

INSPECTION REPORT

**CASTLEFORD HIGH SCHOOL
TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE**

Ferrybride Road
Castleford
Wakefield
WF10 4JQ

Lea area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108273

Headteacher: Mr M W Porter

Reporting inspector: Mr K W Valentine (2277)

Dates of inspection: 2 – 6 October 2000

Inspection number: 223802

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 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ferrybridge Road Castleford West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF10 4JQ
Telephone number:	01977 722985
Fax number:	01977 722991
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W Clift
Date of previous inspection:	11 March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
K W Valentine 2277	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' or students' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils or students taught</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed</p>
E Mills 13459	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents</p>
P D Freund 2225	Team inspector	Art	<p>How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed</p>
B Toms 27638	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Information Technology</p>	
S Foster 30854		Religious Education	<p>How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students</p>

P A Flannery 11764		English	Equal Opportunities
D Beaumont 2491		Design and Technology	
S Cameron 2059		Mathematics	
P Ramsden 10124		Science	
L R Taylor 3965		Physical Education	
G Lewis 17368			Special Educational Needs Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
G K Vaughan 1435		Modern Languages	
G H Thomas 11676		Music	
R L Hutchinson 20564		History	
A Hendry 18080		Design and Technology	
J Deans 17919		English	
J Woolley 30746		Geography	
M White 31199		Modern Languages	

The inspection contractor was:

Doncaster Inspection Services
PO Box 266
The Council House
College Road
DONCASTER
South Yorkshire
DN1 3AD

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castleford High School is a mixed, comprehensive school with Technology College status. It caters for 1172 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. It is situated near the centre of Castleford and provides for a community which suffers a degree of social and economic deprivation. The free school meals entitlement is just over 20%, which is slightly above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 23%, which is slightly below the national average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority background. The prior attainment of pupils on entry is slightly below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Castleford High School is a good school. It has improved in recent years and the evidence of this inspection is that the improvement is set to continue. The teaching is good and recent changes in staff are resulting in further improvements in management and quality of teaching. The leadership and management of the school are good, and the change to Technology College status has been accompanied by a sense of vigour and innovation throughout the school community. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' learning is good, they acquire skills and knowledge well.
- Pupils show very good interest and involvement in activities; their attitudes and behaviour are good
- There is good quality of teaching, which is based on high expectations and well-structured lessons.
- The leadership and management are good.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good and enhances the climate for learning.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good.
- The school has good arrangements for the care of pupils.

What could be improved

- The standards of attainment of pupils of average and below-average ability in English and modern foreign languages.
- The strategic management of the teaching of English and literacy.
- The course provision and teaching of personal, social and health education for older pupils.
- The impact of the technology department and consistency of use of information and communication technology throughout the school in order to further the gains made through the school's Technology College status.
- The school reports to parents to give clearer information about pupils' attainment and set targets for the future.

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 March 1996. Since the last inspection standards at Key Stage 3 and GCSE have improved at a rate broadly in line with the national improvement. There has been a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* - C GCSE grades in the provisional results for 2000.

The school has tackled the key issues raised in the last OFSTED report with a good degree of success. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been reviewed, particularly the role of drama and the creative arts in Year 7. The curriculum is now sound and, indeed, drama is now a strength in the school. Improvements have been gained in the accommodation in the areas identified in the last report as in need of refurbishment. No improvement has been gained in the provision of a daily act of collective worship. The school has continued to develop the good standard of teaching described in the last report, and in this inspection the percentage of lessons observed which were judged to be satisfactory and better was 94% - a very good figure. These improvements have been brought about through effective management and the school is in a good position to continue to improve in the future.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Pupils' standards of attainment have improved in recent years, with the most noticeable increase being recorded in the last two years. The provisional GCSE results for 2000 show 44% of pupils attaining five or more A* - C grades. This exceeds the school's target and represents a very good result. The existing school target for 2001 is reasonable, but will need to be reviewed in the light of this success. Standards attained by average and below-average pupils in English and modern foreign languages have been less good. The school is achieving well above average in comparison with other schools.

Taking account of pupils' attainment on entry they make good progress in the school. Observation in lessons during the inspection indicates much good learning. In a number of subjects staffing changes have resulted in improved management and teaching, and standards are rising. Drama and physical education standards have been particularly notable in their improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are very interested and involved in activities in class and in

	clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: more consistently so in class; occasional lapses in pupils' behaviour when they move around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good: pupils show mature attitudes and there is a cheerful feel to the school.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. It is about the national average.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive. With only a few exceptions they are keen to learn, enjoy their lessons and are well motivated.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is consistently good in both key stages and across all subjects. One exception to this was the teaching of personal, social and health education which was slightly weaker. Teachers demonstrate good management of pupils, good knowledge and understanding, and good expectations in their conduct of lessons. They have good relationships with pupils. Arrangements for homework could be improved, with more being set in some subjects. Greater regularity is required in the provision of homework and encouragement of better use of pupils' planners.

The teaching of the skills of literacy and numeracy are underdeveloped. Many teachers make a contribution, but the current arrangements lack coherence and there needs to be greater direction of the efforts of staff. The percentage of teaching which was satisfactory or better was 94%; that which was very good or better was 17%; and the percentage which was unsatisfactory or worse was 6%.

A strength in pupils' learning was in the good level of interest shown and the willingness to cooperate with teachers. Pupils with special educational needs showed particularly good learning in Key Stage 3.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sound in both key stages. However, improvements are needed in the provision for personal, social and health education in Key Stage 4. The arrangements for extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: arrangements are better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4, where the least able are not achieving their full potential.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall sound: provision is good for pupils' moral and social development; it is sound for their cultural development, but provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: pupils are known and well cared for, and there are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development.

