

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH HALIFAX HIGH SCHOOL

Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107561

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Lorraine Page

Reporting inspector: Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 May 2002

Inspection number: 199642

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Park Lane
Exley
Halifax
West Yorkshire

Postcode: HX3 9LG

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Karen Saville

Date of previous inspection: 11 May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27050	Val Blackburn	Team inspector	Science	
15396	Ron Bulman	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Modern foreign languages	
22849	Ronald Catlow	Team inspector	Geography	
4145	Christine Harrison	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics	
31779	Vivian Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology	
12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17868	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Religious education	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
8360	Fred Peacock	Team inspector	Music	
8672	Michael Roberts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31680	Philip Redican	Team inspector	Art and design	

15372	Patricia Walker	Team inspector	English as an additional language English	
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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The South Halifax High School is a mixed comprehensive educating boys and girls in the age range of 11-16. There are 381 pupils on roll, which is much smaller than most other secondary schools. One third of pupils, above the national average, are eligible for free school meals. There are five pupils for whom English is an additional language, although none is at the early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is well above the national average; the numbers with Statements of Special Educational Needs are also well above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is very low, in part as a result of the presence of selective schools in Halifax. The school attracts pupils from over twenty primary schools in the Halifax area. For the ward in which the school is located, the percentages of adults with higher education and of children living in high social class households is below the national averages. The proportion of minority ethnic children living in the ward is three times the national average, but only 15 of these pupils attend the school as most live closer to another school. The school participates in the Halifax Learning Zone, an Educational Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Standards are well below average when compared to national averages. However, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes in lessons and around the school. Attendance levels are very low. Teaching is consistently good and leadership and management of the school are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are rising at a rate higher than the national trend.
- The quality of teaching across the school is consistently good.
- The quality of relationships is very good and this results in good behaviour throughout the school.
- The quality of pastoral and academic support for all pupils is very good.
- The use of assessment to raise pupils' standards is good.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- The significant minority of parents who are not supporting the school's efforts to improve attendance levels.
- The very low levels of literacy and speaking and listening skills.
- The opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1998. The school has made good progress since then. Although the number of pupils in the school has fallen the proportion of pupils with special educational needs has increased. The proportion of pupils reaching the national average in the National Curriculum tests by the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science has increased significantly since 1998. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C has increased from nine per cent in 1997 to 17 per cent in 2001. The proportion of pupils gaining one or more GCSE grades A*-G has increased from 74 per cent in 1997 to 100 per cent in 2001. This significant progress was recognised by Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with a School Achievement Award in 2001.

In tackling the key issues since the last report the governors have made good progress. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching. Target setting for pupils is now a strength of the school. Limited progress has been made in developing independent learning opportunities for pupils. Despite strenuous efforts, attendance levels have improved but remain very low.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E*	E*	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

E indicates that the school is in the lowest five per cent nationally*

Pupils' results in national tests at age 14 in the Year 2001 were well below the national average in English and science. Pupils' results in mathematics were very low. Overall boys perform better than girls, which is against the national pattern. The trend in the school's results for all three core subjects is above the national trend. When compared with pupils in similar schools, pupils in the school achieve results which are well below average in English and science and very low in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of 6 and above is well below average for English and very low for mathematics and science. These poor results are largely a reflection of the very low level of attainment pupils have on entering the school.

In the most recent GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades was very low in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades at 100 per cent, was very high. When compared with pupils in schools with similar backgrounds the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades was well below average and the proportion gaining five or more A*-G grades was close to the average. The proportion gaining one or more A*-G grades was very high. Analysis of the results for individual subjects in 2001 indicates that there were relatively better results achieved by pupils taking English literature, drama and GNVQ business. Pupils gained relatively poorer results in art and design, computer studies and statistics. Both boys' and girls' results were well below the national average. However, boys perform relatively better than girls which is against the national trend. The trend in pupils' average points score over the past five years was above the national trend.

In the work actually seen during the inspection, pupils were achieving standards which were closer to the national average than test and GCSE results would suggest. This is due to the very high number of pupils with very poor attendance records. Those pupils who attend school regularly are achieving standards which are close to the national average. In relation to their attainment on entry to the school pupils are making good progress in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory progress in Year 10 and 11. Pupils are achieving good standards in English (Years 7 to 9), art and design (Years 7 to 9), music, ICT, modern foreign languages and drama in relation to their prior levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress in all other subjects except for religious education where pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Standards of literacy are low and restrict pupils' access to the curriculum. Standards of speaking and listening are low and pupils lack confidence in expressing their ideas clearly. Standards in numeracy are low. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are low in Years 7 to 11 but are improving.

In 2001 the school exceeded the targets set for the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A*-C, with its best ever set of results, even though these remain low by national standards. Targets were also exceeded for the proportion of pupils gaining one or more A*-G and for the average GCSE points score.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Throughout the school pupils are attentive and work hard in all their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because the school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive and contribute well to the progress pupils make. In particular, older pupils are mature and self-disciplined. There are limited opportunities for pupils to show initiative in lessons.
Attendance	Very low. Despite extensive efforts by the school to encourage attendance, a significant number of pupils do not attend school regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 11 and has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good in English in all years. It is good in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The teaching of science is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is very good in drama and in Years 10 and 11 for ICT. Teaching is good in most other subjects; however, teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 in history and music. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is satisfactory in history. All 97 lessons observed during the inspection week were judged to be satisfactory or better.

A particular strength of teaching is the very good management of pupils in lessons, based on very good relationships between pupils and their teachers. There is an effective range of teaching methods to meet the needs and engage the interest of pupils. Occasionally pupils are over-dependent on their teachers and opportunities for taking initiative and responsibility in lessons are restricted. Teachers are effective in monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Especially in Years 7 to 9, teachers make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their levels of performance.

In the main, pupils respond well to the quality of teaching they receive. The pace of learning by most pupils is good but poor listening skills restrict the progress they make. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory and the level of challenge meets the needs of all pupils, allowing them to make satisfactory gains in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, especially by the learning support assistants. The small numbers of pupils with English as an additional language do not require additional support as none of these pupils is at the early stages of learning English.

The teaching of literacy is unsatisfactory in most subjects. Whilst most departments teach the specialised vocabulary of their own subjects they do not offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion or in a range of writing tasks. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory. The mathematics department has made a good start in implementing the Key Stage 3 numeracy strategy. However, in other subjects, there are not yet enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their number skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets statutory requirements except for the allocation for religious education in Years 10 and 11. Careers education is good; sex and drugs education is effective. Links with local colleges extend the range of opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive sensitive, skilful and effective support from both teachers and learning support assistants. Teaching is very good when pupils are withdrawn from lessons to receive extra help with literacy.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development mainly through good pastoral care for pupils, giving them a sense of their own worth. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory and prepares pupils effectively for living in a multi-cultural society.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Good. The school has very effective links with the majority of parents to support pupils' progress. A significant minority of parents have not responded to the school's efforts to improve attendance.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils' pastoral and academic development is carefully monitored and supported to help them reach their full potential.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher provides good leadership and management for the school. She has the loyal support of her staff in raising standards. The overall quality of pastoral and curriculum leadership and management is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school. They are taking a prominent role in the future development of the school site. They are failing to ensure that all pupils are receiving their full entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11 and a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Since the last inspection the appointment of a senior member of staff to lead on the evaluation of teaching and learning has led to significant improvements. Other aspects of the school's work are rigorously monitored and evaluated by the acting headteacher and her senior staff.
The strategic use of resources	Good. This is a very well funded school. Resources are effectively targeted to meet the needs identified in the school improvement plan. Weaknesses in accommodation are being tackled through the proposals, at an advanced stage, to replace the existing buildings. Staffing is good with very good support being provided by non-teaching staff. Resources are satisfactory. Investment in new technologies is good. The library is underdeveloped to support independent learning. The school is effectively applying the principles of best value especially as they relate to the

	development of the site.
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PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations for pupils • Teaching is good • Pupils make good progress in the school • Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems • The school is helping their children to become mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils receiving the right amount of homework • The school working more closely with parents • The range of extra-curricular activities • Being kept better informed about their child's progress

Most parents are appreciative of the quality of education the school provides for pupils. Inspectors agree with parents on the aspects which please them most. Inspectors judge that pupils receive appropriate levels of homework. Inspectors judge that there are sufficient opportunities for the school to work closely with parents. Inspectors agree with the minority of parents who feel there is a limited range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors judge that the quality of information provided for parents about pupils' progress is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry is very low when compared to the national average. In particular their standards of literacy are very poor with the majority of pupils having reading ages below those expected.
2. Pupils' results in national tests at age fourteen in the Year 2001 were well below the national average in English and science. Pupils' results in mathematics were very low. Overall boys perform better than girls, which is against the national pattern. The trend in the school's results for all three core subjects is above the national trend. In part this is due to the effectiveness of the assessment of pupils' work which enables them to identify achievable targets for improving their work. The low levels of test results reflect the poor attendance patterns for a significant number of pupils. When compared with pupils in schools with similar backgrounds, pupils in the school achieve results, which are well below average in English and science and very low in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of 6 and above is well below for English and very low for mathematics and science, which is a reflection of the very low level of attainment pupils have on entering the school and the number of selective schools within the area.
3. In the most recent GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*- C grades was very low in comparison with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades at 100 per cent was very high. When compared with pupils in similar schools the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades was well below average and the proportion gaining five or more A*-G grades was close to the average. The proportion gaining one or more A*-G grades at 100 per cent was very high. One of the reasons why the school does so well in the proportion of pupils achieving one or more GCSE grades is the quality of the curriculum which enables all pupils to be entered for examinations in Year 10. In part it is also a reflection of the good quality of support provided for pupils with special educational needs.
4. Analysis of the results shows that many individual pupils do well but the school's results are seriously impaired by the poor results achieved by pupils with poor attendance records. For example, when results are calculated on the proportion of Year 11 pupils whose attendance was 90 per cent or above the analysis shows that 43 per cent of these pupils gained five or more GCSE A*-C grades compared with the official figure based on all Year 11 pupils of 17 per cent. All but one of the pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 had been pupils at the school since the beginning of Year 7. The school has a high number of pupils who join the school after the normal admission date. One in seven pupils arrive at the school during Years 7 to 11, often from other schools in the area. The results for this group of pupils are particularly low.
5. There were relatively better results in 2001 in English literature, drama and GNVQ business. Pupils in art and design, computer studies and statistics gained relatively poorer results. Both boys' and girls' results were well below the national average. Boys perform at least as well as and sometimes better than girls in several subjects including science and languages. This is against the national trend where girls outperform boys. Following training in the development of teaching and learning strategies, several departments have adopted successful strategies to improve boys' attainment, such as the selection of suitable texts in English.
6. The trend in pupils' average points score over the past five years is above the national trend. In part this is explained by improvements in the quality of teaching but also because, although attendance is still very low, attendance levels have improved in recent years.

7. Pupils enter the school with standards which are very low. By the end of Year 9, although standards are still very low, most pupils are achieving well and are making good progress. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. In all years the quality of work in lessons and pupils' attainment are higher than are reflected in test and examination results. This is a reflection of improvements in teaching and because the work seen was that of pupils who attend school regularly.
8. In the work seen during the inspection, by the end of Year 9 pupils' standards of attainment are below or well below national standards in all subjects. This represents at least satisfactory achievement in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' achievement is good in English, art and design, ICT, modern foreign languages and music in Years 7 to 9. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except for religious education, where it is unsatisfactory because the amount of time for religious education is insufficient to meet the needs of the 'Agreed Syllabus'.
9. By the end of Year 11, pupils' standards of attainment remain below or well below national standards in all subjects. This represents at least satisfactory achievement in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Pupils are making good progress in ICT, modern foreign languages and music. Their levels of achievement are satisfactory in all other subjects, except for religious education for the same reasons as in Years 7 to 9.
10. In 2001 the school exceeded the targets set for the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A*-C, with its best ever set of results. Targets were also exceeded for the proportion of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades and for the average GCSE points score. The school has set challenging targets for 2002 which, if achieved, will match the 2001 results.
11. Standards of literacy are low and do not allow pupils full access to the curriculum. Standards of speaking and listening are low and pupils lack confidence in expressing their ideas clearly. A good start has been made on implementing the provisions of the national strategy for literacy in Years 7-9. However, less work has been carried out in monitoring how all departments put policy into practice and there is, in consequence, some inconsistency in the thoroughness with which individual departments implement the school policy. Although there are structured 'catch up' opportunities for some of the pupils in Year 7 whose literacy skills are below expectation, a considerably greater number need such provision and not all pupils receive the support specified for them in the strategy.
12. Pupils' numeracy skills are below average for their age. There is a wide variation in the levels of skill shown by individual pupils. There is a relatively small number of pupils whose numeracy skills are average and, occasionally, above the average levels expected for their age. These pupils have a secure understanding of the relationships between numbers, handle data accurately and use graphs appropriately to present information and then make deductions. For example, in science, older pupils successfully calculate the percentage of water in soil and younger pupils construct line graphs to show the stretching of elastic bands. However, there is a much larger number of pupils whose numeracy skills are lower than expected and, for some pupils, very low indeed. For these pupils any form of calculation is challenging because they do not find it easy to recall and use, for example, multiplication tables. Nevertheless, in spite of such difficulties, most pupils are successful in straightforward numerical and measuring tasks. For example, in physical education, lower attaining pupils measure distances, time sprint races and accurately record their findings.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all year groups in the school. They achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment, both in terms of meeting the targets that are set for them in their individual education plans and in GCSE examinations. All pupils, irrespective of any special needs, achieved at least one grade A* to G in the 2001 GCSE examinations. In Year 11 in 2001 there were 11 pupils who had Statements of Special Educational Need and two of these pupils gained a GCSE pass at the higher grades A* to C.

