests, and for the number of sixteen-year-olds achieving nationally recognised qualifications.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school and keen to join in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons. Those who have behavioural needs make very good progress in improving their behaviour because of the support they receive.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have a growing respect for the feeling of others relationships between pupils and with adults are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils arrive at school on time, though some are sometimes late because of difficulties with transport.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good, with a high percentage of very good and outstanding teaching. This is reflected in the quality of learning. Pupils concentrate well, work at a good pace and produce a good volume of work. Teachers and support staff work closely together. They have a good understanding of the diverse needs of their pupils. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress. The teaching of English is good overall. However, few teachers are confident when teaching the mechanics of reading and providing opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy in other subjects. This limits progress in reading. Communication is taught well, as is science. The teaching of mathematics is good and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge in other subjects such as food studies and design and technology. This aids progress. Teaching in personal, social and health education is satisfactory, however, pupils make good progress in their personal development because of daily routines. Physical education, drama, information and communication technology, and food studies are taught very well so pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and skills in these subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Pupils are offered a wide range of learning opportunities. The way teachers plan is an area for improvement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral and cultural development. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and prepares them well for life after school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Day to day care is of a high standard. Staff monitor pupils' personal development well, but there is a need for further improvement in the way pupils' achievements are recorded. Staff work hard to establish and maintain links with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Key staff work well together to the school's advantage. They are very good teachers who inspire others and give good support to their colleagues.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. All legally required policies are in place. Governors take their role seriously with governors taking turns to visit the school each month to check what is happening.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Governors, senior staff and teachers have a good overview of the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but not enough work is done in classrooms to measure the impact of teaching on learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The accommodation is very good and contributes significantly to what can be taught. Staff, the accommodation and funds are used well to improve standards. The school makes suitable use of the principles of best value, comparing its performance with schools of the same type and setting challenging targets.

## 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 hardworking staff.</li> <li>• The progress their children make.</li> <li>• The small groups mean pupils get more attention.</li> <li>• The headteacher and staff are very approachable.</li> <li>• The confidence pupils gain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport to and from school.</li> <li>• Provision for speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.</li> <li>• The range of out of school activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concerns, inspectors judge problems with transport have affected pupils' learning. Some pupils are not receiving the speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy set out in their Statement of Special educational Need. The school provides a very good range of lunchtime clubs and out of school visits which make learning more meaningful to pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Taking account of ability, pupils in both age groups achieve well. Their achievements in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history, music and religious education are good. Achievements in physical education and food studies are very good. Achievement in other subjects is satisfactory. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection especially in speaking and listening, writing, science, mathematics, religious education and history. Very good improvement has been made in standards in information and communication technology. Many pupils now achieve level four and five in national tests for fourteen-year-olds. Pupils who are deemed capable of taking General Certificate of Secondary Education do so at local secondary schools. An increasing number successfully return to mainstream schools to complete their education. Sixteen-year-olds now achieve a wider range of nationally recognised awards.

2. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. Pupils improve their speaking and listening at a good rate because staff take time to talk and listen. Teachers use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to think and reason their answers. Lessons in French contribute to speaking and listening as pupils listen carefully to new vocabulary and are encouraged to practise new words until they pronounce them correctly. Pupils make good gains in writing because they get the chance to improve in other subjects for example in history. They are expected to record their visits to places such as York Railway Museum. Pupils' achievements in reading are satisfactory. Pupils would achieve more if teachers had the confidence and skill to teach reading, and if a structured reading programme was in place. Some staff are confident and teach their pupils ways to read new words and build this into other lessons, such as 'word walls' in religious education.

3. Pupils in both age groups achieve well in mathematics because of consistently good teaching and very good relationships that allow pupils to feel good about their work. Pupils become increasingly confident in their use of the four rules of number. Through work in mathematics and practical activities in design and technology and food studies they increase their understanding of weights and measures. As they get older, they apply their mathematical knowledge to everyday life, such as working out bills and giving change.

4. Pupils' achievements in science are good in both age groups because of the teaching, the programme offered and because of the very good facilities. Opportunities to work alongside pupils from mainstream schools contribute significantly to standards. As pupils move through the school, they make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of living and non-living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Pupils grow in confidence when setting up an investigation and most know why it is important that their tests are fair. Pupils suitably record their work. Older pupils work towards nationally recognised qualifications with over half of sixteen-year-olds having achieved the Welsh Joint Education Board Certificate in science, with one third gaining merit and a good number of distinctions.

5. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. Achievement is now good in both age groups. This is because of very good teaching by the subject manager, the work of a skilled educational support assistant and the very good computer suite. Whilst pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and skills when working in the computer suite, the use of new technology in some other subjects is an area for development. This is

because some subjects such as design and technology, and art are without a computer, others have old or unreliable machines. However, this should be remedied with the arrival of more machines in a few months time.

6. Achievement in religious education is good. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of major world faiths in both age groups. This is reinforced and made more meaningful by visits to places of worship such as Wakefield Cathedral and talks by Muslim and Hindu pupils about their beliefs and festivals. Older pupils have a good understanding of 'faith in action' through their research of organisations like Christian Crisis and Shelter. Achievements in personal social and health education are good overall. Though progress in lessons is only satisfactory, it is enhanced by day-to-day routines, and daily opportunities to follow up assembly topics.

7. Achievement in geography, French and art is satisfactory in both age groups. Pupils make good progress in French lessons, but are only taught once a week, and often forget what they have learned the previous week. In art, pupils work using a satisfactory range of media, but have little experience of observational drawing. Pupils' achievements in history and music are good. Pupils' achievement is very good in food studies with many competent to produce meals such as an 'all day breakfast' and they have opportunity to work together as a team. Pupils achieve well in design and technology when working with wood, card, plastics and paper, but they do not do as well when working with construction kits, textiles, and computers because they have too few opportunities to work in these areas. Achievement is very good for pupils of all ages and abilities in physical education. This is as a result of very good teaching, a very wide range of activities and an energetic subject manager. Pupils who have physical difficulties achieve highly for their ability, extending their range of movements and stamina because of the carefully prepared programme and the very good support they receive.

8. Pupils with significant additional special educational needs, such as visual impairment and speech and language difficulties, make good progress and achieve well. Staff work hard to implement the advice from visiting specialists. The purchase of specialist equipment and the very good individual support from classroom support assistants allows pupils to take part in all activities. Pupils with more complex needs, such as those diagnosed as being autistic spectrum disorder and those with developmental delay, achieve well because of the small groups, the consistent approach and the expertise of their teachers and education support staff. There are no significant variations in the progress of boys and girls.

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

9. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their progress and create a good climate for learning.

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. This is good improvement over the satisfactory attitudes found at the last inspection. Pupils show very high levels of enthusiasm for school, enjoy learning and take pride in their work. They co-operate very well with teachers and apply themselves to tasks. Pupils show very high levels of interest and involvement in lessons and other school activities. For example, in a Year 11 design and technology lesson, pupils concentrated particularly well as they shaped wooden blocks using glass paper and various tools. Though some found the task difficult, they persevered. Similarly, in a Year 10 English lesson, to compare and contrast spare time activities, many were keen to discuss their hobbies. Pupils' enthusiasm for lunchtime activities is excellent. This is especially so in the 'Jolly Members Club' where every pupil takes part in singing, dancing or talking with others.

11. Behaviour is very good. This too is good improvement from the generally satisfactory behaviour found at the last inspection. The great majority of pupils behave sensibly in classrooms, in assemblies and at break-times. Lunchtime is particularly calm. There is a very positive atmosphere in school with very little inappropriate behaviour. Bullying is not a significant problem, when it occurs there are very good procedures to deal with it. Pupils are very polite and respectful towards staff and visitors. They have very good manners and respond well to the very good behaviour management strategies used by staff. Pupils understand the school rules that are clearly displayed around the premises. These factors are successful in giving pupils a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils who have been identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties make very good progress in improving their behaviour because of the support they receive. There were five temporary period exclusions in the last academic year, representing remarkable improvement since the last inspection where there were many more, some of which were permanent.

12. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils listen to, value and respect each other's contributions in lessons. A good example of this was seen in a Year 11 mathematics lesson. Pupils listened very patiently to their classmates' efforts in answering questions about addition and subtraction problems. Pupils generally show very high levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Inspectors observed a number of instances of effective collaboration. For example, in a Year 7 physical education lesson to improve timing, pupils worked very well in pairs as one threw a ball for the other to hit on the volley with a bat.

13. Personal development is good. This marks further improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are developing well in their confidence, maturity and independence as they progress through the school. Parents are especially pleased about this. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given. For example, each day pupils prepare the hall for assembly. Register monitors and those carrying out special tasks for teachers do so conscientiously. Pupils show good initiative in their learning, as in a Year 9 geography lesson, where pupils carried out personal research using books, CDROM, the Internet and newspapers to find information about volcanoes. Clearly, the school has fully addressed the key issue of the last inspection to improve opportunities for personal responsibility and initiative.

14. Attendance is satisfactory. At 90%, it is broadly in line with that of schools of this type. This represents much improvement since the last inspection where the rate was just under 82% and judged to be unsatisfactory. Unauthorised absence is above the national average, being 2.6% in the last school year. The level of authorised absence is high and this is largely attributable to illness and medical reasons. Punctuality is variable. This, and on occasions absence, is dependent on local authority transport.

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

15. The quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent, being good overall in both age groups. This is significant improvement since the last inspection when one lesson in ten was judged to be unsatisfactory. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed during the inspection and that was by a teacher who also taught a number of satisfactory and good lessons. Teachers are now less dependent on worksheets so pupils make good improvement in writing.

16. The quality of teachers' planning is variable, ranging from satisfactory to very good, being satisfactory overall. Teachers now plan for pupils of different abilities and needs,

identifying additional resources required for pupils who are visually impaired or who have other specific needs. Most teachers plan their lessons conscientiously. However, many note the topics and activities that will be covered and few identify the knowledge and skills pupils will acquire. Most lessons end with a useful review of what pupils have learned, but some of this information is lost as many teachers tend to “carry it in my head” and only a few record achievements in their ‘daily planners’ where they evaluate the learning that has taken place. Though teachers and support staff know their pupils well, and have other forms of assessing and recording pupils’ achievements, senior managers recognise this is a gap in the system and an area for improvement.

17. Teachers and support assistants have a good knowledge of the wide range of learning difficulties and plan together carefully to make the best use of adults to support those with additional needs. The strengths of assistants are used effectively to benefit pupils of all abilities, for example, in the teaching of information and communication technology, food studies and individual reading. Teachers are confident when teaching most subjects. They have far more confidence when using computers than at the time of the last inspection. However, few have been trained to teach reading and many lack confidence in teaching pupils strategies to read new words. Teachers who have been trained to teach reading do so well. They show pupils how to use pictures, and their knowledge of letters and sounds to build up words. In addition, they write new vocabulary on the board or on cards and play games so pupils quickly learn how to read the new words. This was demonstrated well in a Year 7 religious education lesson where pupils learned how to read the words ‘selfish’ and ‘unkind’ then match them to the same words on the ‘word wall’ thus extending their vocabulary and improving their reading.