The school curriculum has been enhanced by the Technology College initiative. This has improved resources and, more importantly, has directed the efforts of staff. Further developments are possible, and needed, through improved impact of the design and technology department on the life of the school and in a more extensive use of information and communication technology throughout the school. The improvement in the drama and physical education departments has contributed to a general raising of standards. The introduction of GNVQ courses is an appropriate development, and in art and information technology the courses are helping to improve pupils' attainment. The school does not meet statutory requirements because it does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Although the religious education teaching is good the provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

The school cares well for pupils, and makes good use of records to monitor attitudes and behaviour. Parents express confidence in the school's arrangements. The school maintains detailed scrutiny of pupils' performance and this contributes to planning for future developments.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good. The leadership and management are good in seeking appropriate developments and encouraging good teamwork in the staff. The ethos of the school is one of improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive. It has sound arrangements for its work and has overseen steady improvement in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates carefully pupils' performance. There are good arrangements for review and target setting in relation to the Technology College. The monitoring of teaching and learning is already sound and is improving.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of resources. Improvements have been made to the resourcing of information and communication technology and the library is a valuable asset.

The leadership and management have been successful in encouraging a sense of improvement, vigour and innovation. Management throughout the school is generally good and in some departments new managers are bringing about improvement in pupils' attainment. The strategic management of English and literacy is unsatisfactory. The school seeks good value in its working practice and acquisition of resources and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their child is encouraged to work hard and achieve their best. • Their children are making good progress. • The good teaching. • The fact that the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their child is given to do at home. • Better information on their child's progress. • Closer working between parents and the school.

The inspection team agree entirely with parents. The inspection confirms fully the very positive comments by parents. The inspection report recommends improvements in homework arrangements. It is true that school reports to parents could be improved and inspectors suggest that more detail should be provided to parents on their children's attainment, progress and areas for improvement. The school already works well with parents and the great majority take a positive view, but the comments made by them indicate the need for continuing effort in the partnership.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards of attainment in the school are about the national average. Overall GCSE results have improved since the last inspection at a rate broadly in line with that found nationally. Provisional results for 2000 show a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* - C grade GCSEs. Observation of pupils' work in the school indicates that these higher standards at GCSE should be maintained.
2. The school has moved from a position some years ago of standards of attainment which were much lower. The rate of improvement has increased in recent years. Changes of staff in several departments are having a significant effect on the quality of the work seen and in many subjects improved standards should be possible. In other subjects it should be possible to sustain the improvement seen in the provisional results for 2000.
3. The improved GCSE results for 2000 mean that the school exceeded its target for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A* - C grades. The original target was appropriately challenging, but in the light of the results in 2000 and evidence of improved learning by pupils at present in the school the targets for 2001 could reasonably be reviewed.
4. Standards of attainment of pupils at the age of 14 have been below the national average for the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) when considered together. The results between 1996 and 1999 show an improvement in standards attained to be broadly in line with the improvement found nationally. Standards in mathematics and science have been consistently about average, but the English results have been poor. The provisional National Curriculum assessment results for 2000 show a considerable improvement in the standards attained in English, but pupils' results remain below average. The standard of work observed in lessons during the week of the inspection generally confirms the National Curriculum assessments.
5. Although the results of pupils at the age of 14 have been below average, when compared with schools nationally pupils make good progress when compared with those in similar schools. Particularly in mathematics and science the results achieved have been well above the average for similar schools. However, this has not been the case in English where results have been well below that found in similar schools. Although the English results have improved considerably this year the observation of lessons during the inspection indicates that these higher standards are not secure and the school must take action to maintain and improve the provisional standards attained in 2000. In other subjects observed during the inspection the learning observed and the progress pupils make were judged to be good.
6. The standards pupils attain at GCSE is broadly in line with schools nationally. Standards are well above average compared with schools of a similar type. The rising trend achieved in GCSE has been below the national trend over the period 1994 to 1999, but the trend since the last inspection (1996) has been similar to that found nationally. The provisional 2000 GCSE results show continuing improvement. This year 44% of pupils attained five or more A* - C GCSE grades. This was above the

school target and represents a marked improvement on the standards attained in previous years.

7. In the case of pupils of all ability levels there has been continuing improvement in standards attained. However, the results in English and modern foreign languages have been less good for pupils of average and just below average prior attainment. The provisional 2000 GCSE results in these subjects indicate some underachievement in the case of pupils who have attained average results at the age of 14. For pupils attaining five or more A* - G GCSE grades an improvement in standards is possible.
8. Standards in English are well below average at the end of Key Stage 3 and below average at the end of Key Stage 4. More-able pupils attain standards broadly in line with their ability. However, in the case of pupils with low prior attainment their progress in Key Stage 3 is less good than it should be. Their writing does not show sufficient progress and limited work was observed which demonstrated good progress in speaking and listening skills. Literacy throughout the curriculum is not well developed. There was little evidence of good quality extended writing except in GCSE English. Pupils' listening skills across a range of subjects is satisfactory and their contribution to discussion shows confidence, although the use of standard English language is often inaccurate. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in their reading in Key Stage 3. However, their writing is less good both in volume and quality.
9. Drama standards have improved considerably since the last inspection. GCSE standards are now sound. Standards observed indicate improvement in pupils' confidence and the popularity of the subject is rising significantly.
10. Mathematics standards are about average at the end of both key stages. In recent years there has been a steady improvement in mathematics standards at the end of Key Stage 3 and the provisional GCSE results for 2000 show a very pleasing improvement in pupils' attainment at the age of 16. More-able pupils generally make sound and often good progress. Progress by low-attaining pupils was observed to be less good in a limited number of cases because of the lack of availability of specialist teaching. As a consequence there was a lack of challenge in some of the work undertaken and a lack of motivation on the part of some pupils. Many less-able pupils demonstrate poor basic skills. Standards in numeracy across the curriculum are inconsistent. Some good graphical work was observed, but too little emphasis is placed on arithmetic work in subjects other than mathematics. Given the poor basic skills shown by some pupils there is a pressing need for concentrated teaching of numeracy.
11. Standards in science are broadly in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. The achievement of pupils is good in relation to their prior attainment and they make good progress in science throughout the school. There has been a steady trend of improvement in science standards since the last inspection. Standards of work of SEN pupils in science is good in both key stages.
12. Standards in art are below average in the case of pupils taking GCSE and good in the case of those entered for the GNVQ assessment. Many less-able pupils are making good progress in both key stages and achieve well. Some most-able pupils do not attain sufficiently high standards in Key Stage 3.
13. Standards of attainment in design and technology have been below the national

average and middle-ability pupils do not reach their potential. However, there are clear signs of improvement in many areas of the subject. Attainment in Key Stage 3 has improved and some high quality work was observed in electronic products in Key Stage 4. Attainment in the GNVQ course is poor and many pupils underachieve in relation to their ability, especially middle and lower-ability pupils.