14. Many pupils enter the school with weak skills in reading. Records show that, although pupils' individual progress in reading varies, their progress overall is good. The school is now providing special 'catch up' lessons in numeracy and literacy for pupils in Year 7 who enter the school with very low levels in English and mathematics and pupils make good progress in these lessons. Pupils who are withdrawn from normal lessons to receive extra help, individually or in very small groups, make very good gains in their understanding, particularly of the techniques used in reading, writing and spelling.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The attitudes, values and personal development of pupils at this school are good overall and have a positive impact on standards attained across the school. This aspect of the life of the school has improved since the last inspection.
16. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons seen throughout the school. The only occasions in which pupils' response was less than satisfactory were a very small number of lessons in Years 7 and 9. In general, pupils' attitudes to learning are better in Years 10 and 11 than they are in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils are usually attentive, especially at the beginning of lessons when they settle quickly. However, many pupils find it difficult to listen for extended periods of time and concentration lapses. They are co-operative with their peers and their teachers and are generally keen to respond to questioning. They focus well on tasks set in class, are generally seen to be working diligently but do not often demonstrate enthusiasm.
17. Pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the school day is good. There were 18 exclusions in the last year, which is a much lower rate of exclusion than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils respect one another and remember good manners most of the time. Occasional inappropriate behaviour in lessons is swiftly and sensitively addressed without detracting from the lesson. The behaviour policy is consistently and fairly applied throughout the school. Pupils have clear, consistent views about the unacceptability of bullying and although they acknowledge it exists they are very sure that the school deals with it promptly before it escalates into a major problem.
18. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good with mutual respect being evident. All adults in the school provide pupils with consistently good role models. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds learn and socialise together well. They welcome visitors warmly and have a genuine interest in them, showing them politeness and courtesy.
19. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Although they gain in maturity over their time in school they lack opportunities to show initiative in their learning, remaining dependent on teacher direction in some subjects, with little opportunity for debate, intellectual argument or independent research. Pupils also have limited opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of the life of the school. There is a school council and a prefect system but they do not have a high profile with pupils in the school.
20. Attendance is very poor, being far below the national average. In addition, the rate of unauthorised absence is much higher than unauthorised absence nationally. The rate of attendance is affected by a number of pupils who have a history of poor attendance from previous schools, which has continued here despite many initiatives by this school. However, poor attendance is a general feature of the school and has a negative and significant impact on the attainment of pupils. Nevertheless, the rates of attendance show some improvement since the last inspection. A minority of pupils is late for morning registration but some of this is due to difficulties with public transport. During the school day punctuality to lessons is good.
21. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their learning. They are generally polite, friendly and happy to talk to visitors. Teachers and learning support assistants carefully and sensitively manage all pupils, including those with significant behaviour problems. These pupils respond well to the supportive atmosphere within the school and generally succeed in

maintaining satisfactory behaviour so that their learning, and that of others in the class, can continue without hindrance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching and learning are good overall and show improvement since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection nine out of ten lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better and this has now improved to 100 per cent. The proportion of lessons judged to be good or very good has also improved substantially. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor.
23. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects, allied to their enthusiasm for teaching their subjects, has a positive impact on pupils' learning and on the progress they make. Overall, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils are making satisfactory gains in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. There are many examples throughout the school where the enthusiasm shown by teachers for teaching their subjects ensures a positive response from pupils. Their enthusiasm 'rubs off' on pupils and in these lessons pupils work hard to respond to the demands of the teaching.
24. A real strength of the school is the constructive, purposeful relationship between teachers and their pupils. The good use of praise by teachers enables pupils to feel secure and confident enough to answer and ask questions. Teachers' expectations for behaviour in lessons are very high. There is a consistent approach by all teachers to determining what is acceptable behaviour.
25. Generally the level of challenge provided by teachers meets the needs of all pupils. The school is at an early stage of identifying provision for gifted and talented pupils. By comparison, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good when pupils are withdrawn from lessons to develop their literacy skills.
26. There is a good variety of teaching methods, which are effective in gaining pupils' interest and in maintaining their concentration during lessons. There is occasionally some over-dependency on teachers and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and show initiative in lessons are limited. Not all teachers are yet making full use of ICT to support teaching and learning in their subjects. Similarly, few departments make planned use of the library as a resource to support learning.
27. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching is very good in drama, good in English, mathematics, design and technology, ICT, geography, modern foreign languages, religious education, physical education and art and design. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching is very good in drama and ICT. It is good in all other subjects except for history and mathematics where it is satisfactory.
28. Most teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils and this provides an effective focus for their learning in lessons. At the end of the lessons many teachers test pupils' understanding to judge whether the lesson's aims have been met.
29. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and accurately and there is a particular strength in using marking to identify for pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The school has a lot of data from external and internal testing of pupils' attainment. Teachers are using the assessment information to identify academic targets for individual pupils in all year groups to raise standards. Pupils are aware of the levels they are at and equally aware of what they need to do to reach the next level. This work is particularly well developed in Years 7 to 9.
30. Inspectors agree with the parents' views that teaching is good in the school. Most parents felt that the amount of homework set was appropriate but there was a minority who felt it was

inappropriate. Inspectors agree with the majority of parents. Homework tasks are appropriate and in most cases build upon work started in lessons. The amount of homework set is right for pupils of this age. Pupils felt that the amount of homework set was suitable.

31. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good and, as a result, pupils learn quickly and make good progress. Teachers are well informed about pupils' individual needs and plan appropriate activities. Where pupils receive additional support from teachers or learning support assistants, the support provided is sensitive, effective and of benefit to the whole class. For example, in a design and technology lesson, the support teacher asked the pupil additional questions to structure the pupil's thinking and maintain interest. He provided help with making notes to encourage the pupil to write some notes for himself and to stop him from falling behind. Hence the pupil, who could easily have become discouraged and restless, concentrated well throughout and both he and the rest of the class were able to learn quickly and effectively.
32. Teaching is very effective in the individual or small group lessons in which pupils are withdrawn from their normal lessons to receive extra help with literacy. Teachers use imaginative and intensive methods which involve pupils in using all their senses. In one lesson, for example, pupils worked very hard as they listened to instructions, handled wooden letters, spoke the names and sounds of the letters, gave the spelling of key words, saw basic punctuation explained on the whiteboard and completed sentences in their workbooks. The lesson was expertly planned and paced so that pupils never flagged or lost interest. They clearly gained great satisfaction from their rapidly increasing understanding of letters, words and sentences.
33. There is inconsistency of practice across the subjects of the school in the way in which support is offered to pupils in the development of their literacy skills. Many departments offer little more support than the provision of 'word banks' of vocabulary specific to the subject. There are generally not enough opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions or to carry out a variety of writing tasks. This includes some of those subjects, for example history, which are especially reliant on literacy and speaking and listening skills. In many subjects, pupils' poor reading skills inhibit their access to the curriculum, for example in ICT, pupils find it difficult to read both material on the Internet and the questions on examination papers and teachers work hard to offer pupils support in this area.
34. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for developing pupils' numeracy skills. The mathematics department has made a good beginning in its use of the national Key Stage 3 numeracy strategy. Teachers now begin each lesson with a 'starter' activity to develop pupils' basic skills and speed in handling numbers. However, the use of these activities is still in the early stages of development and they are not yet as quick, lively and challenging as they should be.
35. The department runs a summer school in numeracy to help pupils who leave primary schools with weak number skills. Monitoring records show that pupils make good progress in this course, as well as enjoying some interesting and imaginative mathematical activities. Some pupils with very weak numeracy skills are following the 'catch up' course in Year 7. The teaching in these lessons is good and pupils make good progress in, for example, understanding the difference between a bar chart and a line graph.
36. Pupils do not yet experience enough opportunities to practise and improve their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. The numeracy co-ordinator only took up her post in January. She has a very clear plan of action for liaising with departments and has already conducted a survey to discover when and where numeracy skills are used in school. However, she has not yet had enough time to provide all the required training for teachers or to help departments plan their mathematical activities. Nevertheless, there are occasional good opportunities for pupils to use number skills in some subjects. In religious education there is an interesting introduction to the mathematics of Islamic patterns; in science, pupils in the summer school undertake challenging calculations on biodiversity; in art and design, pupils use a grid system for enlarging drawings.

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

37. The curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences and is fully inclusive both socially and educationally. The legal requirements of the National Curriculum are met. However, there is insufficient time for religious education in Years 10 and 11. Planning is soundly guided by a realistic appreciation of problems associated with the small number of pupils in each year group. Accordingly, the school has introduced an imaginative and successful approach to the options in Years 10 and 11.
38. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 includes lessons in personal, social and health education, information technology and drama. The time allocated for all subjects is adequate. Pupils are placed in ability sets from the day of entry, based on information collected from their primary schools, but later testing and teacher assessments result in pupils being moved where appropriate.
39. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to a wide range of subjects. This is achieved by offering one-year courses for most of the optional subjects. Pupils study each of these for double the usual allocation of time, starting the first batch of courses in June of Year 9 before embarking in the following June on a second group of options for their final year in school. Starting each course in June ensures a full year of study. The vocational element is covered by business studies, a two-year course, and there is opportunity to study double-award science. In this way the curriculum meets the needs of pupils.
40. The provision for personal, social and religious education is good for Years 7 to 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because the time for religious education is either too short to cover the syllabus (in Year 10) or non-existent (in Year 11). However, sex and drugs education is covered adequately. Form tutors teach the course and this does lead to some insecurity when teachers are faced with teaching topics outside their areas of expertise. The school has taken fruitful advice from the local education authority, but has not yet instituted training for everybody involved in the teaching of personal, social and religious education.
41. The provision for careers education is good. Pupils begin learning about work and possible careers before making their GCSE option choices in Year 9. They continue with careers education throughout Years 10 and 11 and all have opportunities to sample college courses and a work experience placement relevant to their interests. However, these work experiences are not exploited as fully as they might be. Pupils are not encouraged to talk about what they have done when they return. They do not learn from each other, as they might, nor use the opportunity to extend their writing and speaking skills.
42. Links with primary schools are covered by the head of Year 7 who visits pupils in Year 6 and establishes what special needs have to be satisfied. Links with partner institutions are very good. Art is enriched for pupils in Year 9 and those taking GCSE by courses at Calderdale College, dance is offered at The Ridings School, physical education at Hipperholme, and science at Brighouse. A recent initiative will see the school using broadband communication technology to widen the teaching of Spanish in the locality. The school has developed some satisfactory links with the community. These include visits to the school by local ministers to take assemblies and a holocaust survivor to talk about his experiences in the war and the purchase of second hand computers for re-sale at cost to pupils.
43. Extra-curricular activities are generally satisfactory. The proportion of pupils taking up the opportunities to practise sports after school is low. However, there are after school clubs for information and communication technology, history, chess, gardening, dance and music. There is a major drama production every two years and other opportunities at Christmas for pupils to perform in public. Extra-curricular music includes a steel band, a rock band, and a summer talent show. The science department organises an Easter science school for Year 9 lasting four days and a five day summer school for Year 10. It also runs an after school club. The school recently bid for funding to run several 'Out Of School Hours' (OOSH) clubs and other activities. Most of

these have been very successful, particularly in encouraging parents to participate, and in giving additional opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.