18. Teachers are skilled at matching their teaching methods to the group they are teaching. This is especially evident in classes for pupils with more complex needs. Staff recognise these pupils are easily distressed so routines are strictly adhered to. Pupils are familiar with what is expected of them and organise themselves, taking out their equipment and settling quickly. Lessons begin with activities that are well within pupils’ capabilities to settle them, before moving on to more taxing tasks which challenge pupils and make them have to think hard. Conversely, the same teachers when working with more able pupils start with a brisk pace and challenge their pupils from the moment the lesson starts.

19. Staff manage pupils behaviour very well. Most pupils are eager and keen to work; producing a good volume of neatly presented work. However, an increasing number have been identified with emotional and behavioural needs. Most staff have very high expectations of how pupils behave and will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour. When necessary they firmly remind pupils of rules and expectations, making sure all are able to get on with their work. Humour, is used well to diffuse potential confrontation. A good example of this was when a pupil arrived at a lesson obviously the ‘wrong way out’. He soon calmed down and gave a wry smile as his teacher commented “I’m depressed too after Ferdinand’s own goal and Darius being voted off Pop Idol”. When the odd incident of inappropriate behaviour does occur, teachers quickly put the well thought out systems into use, calling on the teacher who is timetabled to deal with behaviour without fuss, thus allowing others in the group to get on with their work with minimum disruption. Good behaviour is recognised appropriately with staff making very good use of praise, encouragement, merits and certificates. Adults provide very good examples of how to behave appropriately, so pupils learn to respect each other and tolerate each other’s idiosyncrasies. Pupils appreciate praise, and glow with pride when their good behaviour has been recognised. They respond well to encouragement, growing in confidence and not afraid to ask if they need help.

20. Staff take time to talk and listen to pupils. They circulate around the class, checking pupils understand their work and asking them to explain what they are doing. At the start of lessons and during discussion, teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and to make them think and reason their answers. These activities help pupils make good improvement in speaking and listening. Teachers use interesting objects well to gain and maintain pupils' interest. This was seen in a Year 9 science lesson when pupils groaned in mock horror as their teacher produced raw liver. They were riveted as she used the liver to investigate gasses and later described the lesson in graphic detail to an inspector.

21. In lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory or less effective, introductions went on too long so pupils lost concentration, and on one occasion behaviour was not managed appropriately. In these lessons, the pace was often slow so pupils took their time and did not produce as much work as they are capable of. In the lessons where teaching was very good or outstanding, lessons were conducted with a sense of urgency, not a moment was wasted and pupils made very good gains in the knowledge and skills. This was the case in one Year 11 lesson where pupils were completing a module ' Gathering Information'. The teacher began the lesson with brisk questions like "Why are we doing this?" "What do we need?" "How do we get information?" resulting in pupils being very clear what was expected of them and eager to begin researching CD ROM, the Internet and magazines for information. The system of using the technological skills of individual pupils made all act more maturely, seek help where necessary and take charge of their learning. Pupils demonstrated intense concentration, being desperate to succeed in the activity.

22. The previous inspection identified homework as a key issue. This has been remedied. Pupils now have homework diaries. These show that homework is given regularly in a number of subjects by the majority of teachers and contributes positively to pupils' progress.

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

23. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, which meet legal requirements and give pupils a broad experience of all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school has responded appropriately to the previous inspection report, by making sure that more time is provided for teaching music and personal, social and health education to eleven to fourteen-year-olds. French is now taught to fourteen to sixteen-year-olds, but at present only in Year 10 because of staff illness. Pupils in this age group study for nationally recognised qualifications.

24. Since the last inspection, much work has also been done on planning what pupils will learn. However, at present long-term plans consist mainly of lists of topics, together with 'essential learning experiences', from which teachers select suitable activities for their pupils. Schemes of work are insufficiently developed and do not, for example, identify clearly the knowledge and skills pupils will acquire in each lesson. This means the planning of lessons is inconsistent, and subject managers are not able to guarantee that pupils cover all aspects of the curriculum. Satisfactory progress has been made with the introduction of the strategy for literacy and numeracy for eleven to fourteen-year-olds. All pupils now have a daily lesson in each of the subjects. Whilst there are some useful examples of numeracy and literacy being promoted in other subjects, a lack of formalised planning means that opportunities are often missed.

25. The school ensures that as many pupils as possible have opportunities to gain certificates from nationally recognised boards, and from the Local Education Authority. Some subjects such as art are not accredited at the moment, but this is due to staffing

difficulties. There is no recognised course in English for pupils in Year 11, though OCR has been introduced for those in Year 10. Much of the pupils' work is through Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Youth Award Scheme (ASDAN), and includes skills for life, together with modules which incorporate physical education, religious education, information and communication technology and some design and technology. Further developments are planned for the next academic year, with the introduction of a new Certificate in Life Skills. More able pupils who achieve well in national tests for fourteen-year-olds link with local secondary schools to take General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), thus working towards higher qualifications and having the chance to be included in a mainstream school.

26. Provision for pupils special educational needs is good in both age groups. All pupils have statements of special educational need, and information from these, and from annual reviews, is used to set targets in individual education plans. Since the last inspection, the format for writing the plans has been changed and simplified. All pupils now have targets in English, mathematics, and personal and social development. The usefulness of the targets varies. Staff are aware of the need to make sure that these are specific and that success can be clearly measured. No pupil is disapplied from any aspect of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for pupils with additional and more complex needs such as autistic spectrum disorder is being reviewed, as is that for the developmental classes, in which pupils have more significant learning difficulties. These reviews are at an early stage, but the work which has been done indicates that learning opportunities are suitably planned to allow these groups full access to all subjects and experiences. Wherever possible, pupils join with other classes for lessons in subjects such as music, drama and physical education. Staff work hard to provide equal opportunities for all pupils, and those with additional needs such as hearing impairment, visual impairment and emotional and behavioural difficulties are generally well catered for. There are a few occasions when pupils are removed from lessons, for example, for additional literacy. This is not always monitored to check that pupils concerned do not lose opportunities in some subjects.

27. The school provides very good opportunities to make learning more interesting and relevant. A wide range of visits support learning in different subjects. For example, classes have visited York, Conisborough Castle, the Canal Museum and the National Mining Museum, as part of their history studies. Visits to Lotherton Hall and Gardens, Wigfield Farm and a wind farm, have been used for environmental studies and geography, while creative arts have been enhanced by theatre and art gallery visits. While opportunities for activities after school are, of necessity, limited because transport is available only at the end of the school day, pupils have very good opportunities for a range of lunchtime clubs that provide support for the curriculum and contribute to pupils' social and personal development. Daily sports clubs such as football and basketball, and weekly clubs for bowling and dance contribute well to pupils' physical development. The 'Jolly Members' club for pupils who would find outside playtimes difficult provides a useful opportunity for more vulnerable pupils to make choices and be active. Senior pupils are encouraged to become independent and responsible in their lunch time social club.

28. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. This is strengthened by additional sessions where pupils discuss the moral and social issues highlighted in assemblies. Provision for careers and work related education is good. Pupils embark on the programme at the age of fourteen. Close links have been established with the local careers adviser who visits the school regularly to interview pupils, to attend transition reviews and to participate in some lessons. Pupils in Year 11 have the opportunity of attending the local further education college for 'taster' courses. They undertake work experience, for which they are well prepared and which is carefully monitored. Some work in the community while others who need greater supervision undertake the experience in



school. All these experiences give pupils an understanding of life outside school and prepare them well for transition to further education or training.

29. The school has very good links with the community, which contribute to pupils' learning. Visitors from the community talk to pupils about aspects of their work or contribute to subjects such as personal, social and health education, for example, the fire brigade and health services. Links with police are being established and a road safety course is planned for later this term. Representatives from various churches and organisations have led assemblies. In addition, the school has strong links with various sports groups such as the local football and rugby clubs, which use the school premises, as does a local youth club. Business links have enabled the school to raise the funds to improve the grounds, while the local Lions Club sponsored the signs around the school. The British Trust for Conservation volunteers assisted with tree planting on the Woodland Project.

30. Links with partner institutions are also very good and help broaden pupils' opportunities, both educationally and socially. Useful links, including visits by staff and pupils, have been formed with the primary schools prior to transfer, ensuring that information about pupils is received so that plans can be made for their education at secondary level. Taster courses at the local further education college of activities such as building, decorating, drama and word processing allow pupils to prepare for transfer after school, as most attend this college. These courses receive a college certificate which forms part of a young person's record of achievement. Very good inclusion links exist with several local secondary schools which allow pupils to attend mainstream schools for certain activities, and for pupils from mainstream schools to spend time at Highfield, as is the case with a joint ecology project with Year 10 pupils from Kettlethorpe School. Links with Ossett School allow pupils to take part in a variety of activities linked to a history project and including drama and literacy. The Local education Authority recognises the value of these initiatives. Pupils from Ossett attend Highfield's music and arts days. In addition, close links with schools allow those who are ready to take part in reintegration programmes and, over the last year, four pupils have transferred to full time mainstream education. Two pupils are in process of doing so at present.

31. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the provision was judged to be satisfactory. Provision for spiritual development is good. Weekly assembly themes are continued in daily class discussions, encouraging pupils to empathise with others. The theme during inspection week was 'Differences and Tolerance'. This provided good opportunities for Year 10 pupils to decide if people should be judged by their appearance. Year 9 pupils discovered that people's physical and intellectual features are genetic and decided before birth, and reflect sensibly on the connection between this and prejudice or name-calling. In a full school assembly pupils were encouraged to think about the different ways pupils get along with each other and not show impatience. This was presented well and made a relevant focus for the daily activities. The school climate strongly supports respect for individuals and is evident throughout lessons when pupils show consideration and respect for each other and for the adults working with them. Pupils respond respectfully to the well planned, daily opportunities for collective prayer. There is little planning to promote spirituality in curricular subjects, but pupils are encouraged to celebrate each other's achievements. Though assemblies mostly promote Christian values, pupils gain an awareness of other major faiths such as Islam and Hinduism through work in religious education.

32. There are good opportunities for pupils' moral development. Increasing opportunities are offered to give a sense of responsibility as pupils get older. Older pupils contribute to the smooth running of the school by collecting registers and helping in younger classes.

Successful links with the local college encourage pupils to develop independence skills before leaving school and to extend their relationships to include people who are not from school or home. Personal and social education has an appropriate priority with daily time set aside for discussion and reflection. Throughout the school, pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and are tolerant when members of the class have any difficulty in conforming. Class teachers take the lead in promoting the ideals of right and wrong. They are firm but fair, encouraging courtesy and consideration for others. Pupils understand the morality of giving to charity, supporting Red Nose Day, Children in Need and a good number of disaster appeals. Pupils look carefully at the effects of war and begin to recognise the impact of famine on refugees in Goma.

33. Social development is promoted very well. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to wait their turn to speak and respect each other's contributions. The school places a strong emphasis on providing good opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills such as co-operation, communication and responsibility. Discussions allow pupils to explore emotions, what makes them angry or happy, and to share feelings about their relationships with brothers and sisters. When Year 10 pupils discussed natural disasters, their teacher very sensitively empathised with pupils' fear of wind, and the class responded very well to the reassurance that because they are growing up they will become less frightened. Pupils improve their social skills through the wide range of lunchtime clubs. Food studies are relevant to pupils needs and not only provide pupils with skills to prepare, for example, an 'all day breakfast', but also give very good opportunities to work as part of a team. The teaching of drama is particularly strong and makes a significant contribution to pupils' social skills. This was seen when Year 9 pupils were encouraged to empathise with characters from Macbeth and to understand the emotions involved when someone is cajoled into doing something they know is wrong. Younger pupils benefit from the excellent drama provision as they learn to express emotions and understand the significance of facial expressions. These are important skills that allow pupils to improve the quality of their relationships with people outside the school community. Joint drama workshops with the local high school provide pupils with good opportunities to explore issues around bullying and to socialise with mainstream pupils. Through work in 'citizenship and social issues', Year 11 pupils became engrossed as they learned about the causes and effects of homelessness. Pupils were extremely interested, writing letters to Shelter and Crisis to obtain more detailed information. Regular support from teachers and educational support assistants means that pupils develop positive relationships within school, fulfilling the school motto of 'working together'.