14. In information and communication technology standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and often above this. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards attained are good and well above those expected nationally. Examination results in the GNVQ information technology course are good and the GCSE results are just below the national average. Within the information and communication technology department there is a trend of improving standards. However, across the curriculum there is inconsistency in the use of information and communication technology.
15. In geography, standards have been below the national average. A steady trend of improvement was disrupted by low standards in 1998 and 1999. However, the provisional 2000 results are much improved. The evidence of pupils' work indicates that this improved standard will continue. The performance of special educational needs pupils in Key Stage 4 in both geography and history is very good. Targets are set at the appropriate level and pupils achieve well.
16. Standards in history have been inconsistent, but show an improving trend. In Key Stage 3 there has been a significant improvement from a very low starting point. In Key Stage 4 there is evidence of improving standards, but there is also some underachievement of pupils of middle ability, especially boys.
17. The recent GCSE results in modern foreign languages have been well below average. In lessons observed standards were found to be better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. In both key stages standards are rising.
18. Standards in music have risen sharply in the provisional GCSE results in 2000. Prior to this standards have been well below the national average. Work observed during the inspection indicates continuing improved standards.
19. In physical education standards are average in both key stages and pupils' progress is good. The most recent GCSE results, including the provisional 2000 results, indicate that attainment of pupils studying for this examination is well above average. Good learning by pupils was observed during the inspection.
20. Standards in religious education are in line with the Wakefield Agreed Syllabus. Pupils achieve good results at GCSE and there has been a steady improvement in standards over the past four years.
21. The school has monitored carefully differences in standards of attainment by gender. Although girls outperform boys in many instances there are cases of subjects where more of a balance has been retained: geography, music, art, and design and technology. Boys' results compare favourably with girls for those gaining one or more A* - G GCSE grades. However, much remains to be done particularly in relation to higher GCSE grades and the school is making worthy efforts by a number of means.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

22. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive. With only a few exceptions they are keen to learn, enjoy their lessons and are well motivated. The high quality of much of the teaching and the clear expectations in many lessons are powerful influences and pupils respond well, showing an interest in their work and concentrating well. Pupils studying for GNVQ in art appear confident and show good independent learning skills. This ability to plan their own work is also evident in information and communication technology, drama and music, although opportunities for pupils to do this are limited in science and mathematics. In geography pupils are given some opportunities to show initiative, although this good practice needs to be extended.
23. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils co-operate well with each other and listen carefully to their teachers. In music and science lessons, especially in Year 10, pupils help each other and work productively in pairs and groups.
24. Enthusiasm for school is evident in the way pupils are highly involved in the broad range of extra-curricular activities provided for them.
25. Behaviour in lessons is good, with few instances of challenging behaviour seen during inspection. The school has effective systems to encourage good behaviour and to deal with poor behaviour. Pupils are well aware of the consequences of their actions and most of them behave responsibly and sensibly. Misbehaviour is rare in all except lower-band classes and is usually well handled by teachers.
26. Out of lessons pupils move around the school without noise or fuss. There are areas in school where congestion hinders the smooth movement from classroom to classroom but most pupils are courteous, polite and hold doors open for one another and for visitors. They queue sensibly for snacks and lunches without overt supervision. During break and lunchtimes pupils are trusted to remain inside school if they wish and respond with maturity, respecting their environment. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. During the inspection there were occasions when pupils were not always respectful to adults, particularly if they thought that they were not being observed, but these occasions were rare.
27. The number of pupils excluded from school for a fixed period remains high. The school takes a firm line in matters of discipline and has a policy to exclude for abusive or violent behaviour. This creates a climate in which pupils can learn effectively. The school works hard to try to deal with challenging behaviour and instances of permanent exclusions are not high.
28. Prefects carry out a variety of tasks which are not only useful to the school community but also help to develop in themselves a sense of responsibility. These tasks include assisting form tutors in lower school, paired reading and sports' coaching.
29. Attendance in the school is satisfactory, with rates around those achieved nationally. Instances of unauthorised absence are also in line with national figures. Pupils are generally prompt to school but sometimes pupils are slow to move between classes and some lesson time is lost.
30. Overall, the school provides a good learning environment for pupils and their good behaviour contributes well to their personal development.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

31. The quality of teaching in the school is good. 94% of lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory or better. Teaching observed was found to be equally good in both key stages. The encouragement for the school to continue to develop the good standard of teaching and learning was a key issue in the last Ofsted report. The school has responded well with the quality of teaching being even better than last time.
32. Teaching is consistently good across the curriculum. Only in the case of the teaching of personal, social and health education is the quality of teaching less good. A high level of very good teaching was observed in physical education and religious education. A substantial level of very good teaching was also observed in English, drama, geography, music, science and information and communication technology. In no subject was teaching found to have a significant level of weakness.
33. The best teaching observed was based on good management of pupils; good knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers, and good expectations in their conduct of lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and the class management of lower-ability groups is good. Every effort is made by teachers to integrate the activities of pupils of different abilities within classes to encourage the involvement of all. In many lessons good use was made of a clear presentation of lesson objectives and often these were used to review the lesson at its conclusion.
34. Many strengths were observed in teaching during the inspection. The teaching of GNVQ art was very effective. Good provision was made for SEN pupils in the teaching of science. In the design and technology department there was particularly successful teaching in electronics. Basic skills teaching was well conducted in music and good independent learning was noted in drama. Good use was made of games to summarise work in geography. In physical education teaching is very challenging and maintains a good pace of work.
35. Particularly effective was the management of classes by teachers. Some pupils are lively and talkative and need firm and enthusiastic guidance. In one excellent lesson observed, low-attaining pupils were stimulated by an interesting and challenging introduction to the lesson. The teacher was extremely positive and cheerful in manner. By her enthusiasm and good relationships with pupils she encouraged their participation and interest. By force of personality and alertness she dealt effectively with pupils who were unhelpful in their behaviour. The outcome was a good quality of learning with a group of pupils who did not find the subject easy.
36. In another excellent lesson there was great clarity in the exposition of work. The teacher had a very good lesson plan and the introduction provided pupils with a very clear explanation of how to proceed. The teacher encouraged pupils to work quickly and quietly so that good progress was made. The classroom assistant made a very valuable contribution. The lesson concluded with a clear and helpful review of what had been attempted and achieved. Throughout the lesson the quality of teaching resulted in very good pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour.
37. Although very few unsatisfactory lessons were observed teaching is weakened by variable arrangements for the provision of homework. In some cases the amount set is insufficient. There is also variability in the use and checking of pupils' planners and in regularity in the setting of homework.
38. Pupils would also benefit from greater commitment to teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Teachers would be helped by greater clarity in what is expected and

greater consistency in their application.