44. The school has tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Statutory requirements for design technology and information technology are now fully met. The combination of Years 10 and 11 for many optional subjects has widened the range on offer. The OOSH activities have improved the provision of extra-curricular activities, and links with partner institutions have been expanded.
45. In principle the curriculum caters for all pupils and instances of unequal access are few. The comparatively poor provision of extra-curricular sport for girls is one instance. In some subjects, such as history, geography and physical education, GCSE groups are chiefly composed of either boys or girls. In design and technology, pupils tend to opt for childcare or resistant materials chiefly by gender.
46. The school has few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. They are well integrated and achieve as well as their peers. The preparation of pupils for life in a multi-cultural society is strong. In religious education, visits to and by representatives of local faith groups are regular and rewarding. Ethnic minority cultures are satisfactorily represented in English and music. The school regularly takes initiatives jointly with a local school whose pupil population is mainly from ethnic minority backgrounds.
47. The school provides good learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils generally have full access to the curriculum and work alongside other pupils in lessons. Where it is appropriate, pupils are withdrawn from their normal lessons to receive additional support with literacy skills. Usually this withdrawal from lessons is carefully planned to minimise the disruption to pupils' experience in their other subjects. However, there are a few pupils in Year 7 who are currently missing all their lessons in music so that they are not experiencing the full range of National Curriculum subjects.
48. The school provides a good level of in-class support, either from teachers or learning support assistants, for pupils with special educational needs. There are occasional lessons where the number of pupils needing support, and the extent of their needs, is such that more support is needed than is currently available. However, in most lessons, the support is sufficient to meet pupils' needs and the quality of the support is at least good and often very good.
49. The school has introduced the 'catch up' programmes in English and mathematics that form part of the national Key Stage 3 strategy. Teaching in these lessons is good and pupils are making good progress. However, currently only those pupils who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment are receiving these lessons. There is a much larger number of pupils, who enter the school with level 3 in English and mathematics, who should experience these activities and would benefit from them.
50. Overall, the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. There is a significant improvement in all these aspects since the previous inspection. All these aspects are well integrated and promoted within all subject areas. All the subject departments have re-written their schemes of work to include provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
51. There is good provision for spiritual development. The school is successful in giving pupils a sense of well-being and of their own worth as individuals. There is a warmth and friendliness in the relationships between staff and pupils that is conducive to learning. In most subject areas there is a strong sense of community. Teachers are good role models. They are caring and supportive and aim to make learning as stimulating as possible. Pupils study the spiritual elements of the major world religions and this gives them a sense of the guiding influence that is associated with these faiths. They are given opportunities to experience awe and wonder in listening to music and in considering the mathematical symmetry of patterns in nature, for example in pine cones. They get opportunities to express feelings in dance, though this is for

girls only. In English they are given experiences of the use of aromatherapy in enabling them to be still, listen and gain a feeling for atmosphere in preparation for creative writing. They are enthusiastic about this and feel that it is spiritually uplifting. In design and technology they are helped to be aware of their own creative powers and the creativity of others. Displays around the school, including the work of pupils, are uplifting as are the comments of the philosophies of famous people throughout the ages.

52. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are given a clear understanding of right and wrong. They know the rules and respect the school environment. Displays around the school are not defaced. There is very little damage evident. The benefits of hard work are transmitted through target setting. Pupils are not permitted to make unseemly comments and are given extra attention to help them mend their ways if they do. In mathematics they study data on crime figures and this raises their awareness of wrongdoing. In physical education teachers emphasise the rules of fair play and as a result pupils show positive sporting attitudes. Moral issues are studied formally in history, for example in considering whether Cromwell was a hero or a villain. Pupils reflect on how design and technology affects the environment so that they can make informed choices when designing and making. In religious education and geography they discuss moral dilemmas on a local and national scale with regard to our treatment of the environment. Moral issues are an integral part of religious studies with regard to topics such as poverty, crime, prejudice and care for others and for oneself.
53. Provision for social development is good. Pupils are educated to be socially aware and to consider the effect of their words and actions on others. In all lessons they share resources agreeably and work well in groups when required to do so. There is some exemplary work with pupils who have limited social skills both in individual withdrawal lessons and in lunchtime provision. There is a very high level of care for all pupils, and especially for pupils with special educational needs, both by the teachers and the classroom support assistants. There are Easter and summer courses for pupils in Years 9 and 10. There are science, history and gardening clubs to give pupils extra opportunities to work together on common interests. There are visits outside the school for English and history. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the needs of the less fortunate and to give what help they can. They arrange fundraising events for charities, including Children in Need and animal sanctuaries. This provision helps pupils to become supportive and to exercise a sense of responsibility.
54. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are made aware of the contribution of their own culture and of other cultures to our modern society. They study the social and cultural changes brought about by the industrial revolution, including the position of women. In mathematics pupils learn the number systems from different cultures. The modern foreign language classrooms have a supportive European atmosphere. There are opportunities for pupils to meet native speakers. Pupils study the art of other cultures, including Japanese, Mexican, Native American and Aboriginal art. There is a multi-cultural dimension in the dance programme of work. This includes Afro-Caribbean dance and impressive contributions from African dance. Pupils study music from other cultures. There is a steel band. Pupils study key features of the history of the USA, including Native American history and the work of Martin Luther King. In design and technology they explore the contribution of products to the quality of life in different cultures. Displays around the school suggest an awareness of an ethnically diverse society and all groups are presented in non-stereotypical ways. These displays also enhance the school environment, an improvement since the previous inspection. The school seeks to give pupils opportunities to meet with young people from other cultures through links with the local further education college and youth groups.
55. The learning support department provides very good opportunities for the personal development of pupils with special educational needs. The department works very sensitively and imaginatively to find ways of helping and supporting pupils, some of whom arrive with little self-confidence and very limited social skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The steps taken by the school to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils are very good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. This is undoubtedly a caring environment where the safety of pupils is given high priority in lessons and the general welfare of pupils is very well catered for in the daily life of the school. There is a safety-related issue regarding the ceiling of the sports hall, which is recognised by the school.
57. Child protection procedures are in place, are known by all adults in the school and are very good. The effectiveness of educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievements is good. The school has a very comprehensive pastoral system. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The positive behaviour policy in the school is very good. It is known and respected by the pupils and is consistently applied across the school. Where unacceptable behaviour occurs it is closely monitored and the school tries to involve parents and outside agencies as early as possible in supporting the pupil to achieve appropriate behaviour. The elimination of oppressive behaviour in the school is promoted through the very good relationships in the school between adults and pupils. Pupils trust members of staff and report incidents to them, confident that they will be dealt with well. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good, although they have had limited success to date. Pupils are well known by adults in the school and the very good pastoral system ensures that attendance issues are picked up early and innovative strategies are put in place to target the specific difficulties of individual pupils. The Education Welfare Officer works tirelessly with the school staff, parents and pupils to improve attendance. Although there is frequently short-term improvement in attendance as a result of these efforts, permanent improvement is much less apparent.
58. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. In Years 7,8 and 9, personal development is monitored and supported via the pastoral system in the school which highlights pupils in need of additional support very quickly and recognises pupils' achievements. In addition to the normal pastoral system in the school some pupils in Years 10 and 11 have mentors who monitor pupils' development very closely and implement a range of strategies appropriate to the individual pupil to support their further development. The mentoring system is highly thought of by those pupils involved, who think all Year 10 and 11 pupils should have the opportunity to have a mentor.
59. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. The support extends beyond lessons and includes supervision, activities and a welcoming place for pupils to go at lunchtime. There is a network of outside agencies, which supplements the work of the learning support department when necessary. The school is successful in integrating pupils with significant learning difficulties and those with challenging behaviour. It often succeeds in keeping within the school pupils who have not found it possible to settle successfully elsewhere.
60. The school rightly takes pride in its inclusive philosophy, accepting and retaining disaffected pupils by various means. The pastoral staff is acutely aware of pupils' personal circumstances and provides for each one accordingly. The school's good pastoral systems and close contacts with parents support the valuable work done in class to provide pupils with viable qualifications and experience. Where the support and placements available through the local authority are considered appropriate and beneficial, teachers make good use of them. The imaginative and flexible use of alternative provision in colleges and at work retains a disaffected minority of boys and girls. Nevertheless, the school struggles, and occasionally fails, to include a substantial number of pupils for whom school life has little significance or appeal.
61. Pupils are well aware of the efforts that the school puts into tailoring its provision to individual circumstances. Most appreciate and benefit from the individual attention they receive, but a minority spots any minor inconsistencies that affect them personally. A vigorous and well-targeted mentoring programme is not extended to every pupil for example, and occasional anomalies arise from the policy of entering pupils for some GCSE examinations in Year 10.

62. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are good and are modelled on the very effective science policy that has been in operation for some time. The Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results are used to build up a clear picture of pupils' attainment when they arrive at the school. Departments are now gradually building up records that plot pupils' academic development over time. The school uses its analysis of assessment data from tests to set targets in all subjects, though some subject departments, for example English, mathematics and ICT, use this analysis more carefully than others. A simple system has been devised for dividing each level into three parts with clear explanations of what pupils need to do to improve performance. These attainment targets and the description of levels are written in user-friendly language and displayed on classroom notice boards so that all pupils can see how well they are doing in each subject. Many departments keep their records on a database for easy access and this allows information to be updated quickly.
63. Good monitoring of pupils' academic progress takes place and although the whole school policy has not been in place very long, setting targets and recording progress are enabling pupils to have a good idea of how well they are doing in each subject. Colour coding provides tutors and departments with individual pupil, whole class and whole year performance statistics so that it is possible to highlight those pupils who are falling behind. This allows intervention to take place at an early stage and includes informing parents. Certificates are awarded by departments and presented during assemblies. This helps to raise awareness of achievement throughout the school. Many departments are involving pupils in regular self-evaluation so that they can play a part in the assessment of how they are doing.
64. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory throughout the school and used well in English, physical education and modern languages. In mathematics and ICT, assessment is used to modify units of work. In other subjects, such as music and religious education, assessment is not yet used well enough for reviewing the curriculum or planning teaching to cater for pupils' individual needs.
65. There is good liaison with primary schools to ensure that information about pupils' special educational needs is efficiently transferred. The school also undertakes a full range of tests so that there is a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment when they arrive. Where appropriate, pupils have individual education plans and these are of good quality. These plans provide clear targets for pupils' future attainment and they are regularly reviewed to determine progress. The individual education plans were not specific to particular subjects at the time of the previous inspection and this is still the case. However, subject teachers have now begun to identify targets for pupils to meet in their subjects. The learning support department keeps careful records of all aspects of pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

66. The effectiveness of the partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is very good. Parents feel this is a good school and a higher percentage of them responded to the parents' questionnaire than at the last inspection. The views expressed in the questionnaires show some improvement on those expressed at the last inspection.
67. Inspectors agree with parents on the issues which please them most. Inspectors judge that pupils receive appropriate levels of homework. Inspectors judge that there are sufficient opportunities for the school to work closely with parents. Inspectors agree with the minority of parents who feel there is a limited range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors judge that the quality of information provided for parents about pupils' progress is very good.
68. The impact of the involvement of parents on the life of the school is satisfactory and parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning at school and at home. The pastoral system in the school ensures that parents are contacted very quickly if the school has any concerns about a pupil. Not all parents respond to the initial contact but the staff and the Educational Welfare Officer for the school are committed and persistent and in most cases are able to contact parents

and enlist their support. Despite parental agreement to ensure pupils attend school as often as they should, some parents have been unable to sustain this. The school also contacts parents in order to recognise the personal and academic achievements of their children. Parental attendance at school meetings is not usually good but the school continues to try new ways of encouraging parents to attend. Annual reports to parents are good, covering all subjects studied by the pupil, targets for future improvement and an opportunity for pupils to comment on their own progress. They are greatly enhanced by the interim reports produced termly, giving a brief overview of progress in each subject studied and requesting parents to contact school if the interim report shows the pupil is experiencing any difficulties. The heads of year in the school are diligent in ensuring that contact is made with parents in this situation. Student planners keep parents informed about what their child is doing on a weekly basis. They are well used by the pupils and are all signed weekly by the form tutor and usually by home. However, very few parents use them to communicate with school and establish any dialogue with the form tutor. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is very good.

69. Parents who attended the meeting before the inspection were very pleased with the work of the learning support department, the high expectations that teachers have of pupils with special educational needs and the examination results that these pupils achieve. Parents are fully involved with pupils' reviews. They are strongly encouraged to be present but are kept fully informed by telephone if they cannot attend the review meeting.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. Overall the quality of leadership and management is good. The quality of leadership and management provided by the acting headteacher is good. She is perceptive in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has a clear vision and has identified effective strategies on how to raise standards within the school and she has a clear commitment to inclusion. She receives the loyal support of her dedicated staff in her attempts to raise standards. Members of the senior management team have appropriate responsibilities, which reflect the needs of the school.
71. Overall, the quality of middle management is good. Since the last inspection, there have been several new appointments as heads of department and standards have improved since their appointments. Heads of year provide good quality leadership and management for their pastoral teams. At the time of the last inspection there were weaknesses in the leadership for design and technology and ICT. Since that time new appointments have been made and the leadership is very good for ICT and good for design and technology. Leadership is very good for modern foreign languages, special educational needs and drama. It is good in all other subjects except for music, physical education and religious education where it is satisfactory.
72. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and uses this information to contribute satisfactorily to the leadership of the school. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Individual governors are linked to specific areas of the school's work, although there is no twinning of governors with every curriculum area. In particular governors are providing a significant contribution to the planning of the new school building to be built under a private finance initiative (PFI). Planning for this is at an advanced stage. In most respects the governors are fulfilling their statutory duties with the exception of ensuring that there is sufficient time for religious education in order to meet the demands of the 'Agreed Syllabus' and for the legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. At the time of the last inspection the role of the governing body was judged to be a weakness. Improvements have been made since that time and their role is now satisfactory.
73. The school improvement plan is good and has an appropriate number of priorities for raising standards. The issues identified by the school reflect the priorities identified in the previous report. For each of these priorities, there are clearly identified strategies and timescales. The

identification of measurable targets to determine whether priorities have been met is not always evident. Good quality department plans reflect the priorities from whole school planning.

74. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are good. Since the last inspection a new senior appointment has been made to provide a focus for developing the evaluation of teaching and learning. Improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection are evidence of the impact that this initiative has had. Further support is needed for teachers to introduce more opportunities for pupils to take initiative and responsibility for their learning. There has been a substantial and rigorous programme of monitoring of teaching and learning by senior and middle managers as a result of the introduction of performance management. The school has benefited from recent appointments who have made a significant contribution to raising the standards of teaching and learning. Other areas of the work of the school are very well evaluated and appropriate action taken to remedy weaknesses.
75. The managers, teaching staff and governors attach major importance to equality of opportunity in all aspects of the school's provision. The school takes pride in being fully comprehensive. It offers the whole of its curriculum to the entire local and wider school population, many of whom travel some distance to attend. The school achieves a good measure of success in including pupils from different but often socially and economically deprived backgrounds.
76. The school's emphasis on equal opportunities is evident in its statements of policy and practice in the prospectus, departments' documentation and successful bids for national awards, including Investors in People. The headteacher, governors and senior managers have oversight on a day-to-day basis as well as raising staff awareness of issues through training and external consultation. Where appropriate the school liaises with advisers from the local education authority.
77. The head of the learning support department provides very good leadership and management. There is a strong sense of teamwork among the teachers and learning support assistants and very good liaison with subject departments. The training provided for staff and the monitoring of support are both very effective and ensure a high level of consistency in the quality of the support provided for pupils throughout the school. The department's action plan shows careful planning for future developments of the department's work, though it is not always entirely clear how the success of the various initiatives will be monitored.
78. There is adequate staff coverage in all departments with, apart from religious education, very little non-specialist teaching. Most teachers are well qualified to teach their specialist subjects. Induction arrangements are good with newly qualified teachers being mentored by heads of department and they have regular meetings with a senior member of staff. Other teachers who join the school are well supported by heads of department and heads of year. All induction procedures include strong links with the special educational needs department. There are also effective induction procedures for newly appointed non-teaching staff.
79. There is an effective performance management system in place. Training needs are linked to departmental reviews and the whole school development plan. The in-service training programme is satisfactory and the additional funds for in-service training are well targeted. For example, there has been a satisfactory use made of funds to develop teachers' skills in the use of ICT. Although all teachers have undertaken appropriate training, not all of them have completed it.
80. The school has gained the Investors in People award and all staff, teaching and non-teaching, work well together and give generously of their time to support pupils and contribute effectively towards the smooth running of the school.
81. The school is well supported by non-teaching staff. Clerical and administrative staff have a strong sense of loyalty to the school and provide a warm welcome to visitors and pupils in the reception area. The amount of technical support is adequate for a school of this size. Lunchtime supervisors and catering staff are effective in carrying out their duties. They are respected by pupils, who respond well to their guidance. The caretaking and cleaning staff do a good job in ensuring high standards of cleanliness. The learning support department is well staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teachers and learning support assistants.

82. Accommodation is satisfactory in the school. Most subject areas have appropriate accommodation but there are inadequacies for music and for physical education. These weaknesses will be resolved with the completion of the school's building plan. The school has good vision and plans strategically for its future accommodation needs. There is good expertise and understanding of the needs of the school's accommodation and health and safety issues that follow. The appearance of the school is satisfactory and this is reflected in the respect that students show towards the building. Litter is minimal around the school and there is an absence of graffiti. The quality of display in classrooms and around the school is good. The learning support area provides good accommodation for the teaching of individual pupils and small groups. The area is well used at lunchtime to provide a quiet area for pupils to read, do homework and to seek any extra help or support they may need.
83. Resources are satisfactory. Most departments have sufficient resources to meet the demands of the curriculum. The resources for ICT are very good and the substantial investment the school has made in new technologies has resulted in a better than average ratio of pupils to computers. The level of resources for English, geography, business education and history is good. The library is an attractive area but it is not well used by pupils. It lacks computers and the number of pupil loans is low. It is not well used by pupils and few departments have identified the use of the library as a major resource for developing pupils' independent learning skills. The learning support department is well equipped with good quality reading schemes and multi-sensory programmes for the development of pupils' literacy skills. Appropriate computer equipment and software packages are also used to improve pupils' skills in both numeracy and literacy.

84. The expenditure per pupil is well above the national average. Finances are managed effectively. The balance brought forward from the previous financial year is appropriate for a school of this size. The most recent auditor's report was satisfactory and the governing body has accepted and implemented the recommendations. Opportunities are taken to ensure that the principles of 'best value' are followed when making decisions on the purchases of goods and services. This particularly applies to the re-building of the school. Financial planning is good and the school has been successful in obtaining additional funds for the benefit of students from participation in the Education Action Zone. Specific grants, including those from the Standards Fund and New Opportunities Funding, are spent effectively on the purposes for which they were intended and in line with the priorities identified in the school's improvement plan. The school makes good use of the additional funding it receives for pupils who have special educational needs. Most of the funds go to provide additional staffing to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to make progress alongside others in the class and, where necessary, to receive extra teaching individually or in very small groups.
85. In relation to the level of funding the school receives and the quality of education pupils receive the school is providing satisfactory value for money. All of the issues identified for improving the leadership and management of the school have been effectively undertaken.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

86. In order to improve the school further, the governing body, headteacher and teaching staff should
- (1) Ensure that the strategies implemented to improve attendance are maintained and targeted on those families who are not currently supporting the school's efforts to improve attendance.
(Paragraphs 20, 57)
 - (2) Improve the very low levels of literacy and speaking and listening skills by
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion
 - extending the range of writing tasks.(Paragraphs 1, 11, 33, 49)
 - (3) Extend the opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills by
 - increasing the opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning in all subjects
 - departments identifying ways in which the library can be developed to support pupils' independent learning
 - identifying in all schemes of work opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to take initiative.(Paragraphs 26, 94, 124, 145, 165, 173, 178)

In addition the governing body may wish to include the following less important issues within the action plan.

- (1) Ensuring that the time allocated for the teaching of religious education enables the requirements of the 'Agreed Syllabus' to be met.
- (2) Ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to a daily act of collective worship.
(Paragraphs 37, 72, 182,183)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	11	54	30	0	0	0
Percentage	2.1	11.3	55.7	30.9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	381
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	125

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	33
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	134

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	54
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.4

National comparative data	8.1
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National comparative data	1.1
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	45	33	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	19	17	21
	Girls	10	4	5
	Total	29	21	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	38 (49)	28 (28)	34 (20)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (0)	11 (10)	7 (1)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	10	15	25
	Girls	7	6	9
	Total	17	21	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	22 (17)	29 (14)	45 (25)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	3 (0)	16 (5)	25 (6)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	53	58	111

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	12	40	54
	Girls	7	50	58
	Total	19	90	112
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	17 (9)	81 (70)	100 (87)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	26.7
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	78.9
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	366
Any other minority ethnic group	15

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	17	1
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)	26.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.3:1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	323

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.7
Key Stage 4	20.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	1,591,927
Total expenditure	1,441,832
Expenditure per pupil	3,458
Balance brought forward from previous year	-54,301
Balance carried forward to next year	95,794

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.7
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	381
Number of questionnaires returned	95

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	60	11	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	33	58	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	54	13	4	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	56	22	6	2
The teaching is good.	26	63	4	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	56	15	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	42	4	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	51	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	17	49	21	3	9
The school is well led and managed.	23	54	10	3	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	19	66	7	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	41	16	7	11

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Achievement in Years 7-9 is good.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment and attitudes.
- The difference between the attainment of boys and girls has narrowed considerably and is smaller than the national difference.

Areas for improvement

- To raise attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- To improve literacy skills, especially the confident use of reading.
- To enable all pupils to become independent learners.
- To make use of longer-term assessment information in order to identify and analyse trends over time.

87. In 2001 attainment in English at the end of Year 9, based on average points scored in national curriculum tests, was well below the national average and also well below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was also considerably below the national average, although this represented some improvement since the previous year when no pupils attained above the level expected of 14 year olds. Between 1998 and 2000 there had been a steady improvement in the average points scored by pupils and this improvement was greater than the national improvement, so that the gap between the school's attainment and the national average narrowed steadily during that time. In 2001 there was a dip in the average points scored by pupils and because of this the overall improvement in attainment which has been made since the previous inspection has been small.
88. Since the previous inspection the disparity in attainment between boys and girls has narrowed overall to a point where the average points scored by boys in 2001 was higher than that of girls. This is a reversal of the national situation where the attainment of girls is consistently higher than that of boys. The attainment of boys and girls is closer than it is nationally. Based on the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 is well below national standards.
89. Attainment of 16 year olds in GCSE examinations in 2001 was well below the national average for the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C and also for the percentage attaining A* and A. The percentage attaining A*-G was close to the national average. Over the past three years there has been a slight upward trend in the percentage attaining A*-C. The attainment of boys and girls is much closer than is seen nationally, with a slightly higher percentage of boys than girls attaining both A*-C and A* and A in 2001.
90. The percentage of students who attained A*-C in English literature in 2001 is below the national average, although all pupils who sat the examination attained at least a G grade which is higher than is seen nationally and represents a considerable achievement for many pupils. Pupils do better in their English Literature examination than they do in most of their other subjects.
91. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment at the end of Year 11 is well below the national average.
92. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment in English that is very low. In the national curriculum tests which pupils take immediately prior to joining the school the percentage of pupils who attain the nationally expected level for pupils of that age is well below the national average.

When they enter the school a very high proportion of pupils have a reading age which is significantly lower than their actual age and this seriously inhibits their access to the curriculum, in English and other subjects. By the end of Year 9 attainment is well below the national average and pupils, including those with special needs, have achieved well. Achievement is good in the consistent use of basic punctuation and, for some pupils, in the use of more demanding punctuation. Pupils make good progress in forming their own opinions about what they have read and in referring to their texts to justify and illustrate their opinions. Pupils develop the ability to structure and plan their written assignments carefully in order to produce extended writing of an appropriate length.

93. The group of pupils who took their GCSE in 2001 had attainment at the end of Year 9 which was well below the national average and their achievement by the end of Year 11 was satisfactory. Pupils currently in Year 10 and 11 are making consistently good progress in lessons, but the achievement of many pupils over a longer period of time is limited by a number of factors. The most significant of these is the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils and the difficulty which many pupils have with understanding what they are reading, especially when working independently. Some pupils make good progress during their GCSE courses. For example, a group of very low attaining pupils who have all completed their coursework, are carrying out their revision in a well-organised manner and are on course to obtain a GCSE grade.
94. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers understand their pupils' needs well and plan lessons to meet these. For example, teachers recognise that nearly all pupils have a very limited vocabulary, which inhibits their ability to express their ideas precisely, and so they plan activities which place emphasis on the selection of appropriate vocabulary. A class writing about a novel based in South Africa made good progress in discussing and selecting vocabulary to express ideas of fear and repression. Teachers make good use of questioning and discussion to encourage pupils to reflect more deeply on their ideas. Most pupils lack the confidence and oral skills necessary to participate in productive discussion and they use the many opportunities they are given for discussion to make progress in expressing their own ideas and in learning from hearing the ideas of others. Teachers place clear emphasis on the skills needed to plan and prepare written assignments and pupils, especially younger ones, make good progress in producing structured pieces of extended writing. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high, in terms of both their behaviour and attitudes to work and also of the quality of work they are able to achieve. Pupils respond well to this by behaving consistently well. Their behaviour is frequently very good. They show interest, work hard and are eager to fulfil their teachers' expectations of them. Teachers and learning support staff offer very strong encouragement and support to pupils, especially to those with special educational needs. The marking of work is regular, helpful and enables pupils to understand what they need to do in order to improve their work. Pupils are well supported in preparing for their examinations and organising their revision. However, the general level of support offered means that pupils fail to become independent learners and frequently, for example, wait for individual support before embarking on a task.
95. There has been overall improvement in the generally good quality of teaching reported after the previous inspection. This is especially apparent in the move away from the use of worksheets. Although most lessons contain some whole class teaching, there is no over-reliance on this, as was commented on in the previous report.
96. The leadership and management of the subject are good, as was reported after the previous inspection. There is a strong commitment to raising attainment and an equally strong sense of the need to enhance pupils' motivation and self-confidence before this can be achieved. The head of department regularly monitors and documents the teaching of English and there is considerable consistency in the way in which department policies are followed. Good progress has been made in the introduction of the literacy strategy for pupils in Years 7-9 although it is too soon to assess its effectiveness. The measures which have been put in place to raise the attainment of boys to meet that of girls have been very effective throughout the age range. The procedures which are in place to assess the attainment of pupils and to record this are good and are consistently applied. There are effective procedures to set targets for pupils, who are aware of what they need to do in

order to attain them. However, insufficient use is made of the full range of assessment information in order to identify and analyse longer-term trends in attainment. There are good systems in place, both in and out of school time, to offer additional support to pupils who are likely to under-achieve in their GCSE examinations. Considerable thought and discussion have gone into offering lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs appropriate curricular opportunities in Years 10 and 11. Some innovative decisions have been made concerning the courses these pupils should follow and these show indications of having been well founded. Schemes of work include provision for the teaching of information and communication technology, mainly in the use of word processing and in using the Internet to research information. Access to the necessary equipment for this is rather limited.