34. Provision for cultural development is good. The key issue to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures had been remedied. Through religious education lessons pupils become aware of world faiths and the respect due to other peoples' beliefs. They know that the Bible and Koran are important holy books. A wide range of visits out of school, including York and Hebden Bridge support pupils' increasing knowledge of the history of their local community. A visit to Wakefield Cathedral was effective in allowing pupils to experience a place of worship and in the study of stained glass windows, using these as inspiration or their own art work. Pupils' appreciation of literature is enriched by theatre visits including Macbeth and The Dracula Experience, as well as visits to the Bronte Museum at Haworth. During the last twelve months religious leaders, musicians, sports and environmental groups have made a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. In art, pupils are encouraged to appreciate the work of Western artists such as Monet, Kadinsky and William Morris. Pupils extend their appreciation of music as they become familiar with the instruments of the orchestra and are given opportunities to listen to a range of music, including film soundtracks and television theme tunes. However, opportunities are missed to use music to create a suitable atmosphere for assemblies. Pupils gain an awareness of European traditions and language as they respond to the register in French, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the

Channel Tunnel, and bake European foods such as pizza and Danish apple pie in their food studies course.

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

35. The school provides a caring and secure learning environment for all its pupils. The educational and personal support and advice given to pupils is good overall. These factors contribute significantly to the family ethos of the school, and are effective in supporting pupils. A number of improvements have taken place since the last inspection.

36. The warm relationships with staff are especially evident at the start of the day as staff supervise and welcome pupils into the hall for a brief assembly. Staff know pupils well and there are good procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development. This gives them confidence in their learning. Individual education plans and annual review reports contain much information about personal development with targets for improvement identified. Personal, social and health education is used well to support personal development. Arrangements for child protection are very good. There has been good improvement in staff training since the last inspection. Staff show very high levels of care and vigilance. There are clear procedures to supplement the local authority's policy. The two designated officers are suitably trained and deal with issues effectively.

37. Overall, there are very good arrangements to identify and remedy potential hazards to health and safety. The designated health and safety officer is appropriately trained and carries out regular assessments to identify hazards. The school is in the process of developing a record to assess potential risks before taking pupils on visits and trips out of school. Fire drills are carried out frequently and are carefully recorded. Inspectors are concerned that the fire authorities have reported that the fire bells are inadequate but recognise it is the local authority's responsibility to address this. The school urgently needs to develop and record an assessment of potential risks before taking pupils on visits and trips out of school. Staff also realise that dust extraction in the design and technology room is inadequate. Provision for incidents and accidents is very good with eleven staff trained to administer first aid. The full-time nurse makes a significant contribution to pupils' health and welfare.

38. Staff work closely with many external agencies. This includes specialist teachers for the visually impaired, hearing impaired and specific physical needs. The health services provide much specialist support too including regular visits from the community nurse. However, there is insufficient physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy available to meet pupils' needs. A number of pupils are not getting the support identified in their statement of special educational need. Correspondence indicates that these services are experiencing considerable staff problems. Parents are justifiably concerned about this issue. A number of parents have experienced problems with school transport. Parents attending the meeting reported incidents of some pupils being on transport for over one hour each end of the day, others not being treated with dignity, and one pupil being left at the gate without the escort checking an adult was at home. This results in some pupils arriving at school, tired, disturbed and irritable and does not provide a good start to day.

39. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are very good. There is a strong partnership with educational welfare service with two officers visiting the school frequently. Appropriate records regarding attendance and punctuality are maintained. This allows staff to identify patterns of poor attendance and provide support. Home telephone calls are made on the first day of any unexplained absence. Parents are given frequent reminders about the importance of good attendance and punctuality in newsletters. Pupils are awarded with certificates at assemblies to recognise good or improving attendance. These procedures have improved attendance levels considerably since the last inspection.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection where there were serious concerns about exclusions and the lack of a physical restraint policy. The school has fully addressed the key issue in this area of its work. Staff have undergone training to calm pupils, to diffuse confrontation and to restrain those who may present a danger to others. One member of the support staff has qualified as a trainer. Very detailed records are kept of any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Problems are carefully monitored and tracked to ensure that improvements take place. Sanctions are very well developed. Excellent use is made of a wide variety of rewards to maintain high standards. Pupils are very keen to qualify for merit points, special mentions in assembly and the many treats on offer.

41. Since the last inspection, good improvement has been made in developing systems for assessing pupils' progress. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and progress, and for monitoring their academic progress, are now satisfactory. Pupils are now assessed in language, reading, spelling and mathematics when they start at the school. Further tests are to be carried out annually and will give information about the progress being made. However, the tests have only been used twice, and are not yet being fully used check progress and help staff to decide on any additional help pupils might need such as for specific learning difficulties. A system of half-termly assessments in English, mathematics and science has begun, together with termly assessments in other subjects. These pieces of work form part of pupils' records, and staff are working to make sure they are clear about the different levels at which pupils work. Though each piece of assessed work has an information sheet attached these do not always give details about the amount of help which a pupil needed to complete the task. Where this is not given, it is difficult to make any judgement about a pupil's progress.

42. Staff working with pupils with more complex needs are trialling a more suitable method of assessment, 'P levels', which measure pre National Curriculum work in smaller steps, whilst still allowing for scores to be calculated to give information about pupils' progress. There are expectations that all pupils will be given a National Curriculum or 'P level' in each subject each school year. However, because curriculum and lesson planning are not always done in sufficient detail to focus on what pupils will learn, it is not always possible to assess clearly at the end of a lesson what has been learned. There is no consistency in the way in which staff record what has happened in lessons and, while some clearly record the progress pupils make, others do this in insufficient detail to allow them to judge accurately the levels which pupils have achieved and aid planning.

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

43. Links with parents have improved since the last inspection for example the quality of information to parents has improved from satisfactory to good. Although there were few responses to the questionnaire sent to parents, and few attended the parents meeting, it is clear that parents think highly of the school and its work. Parents attending the meeting expressed their strong regard for the commitment of the headteacher and his staff. They also commended the behaviour of pupils and said their children are happy at school. All parents replying to the questionnaire said that: teaching is good, the school is well led and managed, and they are comfortable about approaching the school regarding any problems. The great majority said that there are high expectations for their child and that children make good progress. Parents feel the school is helping their children become more mature and responsible. The majority of parents are pleased about the arrangements for homework. Inspection findings support these positive views. A small number of

parents feel the school does not provide sufficient interesting activities outside lessons. However, inspectors disagree with this, as provision is very good for a school of this nature.

44. The quality of information for parents, especially about pupils' progress, is good. Although a very small number of parents are concerned about information, inspectors found many positive features. The 'LOOK' notice board, and other notices and photographs around the premises give parents much information about school activities and educational initiatives. Parents are fully involved in their child's annual review alongside staff and other professionals. Annual progress reports give parents good information about what their child is doing and the knowledge and skills they have acquired. The system for setting learning targets and reviewing them at the three consultation evenings held each year is working well. The detailed handbook provides helpful information for parents. Newsletters are sent home on occasions, giving information about pupils' achievements, events and important dates to remember. However, parents would like more information about topics of study.

45. Pupils now attend the school from all over the local authority and some parents find transport difficult and costly. Nevertheless, links with parents are effective, and their involvement has a sound impact on the work of the school. Most make a satisfactory contribution to their child's learning at home. The home and school agreement is well established and makes the expectations between parents, staff and pupils clear. A small number of parents have yet to return their agreement forms. The school actively welcomes parents and encourages them to become more involved in its work. Parents are invited to coffee mornings and events such as sports days, prize giving and celebrations. Occasionally parents help in school. Home and school records show that some parents give considerable support with learning and homework tasks.

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

46. The appointment of a new headteacher and a new deputy has resulted in outstanding improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The past two years have been a particularly turbulent time. In addition to the change in management there has been a change of accommodation and long-term staff illness. The Local Education Authority review of special education has taken place. Originally, it had been planned for pupils to transfer from a closing special school to join Highfield in September 2003. However, the timings have changed and the closure is now scheduled for July 2002. This has necessitated much of senior managers' and governors' time and energies being channelled into planning ways to let this happen with least disruption. To date this has been successful. A number of staff and pupils have already made the transfer. Pupils in Year 10, working towards nationally recognised qualifications, will transfer at the end of this term, giving them more time to settle before their examination in 2003. Managers are anxious that the transfer should be as smooth as possible and that transferring staff and pupils feel welcome and part of the school.

47. The charismatic headteacher has provided the school with a vision and a sense of purpose. He is committed to high achievement. He is sensitive to the needs of his staff and pupils, helping staff to develop and successfully improving standards. He has a high profile around the school and is well respected by staff and pupils. The deputy headteacher, in post since September, works tirelessly to support the headteacher and staff. She is an effective teacher and leader, has a good knowledge of the curriculum and so has the respect of her colleagues. She has been instrumental in raising the attendance figures through her links with parents and her influence on pupils. Additionally, as special educational need co-ordinator, she gives an effective lead on all matters pertaining to special needs. She endeavours to make sure all legal requirements are met and has good

links with outside agencies, whose expertise is used for the benefit of pupils. The principal teacher has worked energetically in his role as premises manager to prepare the accommodation for the new pupils, with the result that attractive, new classrooms will be ready on schedule. The principal teacher has gained regional recognition for his work on nationally recognised qualifications. This he uses to good advantage when teaching the award to older pupils, providing an example of excellent teaching for his colleagues.

48. Senior teachers have risen well to their responsibilities and make a useful contribution to the management of the school. However, there is a danger of them taking on too many responsibilities in addition to their teaching commitment and so becoming overloaded and not as effective. Subject management is variable, ranging from satisfactory to very good, being good overall. Whilst there is no manager for French, the deputy headteacher has an overview of the subject and is making sure the subject is developed. Management of physical education, and information and communication technology are particularly strong. Many managers are new to post but, nevertheless, have a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and know what needs to be done to improve standards. Whilst some have had chance to observe what is happening in classrooms, management recognise this is an area for development.

49. The role of the governing body has improved since the last inspection. Governors are well trained and conscientious in their support of the school. The system of 'governor of the month' is working well, giving governors an insight into the day-to-day workings of the school whilst allowing them to keep a critical eye on what is happening. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable. She meets regularly with the headteacher and has provided very good practical support in the recent local authority reorganisation. The persistence of governors and their knowledge of governance have been effective in discussions with the local authority finance department regarding funding. Senior managers and governors have deliberately left vacancies on the governing body to accommodate parent governors and co-opted governors from the closing school when Year 10 pupils transfer in a few weeks time. The governing body has recognised the rate of improvement and has nominated the school for a national Achievement Award.