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

39. The curriculum is broadly based in Key Stage 3 and covers the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, except for a daily act of collective worship. All pupils are provided with a course of personal, social and health education, which is of satisfactory quality and is well received, particularly by the younger pupils. A strategy for teaching literacy is in the early stages of development, and at present there is little coherence. Nevertheless, many departments have technical key words and their meanings displayed in classrooms and make reference to them in lessons. A well-managed strategy, using the expertise of the English department, would make a major contribution to improving pupils' written expression in subjects across the curriculum. Strategies for teaching numeracy are yet to be developed.
40. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum has been strengthened by a range of accredited courses, which cater for a wide range of abilities. In addition to traditional GCSE courses, pupils of all abilities are offered the opportunity to take GNVQ courses at foundation or intermediate level, and these have been particularly successful. The least able, have benefited from a core skills and vocational education accredited course. Revision classes, after school, are used to support learning. Pupils are less well provided for in personal, social and health education in years 10 and 11, because of the long-term illness of the co-ordinator and some poor quality teaching. Nevertheless, the science department makes a good contribution both to health education and in addressing ethical and moral issues. Careers education is well done and pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of options available post-16. The careers service makes a good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding, and individual careers interviews are sensitively and impartially handled. The curriculum is enhanced in a variety of subjects by out-of-school visits or by visitors in school.
41. The 15 minute form-tutor time each morning is not well used to promote a link between pastoral and academic work, though some teachers attempt worthwhile activities in literacy or personal development.
42. The school has had Technology College status for the past three years. Its influence on the curriculum is significant in providing enhanced learning opportunities. Pupils use information and communication technology confidently in some subjects, but its use to support learning is still inconsistent.
43. Extra-curricular activities are abundant and well supported. The drama, physical education, English, music and art departments make particularly strong contributions to enhancing pupils' confidence, sense of worth and obligations to the community.
44. Pupils with SEN and the lower-abilities are well provided for with the accredited courses, which give a good balance in the curriculum. In general, the curriculum gives reasonable access for all pupils though boys are not attaining as well as they should in GCSE English language and literature, French, and history. A significant number of pupils were not entered for GCSE mathematics.
45. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, despite very good contributions from the religious education department. Some further opportunities are

planned in English and history, but there is little coherence throughout the school. While there is sound provision for spiritual development in assemblies, the assemblies themselves, only occur weekly for pupils. The last Ofsted report recommended that the school addresses the legal requirement of providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. No progress has been made on this issue.

46. Moral and social development are well provided for through a range of subjects: in history through studying slavery, the holocaust and apartheid; in English, through discussing texts and topical issues such as the recent debate on conjoined twins. Social development is further enhanced by staff who act as good role models, by the good range of teaching and learning styles and the out-of-school hours provision. Cultural development is satisfactory, with good provision in English, music, drama and history. In art there are opportunities to study works of art from European traditions and worldwide, but the impact on pupils' cultural development is limited. Pupils have limited experience of multi-cultural traditions.
47. Links with the primary feeder schools and post-16 providers are satisfactory in supporting transition to the next stage of education.
48. The last Ofsted report had a key issue for action recommending a review of the structure of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, and in particular the role and contribution of drama and the creative arts. The school has improved curricular provision since the last inspection, and has greatly enhanced provision in the arts. The provision is now good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The school's provision for the pastoral support of pupils is a strength of the school. There are well established measures with a very effective team of pastoral staff who have a secure knowledge of pupils and of their individual needs. Pupils know whom to approach if they have personal problems or difficulties with their work. The school is constantly reviewing its procedures and has recently appointed assistant heads of year in order to improve monitoring procedures. Heads of year have a pivotal role in the personal support of pupils and effectively link this to their academic achievement. The senior teacher with responsibility for pastoral care provides very effective leadership. The use of tutor time at the beginning of each day varies and is not always effectively used to provide support and to promote attainment.
50. There are clear procedures to monitor the behaviour of pupils. The school's system on sanctions and rewards is clearly understood by pupils and is effective. 'Notification sheets' alert staff to any concerns and 'monitoring sheets' contain targets for pupils who misbehave. Achievement is acknowledged and rewarded with a 'sticker' system which is especially appreciated by younger pupils.
51. The school employs a behaviour support worker who effectively liaises with the educational welfare service and with teachers to provide help for some pupils for whom behaviour or attendance is an issue.
52. Clear procedures are in place to identify any problems with pupils' attendance. The school has introduced an electronic system for registration and this provides quick and accurate information when tracking absence or lateness.
53. Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils exist, but there are no risk assessments carried out in the design and technology department, and the sports

hall does not have a sign to identify the fire exit. These are legal requirements and the school needs to address these issues as a matter of urgency. The school complies with regulations in matters of child protection.