Drama

97. Standards in drama in Year 9 are in general in line with what is seen nationally. Pupils perform confidently, as a result of their careful preparation of rehearsed and improvised drama. They are able to prepare and perform a short scene as part of a group, co-operating productively in this. Pupils make good use of their drama logs as both part of the planning process and also to record their knowledge and understanding about drama, especially the vocabulary specific to this subject. The work in drama logs demonstrates that pupils understand the importance and satisfaction of responding to and conveying mood and pupils show sensitive understanding of the feelings of other people. Pupils put thought into their response to stimulus such as music.
98. Drama is a popular subject in Years 10 and 11 and it is taken by a large number of pupils. Attainment in drama at the end of Years 10 and 11 in GCSE is well below the national average, although in 2001 there was a slight improvement over 2000 in terms of the percentage of A*-Cs. Girls do better than boys and the girls do better in drama than they do in their other subjects. Inspection evidence seen during the inspection, including completed, marked coursework, indicates that attainment in the current Year 10 and 11, both of which groups have taken their GCSE this year, is in line with the national average. Pupils can, with teacher support, prepare and present a well-planned performance which is convincingly acted and grips the attention of the audience. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, show confidence when performing. The study of drama does much to enhance the self-confidence and self-esteem of pupils who find school life rather difficult. For example, some of the pupils who performed a workshop on bullying in a local primary school had experienced difficulties with self-control, but managed to perform and offer advice to younger pupils in a very mature manner. Pupils' drama logs show a developing understanding of character and how to convey this to an audience. Pupils have good quality notes on drama terminology and techniques, but many of these show clear signs of having been directly copied.
99. The teaching of drama is very good. The teacher makes effective use of 'warm-ups' by linking them to the main theme or objective of the lesson. Good support is offered to all pupils, but especially to those with special educational needs, at the preparation stage and the teacher is very aware and vigilant about pupils' difficulties and needs. The teaching shows high expectations both of pupils' attitudes and hard work. There is strong emphasis on the need to use specialised drama terminology. The support offered by the learning support assistant is very good.
100. The management of the subject is very good. There are good schemes of work. Very good procedures have been drawn up to assess pupils' work in a structured and objective way and to involve pupils in assessing their own work, setting their own targets and measuring their progress. There are good opportunities offered to pupils to participate in full-scale performances and to go on theatre trips. Although drama is taught in a fairly spacious room, there is a limited amount of specialised drama equipment, meaning that, for example, the terminology relating to stage lighting has to be taught without proper access to the equipment.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and for pupils with special educational needs in all year groups.
- The leadership and management of the department are good and there is a strong commitment to improving teaching and raising standards.
- The department makes good use of ICT to support teaching and learning, particularly in Year 7.

Areas for improvement

- Many pupils have weak skills in their basic use of numbers and find it difficult to remember methods they have learnt in earlier years.
- Some pupils' progress in mathematics is restricted by their irregular attendance.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work varies and some is unsatisfactory because it does not identify pupils' mistakes.

101. In the 2001 National Tests for 14 year olds, results were very low compared with the national average and put the school in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The results were well below the average for similar schools. The results in mathematics were not as good as those in English and science. Boys did better than girls in 2001 and on average over the last three years. Results have improved slightly since 1997, broadly following the national trend.
102. The 2001 GCSE examination results in mathematics were well below the national average but broadly average when compared with similar schools. Boys did much better than girls. For both boys and girls, the results in mathematics were not as good as their average results across all subjects. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C increased significantly between 2000 and 2001.
103. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are well below the national average at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. These standards match those indicated by last year's GCSE results but are better than those indicated by recent test results at the end of Year 9. This is partly because the general trend of improvement is continuing but also because pupils do significantly better in class than they do in tests. Pupils can solve mathematical problems when the teacher explains what they have to do, points them towards the correct method and gives them plenty of practice. In tests, however, they are often faced with unfamiliar presentations of a problem and, because their general literacy skills are weak, with words they do not fully understand. They then do not know what the question requires and so cannot make use of the skills and techniques they have acquired. Some teachers do emphasise the meaning of 'key words' but they do not give pupils enough practice in understanding a wide range of questions.
104. Higher attaining pupils in the school reach standards in mathematics that are average or, occasionally, above average for their age. For example, in a practice examination paper in Year 11, higher attainers showed good understanding of rotation of geometric shapes and could identify axes of symmetry. In Year 9, higher attainers solve simultaneous equations and understand Pythagoras' theorem. However, for a much larger number of pupils, standards are below, and often well below, average. There are particular weaknesses in algebra where pupils often do not set down their solutions correctly and it is clear that some do not understand how to deal with simple equations. The lowest attainers find even basic work with numbers difficult because they cannot easily recall number relationships, including multiplication tables. Pupils' investigative skills generally match their skills in other aspects of mathematics. Higher attainers in Year 7 were quick to identify the patterns associated with edges, faces and vertices of three-dimensional objects. However, many pupils' progress in their investigation into 'dominoes' in a middle set in Year 9 was limited because they enjoyed the routine drawing of the various patterns but avoided actively seeking the pattern and writing about their findings.

105. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is well below the national average. Their current attainment at the end of Year 9 and their GCSE results are similarly well below average and so pupils, at the ages of both 14 and 16, do as well as might be expected and their achievement is satisfactory. However, within this overall pattern of satisfactory achievement, there are some variations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers are well aware of their needs and choose activities carefully to meet those needs. These pupils benefit from very effective in-class support which enables them to maintain concentration and develop their number skills. Higher attainers, and those who are gifted and talented, achieve satisfactorily. Their books show that, in some classes, they have the opportunity to reach the highest standards. However, in other lessons, they do the same work as others in the group and their progress is restricted. A significant minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they should in mathematics because they do not attend school regularly. There are gaps in the work in their books that reflect similar gaps in their understanding.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers generally have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of most pupils in the group. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well. Teachers generally use the 'three part lesson' recommended in the national Key Stage 3 strategy. The 'starter' activities are generally successful, particularly when they involve the use of the interactive whiteboard, but in other lessons the 'starter' is rather slow. The use of a whole-class session at the end of each lesson is not yet fully developed.
107. When teaching is good, there are interesting activities and resources. For example, in a Year 8 lesson for the lowest attainers, the teacher produced a bag of shopping so that pupils could practise estimating volumes using bottles of fizzy drinks and various exotic sauces. Their interest was aroused, their concentration instantly improved and, with constant encouragement from both teacher and support assistants, they succeeded in estimating the volumes and converting them from millilitres to litres. In other lessons, although teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory, there are some weaknesses. The pace of the lesson is sometimes rather slow so that concentration diminishes and pupils become too relaxed, although satisfactory behaviour is maintained. Some girls lack confidence in their mathematical ability and this is not helped when, occasionally, teachers alert pupils to possible difficulties within a topic which they should be encouraged to regard as straightforward.
108. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of homework to extend pupils' learning. However, the quality of their marking of pupils' work varies significantly. There is much good marking that encourages pupils and points out what they need to do to improve. However, there are also examples of unsatisfactory marking where incorrect work and unacceptable presentation are marked correct by the teacher.
109. The good learning in individual lessons in Years 7 to 9 does not lead to the good achievement that might be expected at the age of 14. One reason for this is the weakness in pupils' recall of mathematical methods they learned earlier. They require frequent reminders of things they might reasonably be expected to remember. One cause of this weakness is pupils' restlessness and difficulty in listening and concentrating, particularly in Year 7. Teachers often work hard to provide a variety of activity and hold pupils' concentration and the problem does diminish in later years. Nevertheless, this weakness in listening skills limits the efficiency with which pupils absorb and retain information.
110. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the department and a clear vision of how he can move it forward and raise standards. The two other teachers in the department are relatively inexperienced but both are keen to improve their subject knowledge and teaching skills. The department has made a good start in introducing the national Key Stage 3 strategy and the numeracy co-ordinator has very good plans for developing pupils' opportunities to use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. The 'catch up' lessons, for the lowest attainers in Year 7, are of good quality but the programme is not currently available to all the pupils who would benefit from it. The department makes good use of ICT to support pupils'

learning in mathematics. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress when using attractive and interesting software packages to practise their skills. The department has introduced some valuable database activities into the 'handling data' work in Year 8 but these are not yet used with all groups.

111. The department has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Test results at the age of 14 have improved slightly but GCSE examination results remain similar to those at that time. There is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. The good teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs has improved still further as the links between support assistants and the department have improved. The department now makes regular use of ICT in mathematics lessons and in 'Maths Club'.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The leadership of the acting head of department.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in all years.
- Relationships between staff and pupils.
- The colourful and interesting displays in the laboratories.

Areas for improvement

- Range of teaching styles to give pupils more opportunities to be independent learners.
- The expectations and involvement of girls in lessons.
- Skills of literacy, particularly of speaking, reading and writing at length.

112. Standards in national tests and examination results are rising slowly but remain very low in comparison to national averages.
113. At the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils attaining level five and above has increased, particularly in 2001, but remains well below all schools nationally. At the higher levels it is very low and over the last four years boys have attained more of the higher grades than girls. In comparison to similar schools, results for the expected grades are below the national average and well below for higher grades.
114. At GCSE results are also rising but the percentage of pupils attaining A*-C grades is very low in both single and double award science. However, for those who complete the course, many attain a grade A*- G. In 2001 the results for both double and single award science show that girls attain less well than the boys and in single award significantly less well than in other subjects in the school.
115. Standards in class and in the work seen are slightly better than the examination and test results indicate, but are still well below national averages. There are several factors which influence this. The poor attendance of many pupils has a detrimental effect on continuity and learning and so can affect their final examination result and in class pupils rely on and receive considerable teacher support which is not present when they sit examinations. Attainment in line with national averages was seen in the top sets in Year 9 and in the majority of pupils in double award science in Years 10 and 11. In other groups it is below or well below national averages.
116. Pupils are achieving at satisfactory levels and make satisfactory progress in all years. They enter the school aged eleven with very low attainment levels in comparison to all schools nationally. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 attainment is still very low, particularly at the higher levels. Pupils also make satisfactory progress during their GCSE course, which is better than at time of the last inspection. The department has analysed pupils' progress related to their attendance at school and has shown that where attendance is poor this has a direct effect on progress. Within

some lessons there is evidence of underachievement of girls. Strategies to involve them more in lessons are often not present, many girls lack the self-confidence to answer questions, and so their progress is not as good as that of boys.