50. The headteacher, his deputy and senior teachers have spent time observing what is happening in classrooms and sampling pupils work. This has been effective and has improved the quality of teaching and learning significantly. Managers and governors are critical of the school's performance, discussing success indicators such as results in national tests, attendance and exclusions and now compare the performance of the school to the national picture for similar schools. A further measure of success is the increased number of pupils returning to mainstream education each year. Challenging targets have been set for results in national tests and in nationally recognised qualifications. There is a commitment to improvement and a sense of pride shared by all who work at the school. Systems and structures are in place to help the school continue to improve at a good rate.

51. The school has sufficient, suitably experienced staff to teach all subjects. The experience brought to the school by staff from other establishments makes a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. For example, a part-time teacher with recent experience of teaching physical education in colleges brings a lively and very successful approach to the teaching of creative dance. The closure of another special school has meant that a number of staff have been re-deployed to the school. Their induction, though not following a formal programme, has been sensitively handled and new staff talk of the excellent level of support they have had from the headteacher and other colleagues.

52. Teachers are well supported by very effective education support assistants. Most have additional qualifications and use their skills well, for example in first aid, in food studies

and in tackling inappropriate behaviour. Support staff are invited to attend school in-service training days including information and communication technology. Weekly meetings with senior managers allow support staff the chance to discuss concerns and to keep abreast of events. Like teaching staff, they have line managers with whom they can discuss any matters that arise. All staff have clear job descriptions that are reviewed annually. Teachers have been suitably prepared for performance management, each having two targets, one of which is linked to pupil progress and the other for personal development.

53. The school has moved to a new site since the last inspection and the accommodation is now very good. Very good specialist facilities such as the gymnasium, the science laboratory and the design and technology rooms contribute to learning opportunities. There is good access for wheelchair users to all areas of the school including a lift to the upper level. Rooms are of a good size for the groups that use them and older pupils have their own comfortable social area. The school grounds are particularly good and have been recently enhanced by a substantial tree planting scheme and the laying of pathways to be used to take pupils around a nature trail. As the six thousand or so trees mature the wild life they support will increase and benefit the school and the community considerably. The school has worked hard to attract grants for various schemes so that the budget is not depleted by, for example, the cost of fencing. The cost of new fences and the recent drainage of the fields is considerable and has been raised from sources such as the landfill tax credits scheme. The grounds are used well by the Youth Club and by various local sports clubs. This contributes useful revenue to the school's budget as well as providing increased involvement with the community which is mutually beneficial. Income raised from use of the sports fields has been used to provide changing rooms and a sports pavilion. Alterations to the building, to accommodate the influx of additional pupils, have been well thought out and planned to cause minimum disruption. Displays around the school are of a sound standard and celebrate pupils' achievements as well as supporting learning. For example, the corridor to the gymnasium is lined with photographs showing the progress pupils are making in physical education and provide a source of pride and inspiration.

54. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall, though resources to promote the use of information technology in some subjects is unsatisfactory. The computer suite is a very good resource and used effectively to raise standards. However, few classrooms have their own computers. There are sufficient textbooks and other basic equipment for other subjects. The school makes good use of local resources such as museums and castles. For example, pupils visit Eden Camp to support their World War 2 history topic. As was the case in the last inspection there is still a shortage of objects to support studies in religious education, especially Christianity. There are few 'Big Books' for use in literacy lessons. This means pupils struggle to see the text and so do not improve their reading as well as they could. An attractive library has been created which provides a pleasant environment to encourage good reading habits. The range and quality of books is now satisfactory with a good number of non-fiction books. However, the stock of books to teach reading does not always match content with pupils' levels of maturity.

55. Administration and financial procedures within the school are good. The recent local authority audit report, undertaken a few weeks ago, noted several minor areas for improvement. These are already being addressed. Developments are well supported through financial planning and the school development plan links educational priorities appropriately. Though the development plan is only for one year, managers have a long term vision for the school, but are sensibly waiting so transferring staff may make contributions to the new plan, which will reflect needs of the school and of the Local Education Authority long term plan. The headteacher, the governing body finance

committee and the administrative manager, work together well to make sure the targets identified are pursued with attention to the available budget. Governors' involvement in monitoring the budget has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Day-to-day financial management and administration is good and contributes well to the smooth running of the school. Technical systems are understood and used effectively. Where the school receives grants for specific purposes, these are used appropriately and often topped up by the school to make the most effective impact on pupils' learning. The governing body and administrative manager keep a careful check on expenditure and ensure that the principles of best value are applied.

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

56. In order to raise standards and improve further, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- ensure planning clearly identifies what is to be learned, and that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is recorded in all subjects and used consistently by all staff.

(paragraphs 16, 24, 41, 62, 63, 67, 70, 76, 79, 84, 95, 98, 121)

- provide further opportunities for subject managers to monitor what is happening in classrooms and the chance to share good practice.

(paragraphs 48, 70, 76, 79, 90, 95, 121)

- improve the teaching of reading and the use of literacy in other subjects by;
  - appropriate staff training
  - the development of a policy for literacy across the curriculum, providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy in other subjects
  - extending the range of reading books to match pupils' ability and interest levels.

(paragraphs 2,17, 58, 60, 62, 63)

### ***In addition to the above the following items should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan***

Increasing the range of materials used in design and technology, including the use of computers. (paragraph 85)

Formally undertaking risk assessment before taking pupils out of school, and remedy the concern regarding fire bells. (paragraph 37)

Provide more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in other subjects (paragraphs 69, 74, 90, 97, 98)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	121
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	32	52	32	1	0	0
Percentage	4	26	43	26	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

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	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.6

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	0
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	115
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	5	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)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.05
Average class size	8.06

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

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	522.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	883,518
Total expenditure	853,799
Expenditure per pupil	7833
Balance brought forward from previous year	-16,490
Balance carried forward to next year	13,229

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results in 2001 national tests for 14 year olds**

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
<b>English</b>	7	4	6	0	0
<b>Mathematics</b>	5	8	3	0	1
<b>Science</b>	0	14	3	0	0

**Welsh Joint Education Board science**

	Pass	Merit
2000/01	4	3

**Youth Award Scheme**

	Bronze level	Silver level
2000/01	4	9

**Wakefield Units of Accreditation**

2 pupils achieved 9 units  
1 pupil achieved 8 units  
2 pupils achieved 7 units  
2 pupils achieved 6 units  
5 pupils achieved 5 units  
1 pupil achieved 4 units  
3 pupils achieved 3 units  
1 pupil achieved 2 units

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	120
Number of questionnaires returned	18

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	28	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	44	0	6	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	56	6	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	56	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	28	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	11	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	65	18	17	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	22	0	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	35	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	28	22	0	11

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents expressed concern about significant problems with transport.

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

### **ENGLISH**

57. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in both age groups, including those with more complex needs, make good progress in speaking and listening and in writing. Progress in reading is satisfactory.

58. Skills in speaking and listening develop well as pupils progress through the school. Pupils in both age groups answer questions about stories which are read to them, and show that they have understood the main themes. More able pupils answer in detail showing good understanding. By age fourteen, these pupils use a good variety of words when talking about the books and plays they are reading as a class. For example, in drama, they discuss feelings and relationships and compare them with the feelings of Macbeth and his lady. By the age of sixteen they prepare presentations to tell others in the class about weekend activities. In ensuing discussions they take turns and listen politely to one another. Pupils develop these skills well in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 8 listened to a tape about a Tudor banquet as part of a history lesson and answered questions, showing good understanding. Pupils in Year 9 discussed and recorded information about being a Christian. Pupils in both age groups readily engage visitors in conversation, especially at mealtimes.

59. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in reading. They know the features of a book, such as title and author, and know that text carries meaning. Some pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen know initial letter sounds and recognise some words. More able pupils read fluently and show understanding of what they have read. As they move through the school, pupils use more strategies for reading unknown words, such as using picture clues or the meaning of the passage. They read, or listen to, stories such as 'Danny, Champion of the World', and 'The Iron Man', and show some understanding of the plot. By the age of sixteen, pupils extract information from holiday brochures and newspaper articles. They use the Internet to research projects, but most have not yet developed the skills of writing the information in their own words. Some pupils are encouraged to read aloud in class and many have books chosen from the library. Pupils read for information in other subjects, such as history and personal, social and health education. However, pupils do not make as much progress as they should because of the lack of a structured programme.

60. Progress in writing is good overall. By the age of fourteen, pupils learn to use basic punctuation, such as capital letters and full stops. More able pupils use a wider range such as speech marks and question marks. Pupils make progress with the development of handwriting, and some join their letters. Most respond well to opportunities to write for different purposes, for example, in writing about themselves, stories, and instructions for activities such as playing a game. They write poetry on themes such as the seasons and Armistice Day, and begin to write newspaper accounts of different events. They develop scripts for plays which they act, such as 'Dracula' and 'Wind in the Willows'. Some write a summary of a story or play, drafting and improving their work, for example, when they write about the character of Macbeth. Many pupils require support with spelling. They learn the alphabet and know how to use dictionaries and word-books. Pupils often produce a final draft of their work using word processing, and this increases their pride in what has been written. They produce their own versions of stories such as 'Watcher in the Woods', using chapters and appropriate structures. There has been an increased use of word processing since the last inspection, and this gives pupils more opportunities for redrafting their work.

By the age of sixteen, pupils write letters and address envelopes using the correct format. They write invitations, and notes to pass on messages. Older pupils prepare a series of questions to ask when they go on visits, for example, to an old people's home or to a car sales room. They keep a log of weekend activities and use the information to write a report of a day at the weekend. Writing on themes such as homelessness produces some thoughtful work showing understanding of the feelings of people without homes. More able pupils show good understanding when writing answers to questions about passages they have read. These pupils take great care with presentation, and are developing a good style of handwriting. Pupils develop their writing in other subjects, as when writing descriptions of visits to places such as the York railway museum. They learn to make their writing more interesting and develop understanding of the distinctions made by using different vocabulary.

61. Satisfactory progress has been made with the introduction of the literacy element of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, and it is being adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. However, some teachers lack confidence in teaching the mechanics of reading, such as using initial letter sounds to help recognise a word. The development of literacy is supported in all other subject policy documents, but there is no shared understanding of how this should be done. As a result, opportunities are often missed. In physical education pupils write captions for photographs of themselves engaged in various activities, and a few write in detail about activities which they enjoy. In some classrooms, display is used well to support literacy, with key words for different subjects and captions for displays. In science, pupils complete charts and worksheets to record experiments and in geography they produce posters of the impact of pollution. Pupils in Year 8 have written creatively about an oil spill on a beach.

62. Teaching was good overall in both age groups. As a result pupils' learning was also good. No teaching was less than satisfactory and it was often very good or excellent. This is an improvement on the last inspection when teaching was judged generally satisfactory. The teaching of drama is a particular strength. The best lessons are well planned with clear indications of what pupils will learn. These are communicated well to pupils ensuring they are aware of what they need to be learning. Lively introductions gain pupils' attention and involve them in the lesson, as when pupils in Year 7 were required to suggest adjectives for each letter of the alphabet. Pupils respond well to questions which are well targeted to ensure that all pupils are involved, and which give them opportunities to show their knowledge and to extend their understanding. For example, in an excellent lesson on advertising, pupils' experience was used and then, by careful questioning, extended as they discussed how to market particular television programmes. Pupils are made aware of how they are expected to behave and generally respond well, concentrating on their work and making good progress. The use of classroom assistants is well planned to provide support for pupils in managing their behaviour and with their learning. Praise is used appropriately, so that pupils know when it is deserved. This encourages pupils and helps them to concentrate on tasks and to make good progress. Lessons are rounded off with a summary of what pupils have done, and opportunities to share information with one another, thus reinforcing what has been learned in the lesson.