54. Assessment procedures are good except in the case of geography and GNVQ manufacturing where weaknesses exist. Records of pupils' attainment are used well in many departments to track pupils' progress and to set challenging targets. The data also helps to monitor those who are not meeting expectations, and who need further support. There are good examples of its use in science, history, physical education and in SEN. Many departments track progress carefully through end-of-unit assessments and tests, and give regular feedback to pupils. However, targets are not specific enough in English to inform pupils on how they need to improve. In mathematics a new database provides clear evidence of progress, but diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the lower-attaining pupils is not clearly made, consequently, targets are not set for them.
55. Pupils with SEN statements are frequently monitored and annually reviewed. This provision is satisfactory. Targets are set for pupils with individual education plans and discussed effectively with them. Subsequently, learning support assistants monitor their success. Subject departments and the special needs providers have good links thereby enabling education targets for SEN pupils to be used effectively for these pupils to make progress in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Parents who expressed a view are mostly very happy with the school and are confident that the school has high expectations of their children to work hard and achieve well. They feel that teaching is good and that high standards of behaviour are achieved. Most report that their children like school and that the school is helping them to become mature and responsible. Parents are happy with the extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Although most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school about any problems, a number do not feel well informed about progress or that the school works closely with them. Some expressed a concern about the level of homework. Inspectors' findings were largely in agreement with the views of parents, although the school does make considerable efforts to involve parents in the education of their children.
57. The school provides adequate opportunities for parents to discuss the progress of their children, and attendance at consultation evenings is satisfactory, with good response in some year groups. The parents of year 7 pupils were canvassed to ascertain their views on the quality of consultations and reports. The response was largely positive. Additional meetings are held for those whose children are making choices at the end of Key Stage 3. Although the school provides parents with all assessment results, the quality of annual written reports is at present unsatisfactory, with insufficient information in some subjects about what pupils can do, their strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement.
58. General information about the school is good, with an informative brochure and regular newsletters. The governors' annual report to parents fails to provide information on the provision for disabled pupils and therefore does not meet legal requirements.
59. The main routine link between the school and home is the pupil's planner. The use of these varies and, although some are used well and signed weekly by teachers and

parents, their use is too inconsistent to provide a sustained link with home.

60. The school works hard to involve parents in the education of their children. The school has instigated the involvement of the community education service which has introduced the 'Share Project', a scheme which is designed to help parents to help their children. School staff are very supportive of this scheme.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The school aims are appropriate and almost entirely met. In order for the school to fulfil its aim of enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential, pupils of average and below-average ability in English and modern foreign languages must be helped to attain higher standards in their work. The leadership and management of the school are good. The governing body is supportive and the Chair of Governors very closely involved in the life of the school. The governing body has sound working arrangements through its committees and an appropriate knowledge of current issues.
62. The headteacher offers good leadership and clear educational direction to the school. The senior management team is very effective in its handling of responsibilities and initiatives, and there is a sense of vigour and innovation in the school. Participation in the Technology College programme has encouraged a spirit of school improvement and contributed to a close analysis of areas for school development. The areas of development are appropriate and have included curriculum initiatives to secure improved progress of average and below average ability. These developments must be pursued further.
63. Middle management is generally good and there are examples of improved management leading to better teaching. In the modern foreign languages department development planning is starting to show results in improved quality of pupils' work. The very strong leadership of the physical education department has led to high expectations in teaching. The teaching of drama is much improved since the time of the last inspection and this subject is well managed. The new management of the design and technology department has gained improvement. A further strengthening of the work of the department is needed to contribute more fully to the Technology College status of the school. The management of the information and communication technology department is good, but the school needs to secure more consistent use of the subject across the curriculum.
64. The strategic management of the English department is unsatisfactory. The English results at Key Stage 3 have been poor for a number of years and, although improvement has been gained this year, the standards attained by pupils remain below what could be expected. The results at GCSE have been better, but below the national average. Despite good teaching in the department the arrangements are unsatisfactory. The management of the department must include improved monitoring of pupils' performance to facilitate a concentration of effort to remedy weaknesses in pupils' work in Key Stage 3. Planning must build more appropriately on pupils' previous work in Key Stage 2. The management of the department must play a more effective role in the school's literacy strategy across the curriculum. There need to be more effective links between the SEN department and the English department. The senior management of the school must ensure that staff roles and expected outcomes are absolutely clear, and the governing body must fully assess the progress made to improve matters.

65. Management structures are generally good throughout the school. However, the role of head of humanities requires clarification. The role does not have the prominence of a number of years ago and should be re-assessed in the light of current working practice.
66. The school administration is efficient and day-to-day working practice is orderly. The school's finances are healthy and funding is effectively deployed in pursuit of agreed developments.
67. The staffing of the school is good. The curriculum needs of the school are met and the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. The level and quality of support staff is also good. There are good arrangements for staff induction and training. The organisation of monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is sound and further improvements are being sought. The monitoring of SEN teaching in subject areas is not secure and variability was observed in the quality of teaching.
68. The level of resources in the school is generally good. However, the lack of access of the music department to information and communication technology does limit work in this subject. The school library is a very attractive provision and is well used. There is a good stock of books and other resources.
69. The school accommodation is good. The building is attractive and well maintained. In some areas there is congestion between lessons, and on occasions this has an adverse effect on pupils' behaviour. The accommodation for the most part meets specialist needs in teaching although improvements are needed in music and food technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. The school should now:

1. improve strategic management in English and literacy by:

- improving monitoring of pupils' performance to focus teachers' efforts to remedy weaknesses in pupils' work;
- planning work in Key Stage 3 which builds more appropriately on pupils' previous work in Key Stage 2;
- managing the department to play a more effective role in the school's literacy strategy across the curriculum;
- securing more effective links between the SEN department and the English department;
- the senior management of the school ensuring that staff roles and expected outcomes are absolutely clear, with the governing body fully evaluating the progress made to improve matters.

2. improve the quality of provision for the teaching of personal, social and health education by:

- reviewing the course structure in Key Stage 4;
- improving the quality of teaching.

3. develop further the Technology College initiative by:

- further strengthening the vision and sense of direction of the newly-established design and technology department;
- ensure that all departments monitor, deliver and further improve the management of information and communication technology;
- seeking greater breadth of study in information and communication technology that allows pupils to solve more challenging problems in a variety of subjects, with increased opportunities for staff to act as role models in its use.