117. The department now records much information about pupils' progress in all years and this is a great improvement since the last inspection. These assessments are related to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades and are shared with pupils. Target grades and levels are set regularly. Further analysis of this data is needed to demonstrate where pupils are experiencing difficulties, how they can be helped and to help the planning of future topics.
118. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress overall and some make good progress. They are helped greatly by the support they receive from support assistants and additional science staff who help them and keep them involved in the lesson. In addition, pupils are given individual support plans to track their progress through the year. These, together with easily read sheets, help pupils with special needs to progress.
119. Above average pupils also make satisfactory progress. Many classes, such as the GCSE double science option groups, contain a group of these pupils and teachers do not always give them different activities or ones which are sufficiently challenging. However, there are opportunities for extension activities for these pupils out of lessons during the Easter and summer science schools and in the science club after school.
120. Where pupils underachieve it is because the demands of the work and teachers' expectations of completion are low. There is much evidence of copied notes and an over-reliance on worksheets which is similar to the last inspection.
121. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons, with good teaching in just under half of all lessons seen. Three-quarters of these good lessons were in GCSE courses, and in most cases the learning pupils make is related to the quality of teaching.
122. In the better lessons, teachers provide ways of stimulating and maintaining pupils' interest such as using an interactive whiteboard and animated computer simulations. This allows pupils to learn well about the structure of atoms of different elements and what happens to the particles of water as it melts and boils. When the pupils themselves are used as 'teachers' this has even more impact on the interest and learning of the rest of the class.
123. In all lessons, pupils are well behaved and settle quickly to work. The few minor incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly and without confrontation. Teachers state the aims of the lesson but frequently fail to revisit these and check learning at the end. Practical activities, well supported by the technician, are often used to help understanding or to reinforce revision topics as when Year 11 were revising the topic of light.
124. Most lessons tend to be directed by the teacher, and give few occasions for pupils to take an active part other than in practical sessions. Questions are asked generally or at individuals by name. However, answers tend to be dominated by the more confident boys and teachers need to involve girls more in lessons.
125. There are few opportunities for all pupils to work in groups, discuss their ideas or report back to the class. Consequently the skills of speaking are underdeveloped. The department has done much work since the last inspection on developing pupils' confidence in the use of scientific vocabulary by word banks, literacy targets and stimulating and colourful displays in the laboratories. However, there are infrequent occasions where pupils can write at length or express their own ideas except in GCSE coursework. Homework is not set uniformly across the department and is unsatisfactory up to the end of Year 9. The tasks given are mainly question and answers and more variety could help to improve literacy skills in all pupils. Most homework is marked with detailed corrections, but few short-term targets to help pupils improve. The

presentation skills and completion rates of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory and often related to the low expectations of staff.

126. The leadership and management of the acting head of department are good and he has a clear idea of further developments. Since the last inspection, and particularly recently, there has been a considerable improvement in the quality and range of resources used in the department. The use of new technology within the laboratories is greatly improved but needs developing further by the purchase of more hardware allowing pupils hands-on experience of datalogging. New courses, the purchase of new textbooks and pupil workbooks and the production of colourful and easily read worksheets have all improved the range of resources available to pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning in lessons are good.
- Teacher-pupil relationships are good, and this produces a positive learning environment.
- Pupils draw confidently and well in charcoal and pastel.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT.
- Experimentation with materials.

127. Standards in Year 9 are below average. Teacher assessments for 2001 confirm this, and similar standards were observed during the inspection week.
128. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. When pupils come to the school in Year 7, their work is well below average, and in Year 9 it is below average. They make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding of art, especially in their drawing. As a result, they use charcoal and pastel confidently and well to produce sensitive portraits. These show an ability to blend colours and tones to accurately represent the features of the human face. Their colour work is bold, and they make bright landscape pictures, based on the work of Vincent Van Gogh, which are lively and show a good grasp of pattern and texture. Their work in ceramics, however, lacks sensitivity, and is rather heavily modelled. In addition, there is not enough use of ICT to support and extend their work, and their research skills are weak.
129. Standards in Year 11 are below average. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, results were well below average and fell sharply from the previous year. Unusually large numbers took the examination course because they were not given the opportunity to do other subjects. This meant that motivation was poor. In the work in the school, however, standards are higher, though they are still below average. This is because pupils are now given more choice in the subjects they can study, and attitudes to the subject are now very good in Years 10 and 11.
130. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, when pupils' work at the beginning of the course is compared with their work at the end. Although teaching and learning in lessons are good, there are poor rates of attendance, with too many pupils regularly missing their lessons. As a result, the standard of work overall is restricted to a level which is below average. Pupils continue to build on their skills in drawing in charcoal and pastel, and they produce striking monochrome portraits, which use a full range of tones to produce strong contrasts of light and dark. They also learn to use paint with more confidence and they produce watercolour landscapes which accurately represent the effects of dappled light falling through leafy branches. However, there is not enough experimentation with materials in their folders, or in their sketchbooks. In addition, their knowledge of artists and art movements is rather sketchy and lacks depth.
131. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, because there is a good range of materials available, which are often well matched to their interest and attainment levels. This is clearly seen

when they are working vigorously with clay and papier mache, using the shapes and patterns seen in animals as a starting point.

132. Teaching and learning are good in all years. A major strength of the teaching is seen in the good relationships between teachers and pupils, which produces an ordered, positive learning environment. For example, in a lesson where pupils in Years 10 and 11 were working on their GCSE coursework, the good relationships meant that pupils were very keen to get on with their work, and they showed very good attitudes and behaviour. As a result, interest levels were high, the pace of the lesson was good, and this produced good learning. Teachers also have good subject knowledge, and often give good individual advice to pupils in lessons. This means that they make good gains in their skills, for example in drawing or painting. Teaching methods are largely based on a careful and considered approach to using materials, and this produces learning which is consistently good. However, materials are not used in exciting enough ways to produce higher levels of excitement and inspiration. This means that learning does not rise above a good level overall.
133. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, and teaching and learning are now good in all years. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 has also improved and is now good. The subject is well led and managed, and there is a clear educational direction in the work of the department. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and learning is established, and assessment procedures are good. However, although the art of other cultures is studied, the diversity of other cultures is not celebrated as fully as it could be, in order to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Good assessment procedures and analysis of data.
- Good planning of lessons and schemes of work.
- Good relationships between pupils and teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the low levels of attainment in all years.
- Increase the amount of coverage for control and electronics and develop computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacturing (CAM).
- Improve pupils' graphical presentational skills.
- Ensure the courses in Years 10 and 11 meet the needs of pupils.

134. Standards of work in Year 9 are well below the national average and the results of recent teacher assessments indicate similar standards. Pupils enter the school with low levels of prior attainment and from this low base their levels of achievement are satisfactory. Some practical work is of a good standard. The better design folders are neatly presented across a range of material areas. Good use of ICT was used in a mobile phone project in Year 9. There were good investigations into re-cycling of materials in textiles and pupils used good research methods into African Culture in a cushion design in Year 8. These and other design folders use a range of presentational skills in developing ideas for design solutions. Where the work is weaker it is due to the inability to develop a range of solutions to problems and generally poorer presentational skills. Drawings are sometimes not annotated, there is too much use of pens, including felt-tip pens, which are untidy and there is an over-reliance on commercial material as a stimulus for design ideas.
135. Standards of work of present Year 11 are well below the national average in all subjects and this is reflected in the recent GCSE results. Pupils perform better in food technology and graphic products than in resistant materials or child development but there has been a gradual

improvement in results overall, although still well below the national average. Pupils achieve good standards in graphic products where design folders show a good use of ICT for research. For example, pupils made good use of the Internet in a packaging project and in a food technology project when looking at nutritional values in breakfast bars. Written presentation in child development folders is usually good as in the research project into nursery equipment. Standards are often low in resistant materials where design folders are often poorly presented. There is a lack of depth in the quality of research and there are poorly annotated drawings as in the lighting project. Modelling of ideas is usually of a satisfactory standard as are practical outcomes using a range of materials. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls but design folder work produced by girls is usually of a better standard than boys.

136. Pupils' attitudes are usually good. They work well together and respond positively when suitably challenged. They usually settle to tasks quickly but there are instances of inattention and distraction during teacher demonstrations or explanations. In some lessons listening skills are underdeveloped and pupils tend to call out answers inappropriately. Pupils have difficulty in using technical language in oral and written communication.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In the better lessons learning is accelerated and good progress made because of the teaching strategies used, as for example in a Year 8 lesson where pupils are developing skills of sequence drawing related to design and make tasks. A Year 9 low attaining group of pupils developed good practical and social skills in a cake-making project and in a Year 11 lesson pupils developed an understanding of 'nets' in relation to a packaging exercise. These lessons had good pace and lesson objectives were shared with pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and used this to encourage pupils to develop or expand ideas. The management of pupils in lessons is good. Some less effective lessons, although satisfactory, were teacher dominated with too lengthy introductions or explanations and lacked real pace. Most lessons had a good mix of activities helping pupil motivation and interest. For a significant number of pupils learning is affected by poor attendance and the inability to access the technical language required for higher standards of work. Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties make good progress especially when support assistants are present.
138. The head of department, appointed since the last inspection, is providing good direction for the subject and has tackled many of the issues raised in the last inspection report. Assessment procedures are good and data analysis is used effectively for target setting. Schemes of work have been reviewed and the design process is now consistent across all areas of the department. There is a shared vision for development of the subject and there is a positive working atmosphere in the department. There is a need to improve pupils' graphical skills, and to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in control and electronics. Building on the successful links with local colleges, the range of courses in Years 10 and 11 could be increased to meet the individual needs of pupils. There are effective strategies in place for monitoring pupils' progress. Literacy support is good and numeracy satisfactory. Pupils are confident in using ICT and this enables them to improve the quality of the work. A technician gives invaluable support to the department. Displays of pupils' work are good and help to support raising standards.
139. Since the last inspection of the department there have been significant improvements. Statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9 are now fully met. Effective assessment procedures are now in place and linked to national curriculum levels. There is now a common approach to the design process across all subjects.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching is beginning to raise standards.
- Specialist teachers have good knowledge of their subject.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- Good use of a variety of learning activities.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers is not fully developed.
- Fieldwork in all years would greatly extend the work done in classrooms.
- Increase in the use of analytical marking would give pupils a greater opportunity to improve their work.

140. GCSE results are well below average at the higher grades (A* - C) but only slightly below across the full range. After a dip in the examination results in recent years, new leadership for the subject is starting to raise expectations.

141. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are below national averages. Standards on entry and for pupils joining the school during Years 7, 8 and 9 show that many pupils are experiencing difficulties with written work due to weaknesses in literacy skills and geographical knowledge. However, a small minority of pupils is working at higher levels. Pupils of all abilities demonstrated in their work or lessons an understanding of some of the processes involved in both physical and human geography and their related effects both on the environment and human activity. As pupils progress through Years 7, 8 and 9 they begin to show some confidence in finding information from text, maps and diagrams but their skills in using computers are not so well developed. There was some evidence in their work that pupils had some understanding of the use of graphs in geography and its contribution to numeracy. The subject has gone some way into providing texts and worksheets to address the different levels of ability and pupils were beginning to show the benefits of this course of action. The work of girls is at a slightly higher level than that of the boys. Pupils with special educational needs make significant progress in meeting their targets when supported. The use of key words has been introduced, however, it requires greater emphasis during the work attempted by pupils. A word search was well used to check not only on vocabulary but to settle pupils down at the beginning of a lesson.
142. In the work seen during the inspection, some pupils were working at slightly above national averages by the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement, relative to standards at the end of Year 9, shows satisfactory improvement. Pupils were making satisfactory progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. Many pupils in Year 11 had a good understanding of the vocabulary and can use it in geographical contexts. Higher attaining pupils show some confidence in their writing, be it short answers or of a more extended nature. Pupils with special educational needs were working well to achieving their targets particularly when supported.
143. Pupils' attitudes were generally positive and when they were not, this did not affect the learning in lessons. Most pupils who came were prepared to work at a satisfactory rate and concentrate on the work they were given. The majority of pupils accepted the demands made on them by their teachers. They generally work well together, sometimes in paired work, taking responsibility for their work. During the inspection behaviour was generally good and any minor incidents were quickly dealt with.
144. The quality of teaching overall was good. The quality of learning is satisfactory in Years 7,8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are well prepared and draw on an appropriate range of activities and resources. However, there are not enough opportunities for the use of computers to support learning. Teachers shared the aims of the lessons with pupils. In all lessons teachers began with a review of previous work, to assist pupils to recall and build on their learning so that they can progress in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have a good command of their subject and tasks are mostly matched to the needs of pupils. Question and answer sessions are well used to check previous work and to ensure that new learning was understood. Marking seen was regular but lacked constructive comments on how pupils can improve their work.
145. The department is well managed with a strong commitment to improving standards despite the difficulties pupils have early on in school with weak literacy skills. The curriculum has been planned to increase their geographical knowledge and develop and reinforce key skills in all years. Geographical visits are limited to work on the River Calder and work in Halifax itself in Years 10 and 11 and this clearly extends the work in the classroom. However, little fieldwork is provided in Years 7, 8 and 9. The provision of resources is generally good with each pupil having an appropriate textbook. Accommodation is satisfactory. Issues identified in the last inspection report have not been tackled as there are insufficient opportunities for independent learning and the use of ICT and fieldwork still remain weaknesses.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Consistently thorough preparation and marking, with sensitive management of pupils.
- Conscientious guidance given to all pupils in preparation for exams.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers should develop pupils' ability to become independent learners.
- They should make greater use of information technology and the locality.