63. In drama lessons, there is demonstration where this is appropriate, but the teacher also encourages pupils to develop their own ideas. Very good use is made of music to create mood and to give pupils ideas. Drama is very well used with pupils with more complex needs helping them to be included with other pupils. In an excellent lesson, highly effective support from teachers and support staff enabled pupils with more complex needs to interpret and act out a range of emotions. Less progress is made when lessons are not well planned so that there is no clarity about what individuals are expected to learn. In these lessons, the work is not designed to meet the needs of different pupils. Books chosen are not always suitable for pupils, being appropriate for a younger age group. For example,

thirteen year old boys commented sequencing the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' was 'for babies'. Not all classes use 'Big Books' for following a story and, when pupils cannot see the text, opportunities to develop reading skills are lost. Not all teachers use the necessary strategies to teach pupils to read when they have difficulties. Marking is often limited to ticks, and there are few developmental comments, although teachers do sometimes discuss pupils' work with them.

64. The subject manager has been in post only since September. In that time he has worked hard to introduce the strategy for literacy and to link it to the wider English curriculum. He is clear about further developments which are required to improve standards. He recognises he had not yet had time to develop the curriculum for fourteen to sixteen-year-olds and knows this requires attention. At present, there is no nationally recognised course for pupils in Year 11. Certificate of Achievement has been introduced in Year 10. Overall, the programme for this age group is too narrow, with insufficient attention to developing writing and the literature aspects of the curriculum. Some progress has been made in assessment since the last inspection. Assessments in reading and spelling when pupils arrive in the school have been introduced, and these are now updated annually. However, they are not yet used to check progress or to identify when pupils have specific needs in regard to literacy. Teachers assess pupils using the National Curriculum and 'P' level descriptors, and targets in individual education plans, but there is a lack of consistency in recording on-going progress to provide a basis for the assessment. A satisfactory range of resources has been developed, including a reading scheme and some 'Big Books' for whole class reading. There are few non-fiction books, and books with a low reading age but of interest to older pupils to extend pupils' opportunities. At present the library is used only as a book borrowing facility, and is not seen as a place in which pupils might sit to read. The teaching of English for eleven to fourteen-year-olds makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

65. Achievement in mathematics is good for pupils in both age groups. Pupils progress well because of the consistently good teaching in this subject and the very good relationships that encourage pupils to feel positive about their lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory for eleven to fourteen-year-olds and satisfactory for fourteen to sixteen-year-olds.

66. By the age of fourteen, pupils, including those with more complex difficulties, make good progress, building on their existing knowledge of number, shape and measurement. Pupils correctly name two and three-dimensional shapes and recognise the types of shape by the number of sides and angles. Pupils increase their knowledge of time, gaining an understanding of seasons and comparing the different number of days in each month. Good use is made of pupils' timetables to examine the number of daily lessons and improve knowledge of time by investigating lesson times. Pupils' knowledge of measurement includes using rulers to measure in centimetres, using scale to represent large units of measure and constructing line graphs to show distances travelled and the time taken. Younger pupils investigate birthdays, sports preferences and television viewing and represent this information in graphical form. Pupils use their knowledge of number well to determine earnings, spending and savings and to calculate change from fifty pence or a pound. The youngest pupils understand subtraction means the difference between numbers and use cubes to check their subtractions from numbers under twenty.

67. By the age of sixteen, pupils continue to make good progress and cover a range of topics that extend and consolidate their existing mathematical knowledge. Achievements are recognised through national awards such as the Youth Award Scheme. Pupils' knowledge of

number and money improves as they budget for a selection of items bought from a catalogue, and investigate types of bank accounts. Pupils know how to write a cheque and make simple calculations to work out the balance in a bank account once a withdrawal has been made. Pupils improve their knowledge of graphs and charts when they compare prison numbers in Europe and the United Kingdom, read graphs showing temperature and rainfall and use the telephone directory to judge how common their own surnames are in the locality. Less able pupils have more difficulty interpreting graphs and make mistakes, this means their progress is slower but they continue to achieve well against their prior knowledge. Pupils consolidate their knowledge of shape when they draw mirror images to make symmetrical shapes. Older pupils collect information and use the computer to produce graphs to show their results.

68. The quality of teaching in mathematics is consistently good and this is reflected in pupils' learning. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be barely satisfactory in both age groups. Teachers now have much higher expectations of what pupils will achieve. Pupils in both age groups enjoy the subject. In all lessons, the relationship between teachers, educational support assistants and pupils is at least good and often very good. Pupils benefit from the skills of educational support assistants who are well prepared for lessons and who work patiently to reinforce the work of class teachers. In the best lessons educational support assistants note pupils' responses and progress, this provides valuable information for the teacher to plan further work. Though the school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy, there is inconsistency in using the recommended structure and the quality of planning is inconsistent. Where teachers plan well for the mental and oral part of the lesson, very good learning takes place because the lively energetic start interests pupils and they respond well. This was seen when one Year 7 class proudly counted to see how far they could get in a minute; they watched the egg timer carefully reinforcing their sense of time. Likewise pupils in Year 10 concentrated well during the brisk start to their lesson, counting backwards and forwards becoming more conversant with number. Strong features of teaching in these very good lessons was the varied and interesting activities planned by teachers, encouraging pupils to maintain interest and make very good progress. Teachers in Years 7 and 9 made good use of the overhead projector to support their teaching, this allowed Year 7 pupils to see the emerging number pattern as they counted on in twos, fives or tens and Year 9 pupils became increasingly confident in completing algebraic sentences.

69. Teachers know their pupils well and include all pupils in class activities asking questions that allow each pupil to show their knowledge and make good progress. In the better lessons teachers give useful verbal encouragement to pupils so they see their errors and improve the standard of their work. Teachers are reassuring, often starting the lessons with activities that are well within pupils' capability and then moving gradually to more taxing tasks that make pupils think and extend their mathematical knowledge. Pupils are sufficiently confident in their relationships with adults to ask for help if they need it. Where teaching is very good, the final part of the lesson is used very well to make pupils aware that they have learned something new and feel a sense of achievement. In one Year 10 class pupils' ability to count is checked regularly and displayed prominently in the classroom, this motivates them to improve their skills and they are proud of their achievement. As a result they make very good progress in their learning.

70. There are regular opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects such as geography and science. These include using graphs to compare the temperatures in London and Singapore, looking at the kilojoule values on packets and ordering them according to value, and in European Studies comparing international shoe sizes. Food studies provide ideal opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge of weights and measures. Limited use is made of new technology and of practical activities.



There are few suitable software programmes, though older pupils use a computer program to produce graphical data.

71. The subject manager is recently appointed and does not yet have an overview of what is happening in other classes. At the moment the role is underdeveloped as there are insufficient opportunities to observe and model teaching throughout the school and so good practice is not shared and built on. Due to recent changes in staffing and school population, there is inconsistency in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Assessment procedures are set up but though they give information about pupils' attainment, the data is not used to set realistic targets for pupils or to assess their progress. The school development plan shows that the school intends to improve the systems for recording pupils' progress and to improve the range of national awards for sixteen-year-olds.

## **SCIENCE**

72. Pupils' achievements and progress are good in both age groups. This is good improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. Pupils with visual impairments and pupils with more complex difficulties, receive the support specified in their statements of special educational need and make good gains in science. There is no significant variation between the achievements of girls and boys. More pupils are now achieving higher levels in national tests for fourteen-year-olds. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards the Welsh Joint Examination Board Certificate of Educational Achievement and in 2001 pupils gained distinctions for the first time. Significantly more pupils gained merit passes.

73. By the age of fourteen, pupils know the temperature at which ice will melt and recognise that it will turn from a solid to a liquid. They correctly identify the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils with more complex needs discuss how the body senses hot and cold. They test the temperature using a thermometer and record their findings. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of chemical reactions, comparing those needing heat to react, such as a lighting a bonfire, with those that do not, such as a setting jelly or mixing yeast with sugar to make bread. An appreciation of the fragility of the environment is acquired when pupils investigate water and consider ways in which water pollution can be dealt with. They are aware of chemical symbols for oxygen and water and how to test for the presence of a gas such as oxygen. Pupils watched in amazement as water rose in a gas jar during an investigation to show the necessity of oxygen in combustion and excitedly discussed what had happened. More able pupils conduct experiments and record their work with little support. Less able pupils often require considerable help to observe changes and record their findings.

74. By the age of sixteen, pupils set up an experiment, for example, using clay cubes to investigate density and mass and predict what will happen to the weight of the cubes under a variety of conditions. Some pupils explain what a 'control' is and know the importance of a fair test. Pupils in Year 10 pupils worked together enthusiastically alongside pupils from a local secondary school on an environmental project to enhance the school grounds, producing a scale plan and preparing borders, planting seeds and cuttings. They know plants need water and light in order to grow, and identify different parts of the plant such as roots and shoots. Pupils apply their knowledge of science effectively in other topics, particularly when considering social issues such as recycling, pollution or safety in the home. As such, the subject makes a significant contribution to their personal and social development.

75. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good, being good overall in both age groups. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Where

teaching is most effective, skilful questioning challenges pupils of all abilities to think, and pupils' responses are used very well to guide the direction of the lesson, thus enabling pupils to reach a deeper understanding. Good use is made of discussion to make sure pupils understand their work. Resources are used effectively to gain and maintain pupils' attention. For example, in a lesson on gases pupils investigated a piece of liver to test for oxygen and were excited by the prospect of finding a gas. In lessons that are less successful, though still satisfactory, the pace sometimes slows, pupils become less interested, and this has a negative impact on learning. Many pupils find recording their findings difficult so good use is made of commercial and teacher devised worksheets to support pupils' recording. The best lessons contain practical elements which pupils find fascinating and enjoyable. The quality of written work is usually good. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils allow pupils to feel secure and supported. Insufficient use is made of new technology to support teaching and learning. For example, there are no opportunities for pupils to use spreadsheets or computer probes and sensors to record findings. This deficit has been identified by both the subject manager, and the governor responsible for science.

76. Staff know pupils and their needs very well. Work is now well matched to pupils' abilities. This was not so at the time of the last inspection. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and activities are well-organised in ways that allow pupils' individual communication and social targets to be met. Teachers understand the subject well and opportunities for pupils to predict, record their findings and consider their results are usually well exploited. Good use of strategies such as questioning together with careful targeting means that pupils of all abilities are effectively helped to reach the right conclusions. On some occasions though, as in a lesson on combustion, pupils are not actively encouraged to conduct the experiments, and tend to remain passive spectators. This limits the extent to which pupils use their initiative and develop their independence. Teachers and education support assistants work very well together. The effective use of a support assistant acting as a technician has improved the organisation and accessibility of resources. Behaviour is managed very well, and is based on positive relationships and a consistent approach. Work is marked regularly and pupils receive appropriate encouraging feedback.