4. improve the school reports to parents by:

- providing more detailed information on pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum; information of their progress, strength and weaknesses; and suggested areas for development.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements in: the provision of a daily act of collective worship and strengthen the provision for pupils' spiritual development (paragraph 45);
- seek greater uniformity of practice in the setting of homework, in the use of pupils' planners, and in the use of the time for morning registration (paragraphs 37, 41);
- improve the assessment arrangements for geography and GNVQ manufacturing (paragraphs 121, 115);
- improve the arrangements for the teaching of average and just below average pupils in English and modern foreign languages to secure good progress in their learning (paragraphs 74, 146).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	179
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	106

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	15	48	29	5	1	

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1172
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	243

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	30
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	278

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	114	107	221

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	67	53
	Girls	64	63	57
	Total	100	130	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	46 (53)	60 (61)	50 (48)
	National	63 (64)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (20)	33 (32)	22 (19)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	64	66
	Girls	79	69	72
	Total	132	133	138
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (47)	61 (62)	63 (56)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (22)	37 (32)	32 (24)
	National	31 (20)	37 (34)	28 (26)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	81	115	196

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	19	67	78
	Girls	52	102	108
	Total	71	169	186
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	36 (36)	86 (84)	95 (93)
	National	46.6 (46.1)	90.9 (87.3)	95.8 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (32.6)
	National	38.1 (37.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	6
White	1162
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	114	3
Other minority ethnic groups		

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)	62.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7-Y11

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	512

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.5
Key Stage 4	21.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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Total income	2539228
Total expenditure	2528718
Expenditure per pupil	2262
Balance brought forward from previous year	90770
Balance carried forward to next year	101280

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1340
Number of questionnaires returned	441

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	178	219	26	8.	7
My child is making good progress in school.	152	222	22	4	32
Behaviour in the school is good.	134	223	33	5	35
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	116	211	62	18	23
The teaching is good.	139	256	5	2	28
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	112	202	57	17	39
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	232	172	16	9	9
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	264	159	5	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	108	203	66	14	41
The school is well led and managed.	143	222	11	8	47
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	155	218	27	6	25
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	167	187	31	5	46

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

ENGLISH

- 71 Standards in English at Key Stage 3 have been well below average in recent years, but have shown a significant improvement this year. There has been some unsatisfactory progress by pupils in this key stage, and some underachievement across the ability range, particularly for boys. At Key Stage 4, standards are below average, but better in literature. Some pupils significantly underachieve, particularly boys. GCSE results have improved this year.
72. Observations of speaking and listening at Key Stage 3 indicated that pupils were keen and confident. However their contributions in discussion showed that they could not always use Standard English appropriately. The opportunity for focused discussion in pairs or groups was not much exploited at this key stage. At Key Stage 4, the upper-ability groups were particularly lively, confident and reflective in their oral work. A debate on euthanasia demonstrated their capacity to use persuasive techniques and select evidence to support their views. A less-able Year 10 group were encouraged to extend their comments and analyse the techniques used by a writer to gain impact. They succeeded well.
73. Reading standards across both key stages are satisfactory, and all ability groups are keen to contribute in class. A good range of stimulating texts is used. Class reading is orchestrated well to maintain pace and interest and build confidence for the less able. In Key Stage 3 pupils are comfortable with analytical approaches to character, plot and setting and are beginning to discuss the stylistic features of their reading, including imagery and tone. Key Stage 4 builds on this firm foundation to good effect, with pupils working to an appropriate level in line with their abilities.
- 74 Writing, particularly at Key Stage 3, is weaker. Spelling has been identified as a priority within the department, but other needs are evident in the work of many pupils, especially the middle-ability and less-able groups. These include simplistic sentence constructions and poor punctuation. Extended pieces of writing often need better structuring, and presentation in work books is often careless and untidy. Writing at Key Stage 4, particularly in folders of GCSE work, shows a marked improvement, with some sensitive and reflective work evident throughout the ability range.
- 75 Pupils and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to positive attitudes and values, and respect for each other is usual in the classrooms. When given the opportunity pupils work well in groups.
- 76 Teaching is good at both key stages. Staff are very knowledgeable about their subject, and their enthusiasm and demonstration of techniques has a good impact, especially in Key Stage 4. Behaviour management is very good and the department has created a colourful and stimulating environment for learning, through display, resources and opportunities for extra-curricular work. Pupils' good work is also celebrated through publication. Staff are committed to examining best practice and have the development of effective teaching and learning firmly on their agenda.
- 77 Expectations at Key Stage 3 are variable in relation to writing. Some lessons need

more differentiation in planning to ensure they build effectively on expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, and that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged. When writing is undertaken the pace of lessons tends to drop because teachers do not clearly demonstrate to pupils how to structure writing and they do not tell pupils how their work will be judged. Timing was not always given, and nor was the expected quantity. Planning of tasks was often thorough, but objectives much less sharp.

- 78 The subject makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discussion extends pupils' capacity for empathy, and their imaginative grasp of ethical issues, for example in relation to race, homelessness, medical ethics. The school has a good record of links with authors, and this too, benefits pupils' cultural development.
- 79 Day-to-day management of the subject is good with a hardworking, knowledgeable and enthusiastic team. Strategic management is, however, unsatisfactory. Development planning needs to be linked to an audit, especially at Key Stage 3, which takes full account of data and qualitative information in order to target weaknesses more energetically. Better knowledge of Key Stage 2 expectations and strategies is needed, to ensure literacy intervention is successful, especially in relation to writing. Development plans in English need to be coherently linked to whole-school literacy development. Staff, who are working hard on implementation, need to be clear about their roles within these plans, what outcomes are expected and how monitoring will be carried out.
- 80 This year has seen hopeful signs of improvement in Key Stage 3 outcomes, but management issues need to be addressed if improvement is to be secured. The department has many strengths and the expertise is there to go forward if the context is right.
- 81 As well as a catch-up strategy for Year 7s within the English department, a whole-school working party exists which is attempting to develop literacy across the curriculum and to shadow the work in the LEA which is part of the National Literacy Strategy Key Stage 3 pilot. At present there is insufficient coherence in the structure to take literacy forward. Work is largely driven by the second in English, and she sets an enthusiastic lead, but her role is not clearly defined. There has been some good work in relation to key words for example, and plans for literacy within schemes of work. The picture at present is variable and an audit and clear action plan are needed to ensure staff across the school understand and have the training to develop the work effectively.