146. Pupils join the school with standards that are very low. They make satisfactory progress through their time in the school but in relation to national standards their attainment, as seen in lessons and written work, is still well below average by the end of Year 9. Progress continues to be satisfactory in the final years, so attainment is well below national averages by the end of Year 11. However, GCSE results improved slightly in 2001, when two out of twenty candidates gained grades A-C. Those gaining grades A-G increased from about half the candidates entered in 1999 and 2000 to nearly three-quarters in 2001. These results are roughly in line with those achieved in other subjects. Many more girls than boys take history as an option, but boys tend to perform better than girls. Standards are made worse by the absence of some pupils and some failure to hand in coursework.
147. By the end of Year 9 most pupils can explain how events came about or how one might judge a character in history. They give several reasons why, for instance, Cromwell might be regarded as a hero and counter these with reasons why he was a villain, but such answers are heavily guided by the teacher and tend all to be similar. They can explain what an original source has to tell us, but are weak in evaluating the source and commenting on its reliability and possible bias. Weak literacy skills often reduce the impact of what pupils write, although the sense is usually clear.
148. These weaknesses continue in Years 10 and 11. Pupils do little independent research and seldom use ICT. They are still strongly directed by the teacher. This ensures a minimum standard of factual content and structure, but limits the amount which the pupils can do for themselves. Pupils in all years find it very hard to remember work they have done previously, and have little idea of when events occurred. That said, most pupils are achieving results in line with or slightly better than their prior attainment would indicate. Pupils with special educational needs receive plentiful and skilled support. They are achieving well. Those who are gifted and talented benefit from extra help at an after-school club.
149. Teaching is satisfactory in all years. Teachers plan thoroughly and prepare conscientiously. They have very good relations with pupils, whose behaviour is accordingly good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively, as for instance in describing how Huskisson became the first victim of a railway accident. They give pupils a great deal of structured guidance, and they mark diligently, so pupils know where they stand and what they need to do to improve. Homework is set and checked regularly.
150. However, too little attention is paid to pupils' learning. Though pupils show interest and often ask questions, they seldom discuss or have opportunities to learn from each other. For much of the time they are told what to think rather than encouraged to come up with their own opinions and then learn how to defend those opinions with evidence. These are skills of a higher order, but teachers could realistically have higher expectations about what pupils can achieve.
151. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The new head of department has revised the schemes of work, made excellent use of the school's assessment procedures, and ensured that the work of the department is carried out efficiently. The number of assistants supporting pupils with special educational needs has increased and liaison is very good. There has been improvement in the range of resources with the acquisition of laptop computers. The

department does not exploit the locality despite its richness as a resource. Teaching is still largely satisfactory, but the teaching style remains mainly teacher directed. There has been some improvement in GCSE results in the last year, but overall standards have not risen significantly. The way forward requires a greater attention to how pupils learn.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **good**.

Strengths

- Very good leadership has resulted in a very good level of improvement since the last report.
- The systems manager supports the work of the department very strongly.
- Teaching by specialist staff is very good and consequently the level of pupils' achievement is good.
- The work of learning assistants and teachers is co-ordinated very well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment data needs to be used more fully for analysis and planning.
- Development plans need to be more focused and prioritised.
- Programmes of study are not being revised to reflect pupils' increasing expertise in ICT.
- A more direct engagement of pupils in their learning through individual or group presentations would stimulate independent learning and personal development.

152. Standards of attainment on intake are significantly below national expectations. Pupils in Year 7 have very few keyboard skills, typing with one hand if not one finger and little or no awareness of the location of keys. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below expectations. Standards at the end of Year 11 are also well below expectations although for the very few candidates entered for GCSE examinations, standards appear to be in line with expectations. GCSE results in 2001 were significantly below average.
153. These results and the low level of attainment overall are in great part the result of pupils' limited experience of information technology. The school's good ICT facilities have been in full operation for barely nine months and the programmes of study for only a year. The influence of the changes implemented by the co-ordinator since his appointment in September 2000 is only now having an impact. Although standards of attainment are low, the progress made by pupils, particularly by those with special needs, is generally good.
154. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last report. Overall it is good and that done by specialist ICT teachers is very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and there is a shared commitment to succeed. Consequently, behaviour is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and, unusually, pupils neither log-on as soon as they enter the information technology rooms nor play with computer equipment when they should be listening and thinking. They pay attention, work hard and sustain a high degree of concentration and as a result achievement is high. The exceptions to this are pupils in Year 7, whose behaviour is immature and lacking in self-discipline and who consequently underachieve.
155. Lessons are planned very well in relation to coherent programmes of study that use new technology effectively and take account of pupils' limited experience in using that technology. Work is demanding and reflects teachers' high but realistic expectations of their pupils. The lessons include a variety of stimulating activities operating at a brisk pace. For example, in one lower set Year 8 lesson, pupils used role-play to simulate a database sorting procedure, to which the pupils responded with sensible, controlled enthusiasm. Coincidentally, the teacher also used this simulation to support the extension of their literacy skills by reinforcing their understanding of ascending and descending alphabetical order. They are engaged by the lessons' activities and their interest is stimulated. In a Year 11 lesson on control technology, they plotted the movements of a robot loader about a warehouse and, in calculating angles of turn and distance of

movement, reinforced their use of mathematical skills. For Year 7 pupils a 'Whodunit' game has been devised to help them learn about the use of database filters and how to apply them. By reading a series of crime stories carefully, pupils search for clues and by setting filters correctly to match those clues, they can discover who committed the crime. The reading helps develop literacy skills, which is important because pupils' speaking and writing skills are very weak and have a detrimental influence on their attainment. For too many pupils, that attainment is also affected adversely by poor attendance, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

156. The support given to individual pupils during practical work is very strong. It is inclusive because teachers are well informed about specific educational needs and so direct it appropriately. Lessons are planned collaboratively with the support assistants, whose contribution to helping pupils with special needs accounts in no small measure for their high achievement and good progress. The numbers in the lower sets are too high and on occasion the level of additional support provided is inadequate.
157. The leadership and management of ICT are very good. There is a clear sense of purpose and vision and this is shared with colleagues, particularly the systems manager. The development plans are detailed and thorough, although they need to be more focused and prioritised. Assessment procedures are very good, potentially excellent, but the data generated needs to be used more analytically to track pupils' learning and to support planning. Relationships with other teachers and senior management are good and appointments have been successful and developmental. The systems manager, appointed in October 2000, has been influential in the development of the school's computer system. His technical skills, so important to support teaching, are augmented by a clear insight into the role of information technology in teaching and administration in the school. He and the co-ordinator have together been responsible for the very high degree of improvement made in ICT since the last report.
158. The use of ICT in the other subjects of the curriculum is patchy and underdeveloped. The school's computer system is fairly modern but it has been fully operational for only nine months and, although all teachers have undertaken appropriate training, not all of them have completed it. Consequently, although its use is evident in programmes of study, teachers have as yet had insufficient time or experience to fully integrate it into their teaching. For similar reasons pupils have not yet had enough experience to have the competence to use the resources to greater effect.
159. The ICT co-ordinator has compiled a helpful guide for all subjects suggesting ways in which ICT resources might be used to support teaching and learning.
160. There is some use of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum, however modest, very often to enable pupils to research topics on the Internet. In mathematics pupils in every class have a weekly lesson using computer resources and in French the ICT rooms are used on a regular basis, often, but not exclusively, to access foreign language websites. In English pupils have researched newspaper pages on the Internet and websites devoted to football hooliganism in studying the role and significance of the media in modern society. In art a digital camera has been used to record sequentially the process of plaster casting and in design technology a digital camera is used by pupils to generate and import images into text documents. They also use spreadsheets to analyse data but as yet there is no use made of design or drawing software. In music special software is used to help pupils in Years 10 and 11 to compose their own pieces. In science a presentation package is used to introduce new topics, such as pollution, and pupils use an interactive whiteboard to explain to their peers the sequence of changes in the state of water atoms consequent upon changes in temperature. Despite improved ICT resources since the last inspection, there is a need for more dataloggers to enable pupils to have increased hands-on experience.
161. The systems manager has played an influential part in developing the school's computer network and this has done much to encourage other subjects to engage more fully with ICT in their teaching. Plans for the future expansion of the school's system allow for improving the rate at which the system works and give all teachers greater access to its resources. The provision of a

laptop computer for every teacher is designed to generate greater individual self-confidence and accelerate the use of ICT in all subject areas.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall, with very good subject knowledge and management of pupils.
- The department provides most pupils with GCSE or alternative qualifications in one of two languages, French or Spanish.
- The systems for assessing pupils' work and helping them to track their own achievements are good.

Areas for improvement

- Recent GCSE results in the range of A*-C have been well below the national average.
- Teachers make insufficient use of ICT.
- There is no opportunity for talented linguists to learn both French and Spanish.

162. In 2001, GCSE results in French at A*-C were well below the national average, but higher than in the previous year. Boys gained slightly higher grades than girls at A*-C but performed less well in the range A*-G, where all girls entering gained a grade. Both boys and girls attained results equal to those they achieved in their other school subjects. No pupils entered for Spanish in 2001, but in the previous Year 5 of the 13 pupils entering attained A*-C grades and they were all successful at A*-G.
163. The most recent teachers' assessments and inspection evidence suggests that attainment at the end of Year 9 is below the national expectation. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with much lower than average attainment overall. They have little or no knowledge of either French or Spanish, one of which they begin to study. Despite limited listening and speaking skills, most pupils, including many with special educational needs, understand and contribute briefly to those parts of their lessons conducted in the European languages. Higher attainers achieve well, writing and performing lengthy dialogues about everyday situations such as finding the way and ordering a simple meal. In Years 8 and 9, many learn to speak and write more expressively about school life, leisure activities and family relationships. Most pupils aged 14 adapt their writing to different purposes, such as filling in forms, making posters or composing short informal letters. A minority of boys and girls improve their vocabulary by working independently on computers. For many pupils, the acquisition of numbers, grammar and idioms remains confined to simple topics such as time and the weather. A minority of higher attainers use a range of tenses to talk and write about past and future events such as holidays and journeys abroad.
164. Current attainment in Years 10-11 remains below the national expectation, although more consistent and skilled teaching is promoting standards in Spanish equivalent to the higher GCSE grades. The most competent linguists, boys as well as girls, discuss and write at length on topics ranging from famous personalities to work experience. Lower attaining pupils, many of whom have special educational needs, consolidate and concentrate on the basic everyday language they learnt in earlier years. They too become more expressive and persuasive in their speech and writing, often using simple visual aids as prompts. Many middle and higher attaining pupils read short authentic texts about teenage interests such as healthy living and the media. The majority learn well how to use dictionaries and infer meaning from familiar contexts, but frequent absence or poor recall adversely affect the progress of a minority. Most boys and girls can cope with short role-plays about banks, pharmacies and hotels and make longer personal presentations. Despite their teachers' very good example and the authentic model of the Spanish foreign language assistant, pupils' speaking is, overall, their weakest skill.
165. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are fluent in French and Spanish and are well supported by their assistants. They are familiar with the requirements of the National Curriculum and those of examining boards, pitching the work done in sets and mixed ability groups to suit pupils' abilities and special educational needs. Their expectations of pupils are generally high and tasks are organised to keep classes working continuously as individuals or in groups. Many pupils' progress over time is nevertheless slower than usual. Teachers use a lot of

English to ensure understanding and maintain a good productive pace, so pupils' exposure to French and Spanish and their fluency is correspondingly reduced. Pupils enjoy and mostly sustain concentration in quick games and competitions using basic classroom equipment such as flashcards and the overhead projector. The few ethnic minority pupils are fully included and achieve well. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and summaries demonstrating what has been learned. Teachers encourage strong contributions to whole class work and reward good speaking or writing with stickers. They promote independent learning by ensuring that pupils have stimulating materials to handle and refer to. Teachers make some incidental use of basic computer software but exploit the potential of ICT insufficiently. Most pupils have good, positive attitudes to learning French and Spanish and work hard in well-structured lessons. Occasionally, lengthy or demanding tasks lose the interest of a minority who become restless and achieve little. Teachers assess pupils' work well, continuously noting their oral answers, setting short tests or marking written exercises constructively. They encourage pupils to track and predict their own progress through the levels of attainment. Most GCSE pupils use homework effectively to prepare and write their coursework pieces, but the opportunities for the most talented linguists to extend or enrich their studies are few.

166. The department is very well led and well managed, supported and encouraged by the school's senior management team. Strong recovery from recent staffing difficulties has been reflected in a sharp rise in standards and a positive response to issues raised in the last inspection. Most evident are a wider range of teaching strategies, greater concentration on pupils with special educational needs and better subject identity in a supportive learning environment. Opportunities for pupils to travel abroad and meet native speakers remain limited. Exciting joint ventures in curriculum development are available to a few, and involve them in partnership with local primary and selective secondary schools. While most pupils gain a valid qualification in French or Spanish, only a small minority have so far aspired to the higher GCSE grades, and as yet the curriculum does not allow any pupils to study both languages.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The head of department has good subject knowledge and performance skills.
- There are good relationships and there is good management of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is narrow.
- There is little use of ICT in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of assessment and monitoring to influence the curriculum.

167. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the age of 14 are well below average compared with the nationally expected levels. Inspection evidence from observing lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of work agrees with this. There have been no GCSE music candidates in 2001 but in 1999 all candidates gained A* - G grades and in 2000 half the candidates were likewise successful. All groups, including those pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, achieve well.
168. By the end of Year 9 pupils' standards seen during the inspection are well below average: by the end of Year 11 they are below average. Considering the very low level of attainment of pupils on entry to the school, this represents good achievement with progress being made by all abilities over time. In the work observed all pupils have equal opportunity to develop their musical skills and there are no gender differences. The programmes of study are covered but the curriculum has insufficient breadth to give pupils in Years 7 to 9 a wide, creative base in preparation for GCSE.

169. Extra-curricular activities consist of the girls' steel pans band and the rock band supported by the Yorkshire Youth and Music team. Pupils rehearse when needed for the summer talent show but no Christmas show took place in 2001. Some pupils take part in musical events at the local church and in feeder primary schools. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to play instruments, join music groups and take part in the school shows.
170. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The teacher has good subject knowledge which impacts well on pupils' musical development. For example, a Year 7 class watching a video focusing on timbre, texture and dynamics improved their understanding of how complex rhythms could be combined. This was interspersed by teacher commentary and demonstration to catch pupils' imagination and give them examples to use for their own improvisations. Better planning would have allowed more time for practical work to take place sooner thus avoiding over-running the lesson. Because of this there was no time for appraisal and summing up. Year 9 pupils make simple improvisations on a graveyard theme and suggest musical effects to express various aspects of the story line. They co-operate well together and a few higher attaining pupils show creative effort by directing their group. Lower attaining pupils need more teacher input to get them started but all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make a contribution to the work. Group performances show an understanding of presentation with good listening skills being displayed by the rest of the class. Although the standard of work was low the majority of pupils were interested and prepared to discuss their contribution to the group. In all lessons seen progress, however small, was being made by all groups including pupils with special educational needs, which demonstrates the inclusive nature of the subject. Good behaviour was due to careful management of pupils and positive relationships being developed. Very little homework was set. Support assistants work very effectively with the teacher in moving learning forward and have a roving brief to help all pupils when necessary.
171. Scrutiny of work showed that published worksheets are used for colouring-in instruments and adding missing words made-up from letters of the staff notation. There was nothing to suggest excitement and vitality in the musical diet that would capture the imagination of pupils. Taped extracts, however, demonstrated increasing confidence in performance, from Year 7 adverts through Year 8 examples of reggae and Indian music to Egyptian music in Year 9. Here two pupils playing clarinet and others on keyboard demonstrated a good understanding of the style due to the thorough teaching which had taken place.
172. Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11, with both year groups being taught together in the same lesson. Although standards are below average the teacher's constant reinforcement of basic musical conventions helps motivate pupils and improve learning. All pupils take the full GCSE course after only one year and although the predicted grades are not high, pupils are still making progress. Pupils use software confidently to record and edit their keyboard compositions and they sing or play guitar for their performance pieces. All pupils concentrate hard on the listening test and display a mature approach to tackling this in readiness for the examination. Higher attaining pupils cope well with some of the multi-choice questions but are less successful where short written answers are required. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to read and understand some of the questions, particularly where musical language is involved. Because of this many questions were left unanswered.
173. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the department. The head of music realises that the scheme of work needs to be re-written to produce a broader and more balanced curriculum with a greater variety of learning tasks. This was highlighted at the last inspection and still needs more attention. The development plan is in place and monitoring of teaching by the line manager has taken place. During the inspection there was no singing in Years 7 to 9 nor was ICT being used. Assessment of pupils' work and monitoring of progress is improving. Although assessment sheets are displayed, pupils do not always know their levels and grades and these are not used when work is being marked. The accommodation is a functioning art room and is unsatisfactory for teaching music. This is the second time in as many years that the department has moved rooms and this does little to enhance staff morale or raise pupils' expectations of music. Lack of practice rooms does not help the situation. There are good resources in the

department but there is a need for more classroom instruments. The library has a small selection of books on music which have rarely been taken out,

174. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection but the scheme of work still needs to be carefully planned and enriched to provide pupils with challenging tasks that will help to raise standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers plan lessons using a range of activities that allow all groups of pupils to learn well.
- Individual support for pupils with special educational needs; particularly in GCSE theory work.
- The use of assessment related to National Curriculum levels and sharing information with pupils in all years.
- The quality of practical work achieved by GCSE pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Curriculum time for non-examination pupils in Years 10 and 11 does not allow them to cover the curriculum in sufficient depth.
- Providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills in Years 7 to 9.
- The outdated accommodation and inadequate outdoor facilities restrict curricular development.
- Strategies to increase girls' participation on the examination course and in extra-curricular activities.

175. No pupils undertook the 2001 GCSE examination. In 1999 and 2000, the proportions of pupils gaining A*-C grades were poor and well below national expectations. Currently, a group of twenty-seven pupils (Years 10 and 11) are entered for the 2002 GCSE sports studies examination undertaking a condensed one-year course.

176. Standards of attainment in lessons and of work by pupils at the end of Year 9 are below national averages. Overall, pupils' achievement across Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory in relation to their attainment levels on entry. A significant minority of pupils makes good progress in lessons but unsatisfactory progress over time, because of their frequent absence. Limited indoor accommodation and inadequate outdoor facilities restrict pupils' curricular opportunities, progress and attainment levels. Most Year 9 pupils understand the importance of preparing the body appropriately before exercise and can plan suitable warm-up routines, when given the opportunity. Most pupils understand basic rules in games and athletics, but show below average levels of individual skill. The small numbers of higher attaining pupils are able to judge performance, plan appropriate improvement and achieve well in extra-curricular sport. They show good technique and use this effectively to outmanoeuvre opponents. The low attainment of a few pupils is due to poor levels of listening skills, hand-eye co-ordination and participation.

177. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 11 are below national expectations. Overall, pupils make satisfactory achievement across Years 10 and 11. GCSE pupils make good progress in the practical aspects and show levels of skill and tactical awareness, in line with national expectations. The overall standard of pupils' theory work is below average; most show poor literacy skills. They understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and can accurately judge performance. Pupils show competent information and communication skills; for example, in their use of the Internet to access information. Their knowledge of anatomy and physiology and the principles of fitness, however, is unsatisfactory. Most pupils do not retain information well or spend sufficient time revising.

178. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Teachers are knowledgeable and manage pupils effectively. Well-structured schemes of work support continuity. Work is planned to suit all pupils and those with special educational needs often make good progress. In a Year 8 athletics lesson, lower attaining pupils progressed well because the teacher simplified instructions,

modified tasks and used the learning assistant to help them measure and time performance. The learning of the few higher attaining pupils is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular activities. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn independently in most Year 10 and 11 lessons. In a GCSE revision lesson, pupils researched information through the Internet, summarised findings and planned feedbacks to their peers. Learning is less effective when teaching is more prescriptive. The learning of a significant minority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is limited, due to poor listening skills. Pupils improve their numeracy skills through opportunities to measure and record performance and by using scoring systems. Teachers are adept in their use of questioning and this improves the speaking and listening skills of most pupils, across the attainment levels. More emphasis on key words will extend their technical vocabulary. The subject provides few opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication skills, except for those on the GCSE course.

179. The department is soundly managed. Major policies are in place and strategies are developing to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. Assessment systems are good and data are well used to set pupils targets. The school is exploring various sources of major funding to improve the sub-standard provision of sports facilities. The department needs to develop strategies to improve girls' participation rates on the GCSE course and in extra-curricular activities.
180. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved from satisfactory to good. Lessons are now better planned to cater for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are more experienced and the standard of pupils' kit is better. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in Years 7 to 9 have improved, but a significant minority, particularly boys, still lack listening skills. Overall, participation rates in Year 7 to 9 lessons remain below expectations.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards this subject and behave well in lessons.
- Many pupils have good speaking and listening skills and can think for themselves.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient time given to the subject in Years 7 to 9. There is no timetabled provision in Year 11.
- Schemes of work need to be developed in more detail.
- Pupils have poor literacy skills. This restricts their ability to read and write at the expected level and so hinders their independent learning.

181. Over the past three years GCSE results have been low. Very small numbers took the full course in 1999 and 2000. In 2000, five of the ten pupils who took the examination gained the higher grades of A* to C. This represents good achievement for these pupils. In 2001, 61 pupils took the short course in GCSE. There are no national comparisons available but again the results in the school were low.
182. In work seen during the inspection standards at the end of Year 9 are well below the expectations of the locally 'Agreed Syllabus'. One of the reasons for these low standards is that there is insufficient time given to religious education. All the chosen aspects of the 'Agreed Syllabus' are covered in broad, general terms but are not studied in enough detail. Pupils' learning within lesson time is good but most pupils are unable to recall what was learned in previous lessons and are unable to make links with previous work. The majority of pupils have poor skills in reading and writing and this restricts their ability to learn independently and benefit from homework. However, in lessons pupils show a willingness to learn. In a Year 7 lesson where they were examining how

Muslims view God they were able to point out our human inability to fully understand the infinite nature of the creator of the universe. They understand and appreciate the Islamic use of mathematical patterns to represent the "completeness", the "oneness" and the infinity of God. In Year 8 pupils gain a general understanding of the ceremonies associated with birth, adulthood, marriage and death in Christian, Islamic and Buddhist traditions. However, there is not enough attention paid to the symbolic aspects of these ceremonies. In Year 9, pupils looking at the rights and wrongs of our treatment of the environment made good use of the knowledge and understanding gained in their geography lessons. They also made good use of the skills learned in history to help them understand how we can research and gain knowledge about different religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. Pupils here take an active part in the lesson, asking questions such as "How can we know that the miracles of Jesus really happened?". They can probe the concept of faith by asking searching questions. When given the opportunity they can speak at length and can argue logically.

183. There is no provision for religious education in Year 11. Standards at the end of Year 10 are well below the expectations of the 'Agreed Syllabus'. Religious education is taught within the personal and social education programme and less than half the recommended time is devoted to religious education. This, again, means that the chosen aspects of the 'Agreed Syllabus' can be covered in outline only in many cases. For example, when considering crime and punishment, pupils can list the purposes of punishment and the likely effects and match the effects to the punishment but they do not discuss these ideas in depth. Pupils are hindered in their learning by weaknesses in their knowledge of language, for example, many pupils did not know the meaning of the word "reform". Twenty-four of the higher attaining pupils in Year 10 are doing the short course in GCSE. They are taking the examination at the end of Year 10 in less than half the required time. They are preparing for the examination and are learning to answer the questions in a manner that will gain maximum marks. They can examine terms such as "the sanctity of life" from the Christian and Islamic teachings. They can present arguments for and against abortion, euthanasia and suicide although their arguments are not explored in sufficient depth to gain the highest grades.
184. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, make good progress in their learning within the lessons. However, their progress over time is unsatisfactory because they do not study the topics in enough depth to enable them to make links or to gain a coherent understanding. In class discussions the majority appear to have poor recall of work studied earlier, even when this is recorded in their exercise books. The majority of pupils do not do sufficient homework to compensate for the short time devoted to the subject in school. They also have inadequate literacy skills to support their independent learning. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning is not fully developed. Pupils have the opportunity to e-mail their homework to the teacher but the practice is at an early stage.
185. Religious education is taught within the humanities faculty that includes history and geography. To some extent pupils benefit from this wider vision. Teaching is good overall. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and maintain very good class control and discipline even when a minority of pupils present challenging behaviour. A good climate for learning is created and maintained in all lessons. Teachers plan and structure their lessons well and time the delivery of each part of the lesson so that pupils' interest is captured. In some lessons there is too much time given to responding to worksheets and not enough opportunities for pupils to discuss topics or to express their own opinions. There are no specialist teachers of religious education. The schemes of work need to be updated and written in more detail. This was acknowledged by the subject review in 1999 and again in 2002.
186. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The spiritual aspects of the major world religions are studied in general terms. Moral, social and ethical issues such as care for others, support for the needy and respect for life are discussed formally. The cultural aspects of the major world religions studied help to give pupils a global perspective of modern life.

187. There is some improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching has improved; there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved. This is largely due to the very good class management skills of the teachers. Work is now sufficiently challenging in most lessons although on occasions too much time is spent reviewing what has been covered already. Assessment has improved and is now satisfactory. The current scheme of work is still not sufficiently detailed or clear but it does relate to the 'Agreed Syllabus'. The time given to the subject has decreased significantly, especially in Years 10 and 11. This is unsatisfactory and is a significant factor contributing to the low standards of attainment across all years. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education for all pupils.