77. Overall science is well managed by an enthusiastic subject co-ordinator. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils of all ages now have good access to practical work. Schemes of work are being further developed to guide short term planning and improve coverage of National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Assessment has been introduced. However, the use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress is not sufficiently developed to support lesson planning. No classroom observation has taken place. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in forging many valuable links with mainstream schools that contribute significantly to pupils' personal and social development. Science makes a positive, relevant contribution to other subjects and has satisfactory links with literacy and numeracy.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

78. Pupils' achievements in art continue to be, overall, satisfactory. In some lessons pupils make good progress. Limited work was available for scrutiny because of changes in staffing. The work which was available shows that pupils have had experience of working in a variety of media such as crayons, felt tips and paints, and are making progress in developing techniques in using these. For example, they mix colours as they produce work based on that of other artists. Younger pupils in Year 7 produce effective work based on a variety of patterns, such as block, wavy and straight line patterns. They are developing skills in drawing as, for example, when they draw faces from descriptions which are read to them, and then paint these. By the age of fourteen, pupils have had little experience of

observational drawing, and these skills are at an early stage of development. Less able pupils have acquired a range of skills, for example, drawing careful designs for stained glass windows, and then making these from clear and coloured papers. Pupils of all abilities have attempted collages, often linked to paintings. For example, pupils in Year 9 have produced some very effective paintings and collages based on newspaper photographs of New York. Pupils of all abilities are developing a technical vocabulary as they are given opportunities to talk about their work. They have been introduced to the work of western artists, such as Dali and Picasso, and have had opportunities of painting in similar styles. Three-dimensional work is seen in activities such as mask making based on Venetian masks, and in pottery such as vases, mugs and friezes.

79. As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of the teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to good, and was good overall. In the best lessons, pupils are given clear instructions about the work they are to undertake, which ensures that they feel confident in what they have to do. They are helped to understand that planning and design are needed before they begin a piece of work. In these lessons, pupils are encouraged to become independent, both in developing their own ideas, and in the practical aspects of preparation for their activities. Good relationships create a good atmosphere for learning, as pupils feel confident to experiment with their work. Teaching is generally well supported by classroom assistants, although there are a few occasions on which some do too much for pupils. Where teaching is less successful, the reasons for carrying out tasks are not clear to pupils. They are given little choice of the activities in which they are to participate, and they show little interest because of this lack of choice. In these lessons, expectations are sometimes low, and the teacher does too much for the pupils.

80. The subject manager has been in post only one month, and planning for pupils' work is at an early stage. An outline plan has been produced which provides pupils with an appropriate range of experiences, which the co-ordinator recognises needs to be developed into a full scheme of work, to provide learning objectives and to give ideas for activities and resources. This is particularly important as several members of staff teach art. Assessment and recording are not yet consistently developed, but the co-ordinator evaluates and assesses lessons well. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity of meeting formally with others teaching art, but a meeting is planned for the near future, and to ensure consistency of practice. The art room has been recently refurbished to provide a pleasant environment in which pupils can work. Resources are limited, but there are plans to develop these over time. An art project between pupils in Year 7 and a group from Ossett High School led to the production of a variety of drawings and paintings based on Monet's garden.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

81. Pupils achievements are good. They make good progress in the aspects of this subject they study, particularly in food studies, where their progress is very good. In food studies, pupils learn how to plan and prepare meals, and by the age of fourteen they know the basic rules for health and safety in the kitchen. They plan a meal such as spaghetti, cheese and chips, successfully opening containers, grating cheese and cooking the ingredients. They understand the important rules of hygiene, and follow them carefully. Pupils operate the gas, electric and microwave ovens and the hobs safely, with those who are less able needing some supervision. Pupils of all abilities make cold meals such as a baguette sandwich and salad and are aware of the different groups of foods such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats and minerals, with more able pupils knowing what each does for the body.

82. In the workshop, pupils make a range of items from paper, card, wood and acrylic, with a soft metal item included in one project. They gradually acquire skills as they make a series of items such as an aeroplane model, different vehicles, flowers, or a letter rack. Much of the work is in wood. Pupils learn to measure accurately, cut the required sizes using different kinds of saws, smooth them down, shape them carefully, join pieces together and finish the item with paint, polish or varnish. Pupils learn to operate power machinery safely, including a sander, grinder and an electric strip heater for plastic sheets. As in food studies, they learn to use hand-held tools and equipment properly and safely. Some less able pupils, and those with more complex learning difficulties, do not have lessons in the workshop, and make models in their own classes, such as papier-mâché money boxes, weathervanes, windmills, a model village, and jointed figures of people.

83. By the age of sixteen years, pupils have practised and extended their skills in the same areas, and their achievements are recognised through a national award. Pupils learn to operate workshop machinery and kitchen equipment more independently. They cook more complex meals, and have a better understanding of the value of different foods. They plan their meals, and design various wood and plastic items such as a clock or a 'light-up' beacon. They cut wood and plastic more accurately, and drill holes into the wood, such as for a pencil holder. Less able pupils have worked with papier-mâché; and have made a small table mat using cross-stitch on coarsely woven material.

84. The teaching of design and technology is good overall. Teaching in the workshop continues to be satisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. The teaching of food studies has improved from good to very good since the last inspection. Lessons in food studies are very well planned and conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers and support staff have very high expectations that pupils should learn to use the equipment safely and hygienically, and that pupils plan as much of the work as possible. Relationships are very positive, and lessons are often fun. This means pupils learn more readily, and concentrate very well on the task. In one very good lesson the teacher was aided by very capable assistants, including one who has responsibility for running the kitchen area; the teacher led a lively discussion about which foods would be required for an 'all day breakfast'. Pupils worked very well as part of a group, discussing how to prepare and cook the ingredients. They co-operated with each other very well chopping, slicing, cooking, setting the table and finally eating together in harmony.

85. The quiet manner of the teacher in the workshop is very effective in calming pupils who can be boisterous. The teacher and support assistants work well as a team. An older pupil, on work experience, showed increased confidence and self-assurance because of the responsibilities given to him as a 'teacher's assistant'. Workshop lessons tend to run at a slower pace and some have a number of interruptions. In one satisfactory lesson, for example, the teacher discussed the design of a coat hanger for a door and allowed pupils to look through books and magazines for some ideas for the back plate. Just as they were settled and drawing their ideas the teacher took them to a machine to show them how to operate a heated strip for bending pieces of plastic. Pupils were reluctant to leave the work they had just started, the flow of the lesson was disrupted, and the original activity was not completed. Pupils behave very well in all lessons, whether they are run at a high pace with a lot of challenge in the kitchen, or at the calm and measured pace of the workshop.

86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, although there are no ambitious plans for developing and broadening the scope of what is taught. The co-ordinator is well qualified, and has produced a very good system to judge and record pupils' progress and skills. There is not, however, one overall manager for both aspects of the subject. The workshop and food studies area run separately. This has left a gap in the provision, for example in textiles. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils but is

limited in the workshop. There is no computer and little use is made of control and power equipment that works with construction kits. The accommodation is good, with the two specialist rooms. Resources for food studies are good and very well organised. Workshop and other resources are equally well organised, but limited in breadth. Since the last inspection, staff have adjusted soundly to the changes in circumstances and premises. Pupils continue to be keen, more design work is carried out now and the assessment system is used more consistently to record pupils' achievements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

87. Evidence from teachers' plans, displays, pupils' reports and their work indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with more complex needs make good progress because of small group work and very good support. Standards of achievement have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages, including those with more complex needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their understanding and skills.

88. By the age of fourteen, pupils investigating farming and the countryside use appropriate vocabulary in a diary of a farmer's year. They compare life in India and Great Britain and extend their knowledge of weather, becoming increasingly aware of the global context within which places are set. Pupils build on their knowledge of maps by using simple symbols and four figure grid references. They understand the cardinal points of the compass and use a simple mnemonic such as 'naughty elephants squirt water' as a memory aid. Through a local survey, pupils consider the location of villages and the movement of populations into towns. Good links to literacy are made when pupils do their own research. They use appropriate vocabulary such as 'magma', 'vent' and 'cone' during discussions, and label diagrams appropriately. Pupils know that volcanoes can be active, dormant or extinct.

89. By the age of sixteen, pupils achieve Wakefield Certificates of Achievement in a number of units. They plan European holidays using brochures, using their mathematical knowledge well to find out about flight times, hotel costs and work out the total price of the holiday. They compare international shoes sizes with those in the United Kingdom, further developing international awareness. Pupils consider the advantages and disadvantages of modes of travel to France, identifying popular methods of travel, for example ferries and planes, showing a high level of interest when discussing issues related to the Channel Tunnel such as cost and usefulness. Whilst working on an environmental unit of study, a group of older pupils with more complex needs become aware of problems caused by litter. Pupils suggest a variety of ways in which the problem might be solved including the increasing the number of bins, fines, signs and closed circuit television. They use their ideas to create posters, using slogans such as 'OY, there are more bins – Use them!'

90. The quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory overall with a small amount of good or very good teaching in both age groups. Relationships are supportive and encouraging. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good, leading to appropriate lesson content. New ideas are explained clearly to pupils. Teachers have high expectations and this leads to good learning. Good use of questioning gives pupils suitable opportunities to show their knowledge and contribute to lessons, whilst allowing teachers to check skills and extend pupils' learning. Teaching is most effective in lessons where teachers plan interesting activities so that pupils are keen to learn. This was so in a Year 9 lesson about volcanoes. Following appropriate discussion, pupils were encouraged to work as part of a team whilst undertaking their research using text books, the Internet and CDROM. Where teaching is less effective, the pace is slow so pupils learning slows. In lessons where teaching ensures that there is a brisk pace and clear and consistent expectations of behaviour, pupils concentrate and participate effectively, which allows them to make good

progress. Pupils' work is marked in a consistent and constructive manner. The contribution made by education support assistants is good, and is a particular feature of many lessons.

91. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The manager, who has been responsible for the subject since the last inspection, is currently revising and updating the policy and schemes of work to include pupils with more complex needs. A subject development plan has been established since the last inspection which has suitable priorities to raise standards. Although there has been satisfactory improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection, there is still no formal system for the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but has had no opportunity to observe teaching. Currently assessment of pupil progress is being addressed and samples of work are being moderated. Resources are good and used appropriately. However, teachers make insufficient use of information communication technology to support pupils' learning within the subject. A wide range of visits to places such as the water treatment works, a local wind farm amongst others, enhance learning opportunities. Homework is used when necessary to reinforce and extend learning.

## **HISTORY**

92. Progress in history is good and pupils in both age groups achieve well. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory. Pupils also make good progress in listening and speaking particularly in the question and answer sessions which form a large part of lessons. Writing is also developed through regular opportunities to record their thoughts and ideas in lessons and following visits to places of historical interest. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of the passage and language of time. Their cultural development is promoted successfully through numerous visits to museums, castles and other sites of interest to support their studies.