Drama

- 82 In the last inspection drama was considered weak especially in Key Stage 3. It is now a strength of the school. Standards in GCSE examinations are sound, and the popularity of examination drama is growing. Alongside this, at Key Stage 3, pupils are given a firm grounding in necessary group skills and techniques of presentation. This builds their confidence and makes a significant contribution to their speaking and listening skills and their personal development. Opportunities are also given for exploration of ideas and independent learning. Most Key Stage 3 pupils use this opportunity to the full. Those who find this a challenge are led to explore the consequences for themselves and others, of failing to be sufficiently disciplined. Curricular opportunities are greatly enhanced by the growing number of productions and presentations in which pupils of all ability levels can participate.

- 83 Teaching is good, with the employment of expert staff ensuring confident handling of curricular demands, and the enthusiasm of the team helping to motivate pupils. Behaviour management builds on the positive, work-focused ethos of the department. Assessment is accurate and feeds into planning. It would, however, be beneficial for pupils to have assessment of speaking and listening in drama linked to their English assessment, so that they have a clear picture of their strengths in this area.
- 84 The department is well managed and has a clear vision for development. Day-to-day management is carried out efficiently, informed by the commitment to improvement and growth, which has carried the department forward. Development is well supported by the senior management team.

MATHEMATICS

- 85 The attainment of pupils in mathematics when they start at the school in Year 7 is slightly lower than the national average. Results in mathematics tests for 14 year-olds at the end of Key Stage 3 have risen over recent years and they are now similar to the national average. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Compared to other schools in similar contexts, pupils' performance in these tests is well above average.
- 86 Results in GCSE examinations at higher grades A*-C have risen significantly over recent years. Provisional results for 2000 show another good increase to 40.1% of pupils gaining A*-C grades. The number of pupils gaining the highest grades A*-A has more than doubled in 2000. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade A*-G at GCSE in 1999 was 85.7% and remains similar in 2000.
- 87 In 2000, 23 pupils were not entered for GCSE, because of poor attendance or non-completion of coursework. This is much higher than the proportion nationally. Seven of these pupils gained a Certificate of Achievement in mathematics.
- 88 In lessons, on average, pupils achieve in line with national expectations. However, the least-able pupils have low levels of basic skills. They have limited recall of number facts such as multiplication up to 10x10 and few methods to work out calculations. The highest-attaining pupils in year 9 are tackling challenging work in extra, after-school lessons
- 89 Most pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics; they listen to teachers and generally work hard at set tasks. The majority take care setting out their work, but some pupils write answers only, rather than fully explaining their work. Almost all pupils behave very well. In some lessons, lower-attaining pupils are less motivated and fail to concentrate on their work. In these lessons attendance is often irregular. Pupils do not have many opportunities to take responsibility for planning their own work in mathematics.
- 90 The quality of teaching in almost all lessons is satisfactory, and in nearly half of all lessons observed was good. In these lessons there is a clear focus and activities are appropriately challenging. Expectations of hard work and good behaviour are clear. Teachers explain new ideas well and in most classes pupils have example books for writing definitions, explanations and examples. Key words are displayed in classrooms, but these are often not highlighted and used or practised by pupils. In the best lessons teachers involve most pupils in questions and answers, but in other classes only pupils with 'hands up' are asked and few pupils are involved. Whole-class response is little used to check what all pupils know. Lesson conclusions vary

in quality and are not often used to recap on main ideas and check what pupils have learnt. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and time limits set to encourage pupils to complete work.

- 91 In a small number of lessons with low-attaining groups teaching is less than satisfactory. In these lessons the teaching does not motivate and involve pupils sufficiently to ensure effective learning.
- 92 The mathematics curriculum has appropriate time and content. In Year 7 the curriculum has been changed in line with the new National Numeracy Strategy for Year 7, with smaller units of work, revisited regularly. A mental test is regularly set at the start of lessons in Years 7 and 8. This needs to be developed into active mental and oral sessions which teach a range of methods for calculations. The curriculum for the lowest-attaining pupils needs to be reviewed to provide more motivation and to address the specific weaknesses of individual pupils.
- 93 A new homework and assessment system has been developed which enables teachers to keep a clear overview of each pupil's progress. Homework is regularly set and completed in separate homework books. It is regularly marked but there is little use of constructive feedback to pupils. However, classwork books are not regularly checked for accuracy and presentation.
- 94 The department is just beginning to plan for a whole-school numeracy strategy, starting with an audit of departments. Work in science, technology, geography and history includes applications of mathematics such as the use of graphs.
- 95 The department works well together as a team. Not all teachers are mathematics specialists and supply cover is used in the absence of permanent, specialist staff. Although development plans are limited, the department has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen significantly. The department now has a good stock of up-to-date textbooks and information and communication technology is more regularly used. The Head of Faculty has begun to observe teaching and this is used as a basis to set targets for improvement.

SCIENCE

- 96 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are just below the national average, but are well above standards achieved in similar schools. National test results have shown steady improvement since the last inspection. Standards reached by Key Stage 3 pupils in science lessons are close to the national average, with Year 8 pupils able to describe the digestive system and explain the role of its various components, and others able to relate the structure of the eye to its function.
- 97 GCSE results are below the national average, but are well above those of similar schools and have shown a general trend of improvement. In 1999 the results for separate sciences were well below expectations and this seems to have been due to inappropriate entry decisions. This has been dealt with and the results for 2000 are much closer to expectations, with most separate science pupils obtaining A*-C grades and several gaining A*. Double Award results have improved steadily. Standards reached by current Key Stage 4 pupils are close to the national average, but cover a wide range.