93. By age fourteen, pupils with more complex needs make good progress in their study of mediaeval Britain. They are developing an awareness of what it must have been like to be afflicted by the Plague through descriptions of life at the time, and know that the popular song 'Ring-a-ring o'roses' has its origins in those times. They are helped to cook and taste food made using recipes of the time. This useful link with food studies helps to reinforce learning. Pupils make good progress using a range of source materials to investigate and hypothesise about the events of the past. By the age of fourteen, they are aware of the development of castles as they are shown photographs and drawings of castles erected through the ages. They are encouraged to make observations about features such as building materials, moats and castellations and to guess why castles were built for example in Norman times following the Conquest. Pupils are acquiring a good insight into life in Tudor times. They recognise the differences in baking and other cooking techniques between then and now. Pupils know some of the main reasons for the migration of people over the centuries from rural areas to towns and cities. They are aware of some reasons for social unrest in the eighteenth century and about the social structure typical in small villages. Pupils are developing a sense of the passage of time as in an exercise to place in chronological sequence, pictures of the changing landscape around Leeds from 1750 to 1900.

94. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen continue to make good progress. By the age of sixteen, they know that people during World War 2 had a limited diet compared to that of today. They know that there were shortages of foodstuffs and that home grown substitutes were used for scarce commodities such as sugar. Pupils appreciate some of the difficulties experienced in wartime when they taste a pudding cooked to a recipe of the time. They peruse original materials such as ration books and posters to gain an insight

into conditions at the time. Pupils recognise and record outstanding examples of change since the last war including high rise flats, television and supermarkets.

95. Teaching is good overall. The level of challenge is now good. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Subject knowledge is good which results in lessons that are well planned and taught. An enthusiasm for the subject results in a level of detailed description that brings past times alive in pupils' imaginations. Introductions are clear and concise so that lessons get off to a good start and no time is lost. Relationships are very good and this leads to lessons that are purposeful and enjoyable. Teachers and classroom assistants use encouragement well to promote learning through engaging pupils' attention and interest. Teachers are working towards the production of pupils' booklets that bring together all the materials, including writing, in a particular topic. Teachers make good use of stimuli that are close to pupils' interests so that learning can build from a secure base. Staff introduce new significant words carefully to make sure that pupils' progress is not hindered by confusion over meaning.

96. Subject management, by a history specialist, is good. There has been a clear improvement in the planning since the last inspection. Schemes of work are being developed which relate more clearly to pupils' interests and abilities. Though the co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, he has not had the chance to observe in classrooms to make sure that standards of teaching and learning are consistent. Assessment procedures have been improved. The co-ordinator recognises further work is needed in this area and is developing procedures which will track pupils' progress and provide information to help teachers in their planning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

97. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Their achievements are good. By the age of fourteen years, almost all pupils have learned to use the keyboard, the mouse, and screen menus without help. They write passages of text for other lessons, such as poetry or newspaper reports, adding large coloured titles, borders and pictures. Pupils change the style, size and colour of the print, and make corrections to spelling, layout and grammar. They create graphs from tables of data which they have collected, such as their favourite chocolate bars, animals or sports. Different art programs are used to create pictures with a painting style, or for making repeating patterns or T-shirt logos. Less able pupils and those with more complex needs generally need more help in remembering how to use these programs, but all pupils manage to use them successfully. In mathematics, pupils use spreadsheets to create tables about, for example, the times of different television programmes, and what they are about. A robotic toy is programmed to move in the required directions. Pupils also use a screen version of the toy to navigate around different obstacles. Many pupils know how to access the Internet, and during the inspection used this in their studies in other lessons, such as in finding out about the Nyiragongo volcano in the Congo, or about witches as part of their English work.

98. By the time they are sixteen years old, pupils have extended and developed their skills well in each area. They produce more complicated graphs, with three different sets of data in one graph. Pupils look for specific information from more complex databases, such as a very good one the teacher has created about holidays – with all the information about flights, resorts, hotels, prices, airports and departures. They use the Internet, to send emails. Many pupils have made calendars, complete with pictures and ornate borders, and have used a scanner and a digital camera to make pictures to add to their work. Though some have extended skills gained in the computer room by using computers to support work in other subjects, particularly in English, this aspect of information technology is

underdeveloped. This is largely because of a lack of modern computers in most classrooms, especially in the science, design and technology, and art rooms.

99. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology are good. Teaching in lessons in the computer room is good for younger pupils, and very good for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen. In classrooms teaching is satisfactory, but is held back by the lack of modern computers. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very well as a rule, and the activities are well structured, with clear aims for what pupils will learn. The knowledgeable teaching, along with very capable support by classroom assistants, especially one allocated to the computer suite, helps pupils get the most out of lessons. Teachers keep good order. Relationships with pupils are positive, often being enthusiastic. Staff have high expectations for effort, behaviour and concentration. Pupils respond very well. They behave well, are interested, and concentrate throughout each lesson, trying hard to understand the work and to do it correctly. One very capable teacher carries out most of the teaching in the computer suite. This she does very well, and consistently, and has the full attention of all pupils throughout each lesson, with consequent good and very good learning. Other classroom teachers also use the computer room each week. In one very good lesson with older pupils, the teacher had produced her own database for pupils to find information. She explained it very clearly, and kept up a very demanding pace throughout the lesson, with the very good help of two assistants. She praised pupils well, and gave them a lot of support where needed, ending with a look for related information on the Internet, and a brief outline about what they would be doing over the next few weeks. In contrast, a satisfactory lesson by another teacher saw planning that was sketchy, and an introduction that was held up because the teacher was not able to get the full attention of all pupils. The teacher was not successful in maintaining pupils' concentration for the whole lesson, consequently their learning slowed at times.

100. Subject management is very good. The co-ordinator, who teaches most classes, has a good knowledge of the subject, and has had a lot of additional training. The co-ordinator has written long-term plans of what should be taught, and is currently re-writing these to include new national guidelines to provide support and guidance for colleagues. Good systems are in place for recording pupils' achievements and progress, and this is used well in deciding what will be taught in the next lessons, or in future years. There has been a major purchase of new computers for the computer suite since the last inspection and this has greatly improved the provision. There was very little use of computers in the classrooms, and the few computers that existed were obsolete, this has improved to a large extent, and there are clear plans to develop things further. The school awaits more computers from the closing school. These should help the current situation in most classes where there are few, if any, computers. The co-ordinator has suitable plans to develop the subject, such as fitting a large interactive screen for teaching with, and increasing the nationally recognised awards. There has been a tremendous improvement in this subject since the previous inspection, when the long term planning, teaching, learning and progress were all considered to be unsatisfactory. These are now at least good, and often very good. The provision of the computer room, and its use, are very good.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

101. The key issue to teach a modern foreign language to pupils aged fourteen to sixteen has been partially remedied. French was introduced to this age group following the last inspection. However, staffing difficulties have resulted in there being no French taught to pupils in the current Year 11. This has not been the case until this year. Previously pupils in this age group have achieved nationally recognised awards. Pupils in the current Year 10



have embarked on a similar course. Pupils continue to achieve well in lessons. However, pupils aged eleven to fourteen have only one lesson each week. Many find it difficult to remember new vocabulary and so a large part of each lesson is spent revising work done previously, so achievement could be better. Staff try to compensate for this by greeting their pupils and taking the register in French which allows pupils to recall vocabulary and respond appropriately.

102. By the age of fourteen, pupils know the vocabulary for numbers to twenty, with more able pupils counting to 100. They know their colours and the names of family members. Pupils greet each other and their teacher, and ask and reply to questions about their name and age. More able pupils combine two responses such as, "Je m'appelle Liam, j'ai douze ans". When acting out scenes in a restaurant, pupils request food and drink. Though some are shy when trying to pronounce new vocabulary, most make a good attempt. Most pupils have difficulty reading French words. Nevertheless, they make a good attempt at matching, for example, words to numbers and pictures. By the age of sixteen, pupils give more information about their brothers, sisters and pets. Some know the vocabulary for the subjects they study and useful phrases to help them when on holiday. More able pupils understand written information about two or more of their family members. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of France and French customs. They use the information well to plan a holiday and cook a meal. This makes a useful contribution to their awareness of other cultures.

103. The quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good, being good overall. Most lessons are taught by class teachers who, though not language specialists, work hard to make lessons meaningful. Most plan opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write the language. However, many are reluctant to use the target language to give instructions such as 'écoutez', listen, or 'regardez', look. Most lessons end with a game to strengthen what has been learned. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were unsettled on arrival. Instead of gaining their attention by a lively question and answer session, the teacher moved immediately into an activity using a tape recorder and following text which required high levels of concentration. Pupils could not sustain this and so became bored and disruptive. This the teacher allowed to continue for too long before changing the activity, with the result that very little learning took place. In contrast, in the lesson where teaching was very good, the teacher had planned numerous activities to maintain pupils' interest and to help them progress. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson, hugging themselves with glee when they succeeded in pronouncing new vocabulary correctly and when they gave the correct response to a question. The teacher persistently repeated new vocabulary and encouraged pupils to repeat and echo words, thus improving their pronunciation. A short video clip was used effectively to reinforce what pupils had learned and to wet their appetite for the next topic.

104. The subject is currently without a manager but is overseen satisfactorily by the deputy headteacher. A new manager is to be appointed when the staffing complement increases at the start of the next school year. Resources continue to be satisfactory and supplemented by teachers as when pupils sampled a French breakfast. Pupils increase their knowledge of French culture through discussions about French customs and by singing songs in French at the annual carol service.

## **MUSIC**

105. Music is taught to pupils aged eleven to fourteen. Achievement and progress is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore sounds and, by the age of fourteen, are learning the rudiments of composition and using simple scores to help them play a known tune such as a television theme. Pupils

think carefully about characters such as 'Tom and Jerry' or 'Dennis the Menace' and experiment with the keyboard to choose notes that might represent them. Pupils are sometimes initially reluctant to perform their tunes but respond well to support from their teacher and educational support assistant. Regular opportunities to use percussion instruments and experiment with rhythm and speed encourage younger pupils' understanding of beat and rhythm. Their appreciation of the value or worth of notes is supported by appropriate matching games before they start to use their instruments. In Year 7 pupils used their listening skills well to help them recognise the high and low notes of the double bass and violin. They were enthralled as their teacher showed them a cello and violin, and eagerly waited their turn to hold the instruments and to mime the plucking and playing. Pupils are enthusiastic about their music lessons, one boy bringing in a photograph of a cellist to show the rest of the class and another leaving the lesson very happily singing "I Am The Music Man".

106. Pupils in Year 10 who have music lessons enjoy themselves immensely. They made good progress in their ability to perform a simple tune on the keyboard; using equipment sensibly and remaining totally focused when they concentrated on playing 'Merrily We Roll Along'. Pupils enjoyed making music and glowed with pleasure after their well applauded performances for each other. At the end of the lesson, pupils joined in enthusiastically as they sang 'Hey Baby' complete with actions. This lesson reinforced well the idea that music is entertainment and to be enjoyed.

107. Four music lessons were seen during the inspection and the quality of teaching was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a commitment to making music pleasurable. The educational support assistants provide invaluable encouragement so that pupils become more confident, improving their self-esteem. The management of pupils is good and teachers' individual knowledge of pupils' skills means the work is appropriate and pupils of all abilities make good progress in composing, appreciating and performing music. Music lessons are enjoyable, epitomised by lively teaching and pupils' positive response to the opportunities to make their own music.

108. Leadership and management of music are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce a scheme of work based on National Curriculum requirements. Assessment procedures have been introduced, and the co-ordinator has developed a useful recording system to make sure that if pupils change groups they still get their entitlement to all aspects of the music curriculum. Visiting musicians have run workshops for pupils and this has increased the profile of music in the school. Music contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development through encouraging self-confidence and making pupils aware that there is a range of music to be enjoyed. Future plans include joint ventures with neighbouring schools to hear an Afro/Caribbean steel band and a Rastafarian Rap artist. Resources for the subject are adequate but there is a shortage of tuned instruments and instruments from other cultures. The co-ordinator has clear plans to develop the focus on singing and to support teachers in using music to help other subjects. The use of music to create an atmosphere in assemblies is underdeveloped.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

109. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and achieve highly for their ability. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory for pupils aged eleven to fourteen and unsatisfactory for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen. The improvement is due to highly effective subject management and very good teaching. A very good scheme of work has been developed by the co-ordinator which is challenging to pupils of all abilities.

110. All pupils know they should warm up the body to prepare for strenuous activity. They are aware that their pulse rate increases when they have been exercising. Pupils know the body benefits from the aerobic exercises they all practice as part of their health related fitness training. More able pupils realise the heart needs to be kept healthy by regular exercise. All use the equipment safely in their gymnastics lessons and are increasingly aware of the need for safety. One boy in Year 8 was quick to spot a lack of mats under apparatus when the teacher asked them to look for any missing safety features.

111. By the age of fourteen, pupils with more complex needs move over, under and through apparatus. They make very good progress acquiring basketball skills. They throw and catch with increasing accuracy, are developing their shooting and, for their ability, have a good grasp of tactics in a game of mat ball. More able pupils make very good progress in dance. Though some find it difficult to keep to the beat, they are successfully tackling a very good range of dances including line and Greek dancing. In a creative dance lesson they made excellent progress in their performance of a dance inspired by 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice.' A wheel chair user is sensitively and appropriately included in the performance and makes a valuable contribution. Pupils are very enthusiastic about dance. When in the creative dance lesson it was suggested that they perform the dance one more time for the visitor they clapped and cheered. Their concentration and commitment are generally very good. Pupils continue to make good progress as they get older. By the age of sixteen they build a sequence of steps given to them by the teacher in a country-dancing lesson. They listen very well and are becoming much better at modelling their moves on the people about them.

112. Pupils of all ages make very good progress in developing skills in a good range of sports including volleyball, table tennis and swimming. The level of challenge presented to pupils is very good. Teachers make sure that there are no dead spots in lessons. Pupils are active all the time, engaged in a very good range of activities that successfully and progressively build skills. For example, in table tennis older pupils learn basic positions and bat and ball skills progressively and quickly build to rallies. They learn the terms used such as 'rally' and 'smash'. In badminton they make very good progress in footwork and serving.

113. Teaching is very good. Teachers give very clear introductions that recap on what has previously been achieved and then set out ways in which they will make progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use this to devise ways of teaching skills which are easily grasped by their pupils. In a basketball lesson, for example, pupils made very good progress by playing an introductory form of the game 'mat ball' to teach tackling and passing skills without being hampered by the more demanding shooting skills. Those come later once pupils' motivation and involvement are assured. In badminton they are taught step by step to serve, return and smash. In this way they are given the confidence to move on to the conventional game in good time. In all lessons pupils' enjoyment was evident. Teachers' organisational skills are very good and because of this lessons have pace and no time is lost, for example, in setting out equipment or sorting groups. In order to achieve this teachers keep up a constant dialogue that moves lessons along, giving expert advice, praise and motivates pupils. Teachers' sense of timing is very good and activities last just long enough to offer the opportunity to gain skills. As a direct result in lessons with pupils who present emotional and behavioural difficulties there are in fact few occasions when teaching and learning is sidetracked by inappropriate behaviour. Teachers and classroom assistants work very sensitively with pupils who may become upset and, discreetly and quietly, keep them on task. Lessons are always purposeful. Teachers work hard to devise ways in which all pupils, no matter what their learning difficulties might be, are included. During the inspection an older pupil from the school, as part of the work experience programme, helped teachers in lessons. Teachers made sure that he was fully involved in supporting pupils. As a result he provided a valuable role model for younger pupils. Teachers and assistants give

pupils a sense of responsibility by making sure that they are included in appropriate ways in the setting out and return of equipment, and the assessing and recording of their own performance. Teachers make sure that their experiences are full and enjoyable and the result is that they leave lessons with a real sense of achievement.

114. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has tackled a number of issues raised in the report and has made substantial improvement in all. Assessment procedures are now very good and provide a detailed and useful profile of pupils' progress which is used to help plan future work. The co-ordinator is presently developing a record of achievement. The proposal involves bringing together all the information pupils generate in the wide variety of activities experienced in and out of school, as well as other information including that gained from the health related fitness training programme. This will provide a record that will be valuable to the school as a record of progress and to individuals as a source of pride in their achievement during their time at the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. The co-ordinator regularly observes other teachers and the results of observations are recorded and discussed. The teaching of physical education makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

115. Pupils' achievements have improved since the last inspection and are now good by the ages of fourteen and sixteen. By the age of fourteen, pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths. They have a suitable knowledge of the Christian year, knowing the importance of Lent. They recognise the significance of being a Christian and have a suitable understanding of Christian Baptism. Pupils compare religious celebrations and know that Jewish Hanukkah and Hindu Diwali are all festivals of light. Pupils know the Bible is important to Christians and have knowledge of a number of stories from the Old and New Testament such as Joseph, and some of the parables Jesus told. When discussing the story of the Good Samaritan, they consider the feelings of each participant commenting that the Levite was 'selfish and unkind'.

116. Pupils aged fourteen to sixteen study 'Beliefs and Values' as part of a nationally recognised qualification. They have a good knowledge of Islam, talking confidently about the 'Five Pillars' and the sanctity of the Koran. As part of their studies 'Belief in Action', they begin to appreciate poverty, homelessness and the social effects of alcohol. They have a good awareness of the work of organisations such as Oxfam, Barnado's and Christian Crisis. Pupils in this age group improve their writing by composing and sending letters to various charities requesting information. Pupils are well prepared for adult life as they consider moral issues such as rights and responsibilities, for example, why people marry.

117. The quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good, being good overall in both age groups, which is an improvement on the last inspection. Groups are now smaller so more discussions take place. Work is better matched to pupils' needs so pupils learn more readily. Staff recognise that some ideas are difficult to teach but are imaginative in the way they present them. This was well illustrated in a lesson with pupils with more complex needs. Pupils were learning about God and the aim was to understand that God can have different names yet still be one. Pupils chuckled as their teacher divulged the numerous names she is called by her friends and members of her family, but clearly recognised she is just one person. Teachers have respect for the contributions and beliefs of all pupils. They encourage pupils to share their beliefs, as when a Year 11 Muslim pupil discussed his preparation and thoughts when observing Ramadan and how difficult it is to go without food. Where teaching is most successful, teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to think and reason their answers. For example, when discussing the Good Samaritan, pupils were encouraged to consider 'Why is that person important to the story?' In good lessons pupils

are expected to use their knowledge to read new words, or those they already know, on the 'word wall' associated with the story. In the minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, though still satisfactory, discussions go on too long so pupils lose concentration, and occasionally the work lacks challenge. For example, pupils coloured a sheet as opposed to recording their work in writing. Overall teachers have high expectations of pupils, so pupils in both age groups have produced a good volume of neatly presented work.

118. There has been good improvement in the management of the subject. Although the co-ordinator has only been in post for six months she is very clear about its strengths and weaknesses. She has made sure that topics are not repeated in different age groups, as was the case at the last inspection. Staff teach the Wakefield Locally Agreed Syllabus, which is due for review. Documentation has improved and now provides helpful guidance for staff. Though staff have grown in confidence since the last inspection and this is reflected in pupils' learning, the co-ordinator recognises that some are less certain when considering the meaning of faith. Resources have improved since the last inspection with interesting objects being acquired for a number of world faiths. However, there are too few objects to support the teaching of Christianity. The teaching of religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

## **PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

119. Pupils make sound progress in their personal and social development lessons, and achievement is sound in both age groups. By the age of fourteen, pupils have learned to behave well, how to get along with their classmates, and how to respond appropriately in lessons. Much of this is the result of specific lessons to discuss what is expected in school, whether in class, the dining room or the playground. They understand what to do if anyone is bullied, standing up for themselves and their friends. Pupils begin to understand the importance of body language and facial expressions and why it is important to take care of their appearance. All pupils have individual behavioural targets, and make progress in learning not to interrupt in lessons, in ignoring distractions and joining in class discussions. Pupils are aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of the school community, or as citizens of England. Many help to run a tuck shop, or a café in their class, and most have been involved in raising money for charity. On a wider scale, pupils have a basic understanding of how laws affect them and begin to form opinions about the government and human rights issues.

120. By the age of sixteen, pupils have developed a greater understanding of citizenship. They are developing strategies to deal with life's problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. Pupils taking part in an environmental improvement project begin to appreciate the need to conserve natural resources. As part of a nationally recognised course they improve their skills in food studies and have a basic knowledge of first aid and road safety. Many pupils develop a sense of responsibility through work experience. Leisure activities add to their growing sense of responsibility and social awareness so by the time they leave school, they understand the need to be sensible and well-behaved people who think about the needs of others, as well as their own.

121. The quality and teaching and learning is satisfactory. When lessons are part of the programme, they are well structured and well planned. Teachers encourage good discussions that stimulate pupils to think, to express opinions and to be more aware of matters beyond their immediate experience. Staff and pupils enjoy very good relationships that help the learning to move along well. Teachers give good praise where it is deserved. Sometimes, when teachers are aware of a pupil's individual social or behavioural target, they create opportunities for pupils to practise them, for example, being a calm member of a class, or being kind to people other than their best friend. In one particularly good lesson,

the teacher looked at several global issues, using a 'brainstorming' discussion to get pupils thinking about the environment and disasters that might occur. Pupils imagined that the whole area was flooded, and discussed how it would affect them. The lesson continued very well, with very good rapport between staff and pupils, very good support from a classroom assistant, making very good use of recent news items. Some lessons are not so well planned and organised, however, and pupils do not progress so well. One, for instance, saw pupils making portraits of themselves on paper plates, to show that they were all different, but the teacher did not reinforce the idea of being different, and the lesson focused on skills such as colouring, cutting and pasting. Whilst many lessons following the theme from assemblies are good and make a useful contribution to pupils' social development, others are not such positive experiences for social development. One was merely an opportunity to finish work that had not been completed earlier. Another morning lesson was a discussion about being tolerant of each other's differences, but this was conducted very formally with pupils at desks rather than in a more intimate circle. Pupils were not so responsive and were reluctant to volunteer information unless under close pressure to do so.

122. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although they are in a state of transition from one co-ordinator leaving almost two years ago, and a new one taking up post recently. This is linked to the lack of development and a previously inappropriate scheme of work. The new co-ordinator is monitoring planning, but has not observed in classrooms. A new scheme of work has been introduced recently, following the unsuitability of one that had been tried earlier. This is very appropriate to the needs of pupils, although it is not yet fully embedded in the school, and some teachers need training in how to teach it. The assessment of how well pupils are developing is satisfactory, but is not used consistently by all teachers. Although teachers may be aware of the targets that each pupil has for behaviour, there is not a consistent way for them to monitor how well pupils are behaving or developing during each day, especially when the pupils go to several different teachers each day. Resources are very limited, but the co-ordinator has plans to develop them, and to start other projects such as a revival of the school council, a personal skills group, and becoming a member of the 'Healthy Schools' programme.