- 98 More-able pupils could use ideas of particles to explain how the concentration of acid might affect the rate of a reaction with magnesium. Middle-ability pupils could use a computer model to test ideas about the factors affecting photosynthesis, and low-ability pupils could distinguish between genetic and environmental factors in humans' development.
- 99 The quality of teaching at both key stages is good overall and never less than satisfactory, with examples of very good and excellent teaching being seen. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of pupils and show genuine commitment to their learning. Pupils respond well to this and the quality of learning is good. Pupils join in readily in discussions because their ideas are valued and given full consideration by teachers. They follow instructions carefully and work co-operatively and conscientiously. Lessons are well managed with good behaviour as a first priority.
- 100 A science club, and awards schemes, along with several national competitions, as well as visits and visiting speakers, are used to enhance pupils' interest for science.
- 101 Good and effective use is made of information and communication technology by all staff. This is built firmly into schemes of work and includes data-logging and sensing, modelling, databases and use of the Internet. Revision software is used before every test and examination and is available to pupils outside lesson times.
- 102 Newly-revised science schemes have been developed jointly by all staff. They are detailed, comprehensive documents which include a good variety of teaching strategies and resources which are well suited to pupils' needs and interests. However, the commitment of staff to the development of skills of scientific enquiry is not fully reflected in these schemes. Scientific enquiry is only referred to in those lessons preparing for its assessment. More cross-referencing of opportunities to develop these skills is needed in lessons where the main aim is developing pupils' understanding. Schemes could also include more opportunities for independent learning that capitalise on the good response of pupils to learning and develop their independence.
- 103 In Key Stage 4 good use is made of assessment data from module tests, homeworks and teacher assessment of skills, to let pupils know what grades they are likely to get at GCSE and to set targets for improvement. This is not fully developed at Key Stage 3 yet and, although the data is gathered by teachers for monitoring and setting, it is not systematically used to set individual pupil learning targets.
- 104 The science staff work well as a team and the head of department manages staff well. Planning is good and the department has a good range of policies to cover key areas such as safety, homework, lesson planning and assessment. Some of these have only recently been developed and are not fully implemented, such as the target setting in Key Stage 3 and the marking policy. There is still some inconsistency about the regular marking of pupils' books and the use of grades.
- 105 SEN pupils are appropriately supported by learning assistants who co-operate well with science staff in reviewing pupils' progress on their general individual education plan targets. The use of supplementary science specific targets for these pupils is still being implemented.
- 106 Accommodation and resources are very good and make a positive contribution to the quality of learning.

ART

- 107 Although standards of attainment were below average in 1999, there has been significant improvement this year in GCSE/GNVQ results in A*-C grades. Pupils taking the GNVQ Intermediate course rose to the challenge and some attained grades of distinction. The pupils doing GCSE fared less well, but, with some exceptions, performed according to expectations.
- 108 Standards in Key Stage 3 are below average, although standards in drawing are satisfactory. Some drawings of good quality were seen during lessons and in displays. Pupils have a good understanding of the basics of line, shape, tone, texture and pattern and can apply these well when working from observation. They have less understanding of colour, particularly in painting and are not technically adept. Pupils' knowledge of art is limited. Low expectations in teaching explain some of the below-average standards of the most able. Other factors include not taking into account prior learning and lack of progression in the schemes of work.
- 109 Teaching is almost always satisfactory and some good teaching was observed in most year groups. The teaching strengths are in well-prepared lessons, good classroom management and the appropriate challenge for all abilities in many lessons. Well-structured learning opportunities, supported by written prompts, enabled the pupils in Years 10 and 11 to develop research skills and become independent learners. Pupils responded well to the structured approach and showed a great deal of interest, enthusiasm and persistence, resulting in work of a good standard. This was most obvious in the GNVQ intermediate course. The weaknesses in teaching, though not universal throughout the department, are in lack of consistency in adhering to the scheme of work and in not challenging pupils sufficiently. It is difficult to provide the right level of challenge if a teacher does not find out what pupils already can do.
- 110 Learning, on the other hand, is satisfactory throughout the year groups. It is better in Years 10 and 11, and in sets in which girls predominate. In these lessons pupils apply themselves well to the tasks, are willing to experiment with materials and techniques, and use information and communication technology to support their learning. Instances of unsatisfactory learning occurred in a lower-ability set, in which boys, predominately, displayed a lack of concentration, and in an upper-ability set in which girls were not sufficiently challenged. Good classroom control in the majority of lessons helped pupils to make progress in their work. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of art are major weaknesses in the quality of learning. This is inhibiting some pupils of average ability from attaining better standards, because they cannot evaluate works of art well enough to apply what they have learned to their own work.
- 111 The department is well managed and well organised. Improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection. There is now a greater range of activities in Years 7 to 9. Teaching has been monitored, but it has not yet brought about the necessary improvement of consistency. Not all pupils receive an equal entitlement to information and communication technology because of a lack of teacher expertise. This needs redressing with both staff development and better provision of computers in one art room.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 112 During the last two years fundamental staffing changes have occurred within the department, with five new appointments, including a new head of department. The new team is working hard to effect change and put the subject at the heart of the Technology College curriculum. Changes, which include a total restructuring of the curriculum in the lower school, have been effective in beginning to raise levels of attainment. However, much remains to be done before pupils attain standards in line with other core subjects and, therefore, meet the targets set in the Technology College development plan.
- 113 At GCSE level, standards overall are well below those attained by pupils nationally, and up to a grade below the average achieved in other subjects in the school. However, pupils studying electronic products attain high standards and achieve well in relation to their ability. In other courses pupils have not done justice to their abilities, with some higher-ability and lower-ability pupils underachieving. Attainment in GNVQ manufacturing is poor because the course is not well planned. Pupils do not have an adequate induction programme. Consequently, they do not become familiar with, and practised at, learning in a way which requires them to work much more independently. In the lessons observed standards are beginning to show improvement with work in food technology and graphic products beginning to reflect pupils' abilities, and match those found nationally.
- 114 In Key Stage 3, the new scheme of work is well matched to the National Curriculum and beginning to raise standards across the material areas. Good standards were observed in product design, graphics, electronics and food technology. Standards at the end of Year 9, do not yet match pupils' abilities, and progression in learning from Year 7 to Year 9 needs to be further improved. Groups of pupils need more continuous contact with an individual teacher, to ensure that the teacher can build on earlier learning in order to raise standards. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good.
- 115 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good and very good teaching in electronics and food technology. Where teaching is very good, the lesson is carefully planned with clear objectives about what is to be learned. The teacher introduces new knowledge and reinforces existing learning, through a well-organised series of activities. For example, in an electronics lesson pupils used actual components, as the teacher demonstrated the constituent parts on the overhead projector, to identify and learn the features of a transistor. Pupils then used this knowledge to complete their circuit design, and translate this to the printed circuit board. Knowledge and understanding were reinforced by continually asking pupils the question 'Why?' Where teaching is less effective the teacher's input is too long and does not put the onus on pupils to think and provide possible answers. Teachers support individual pupils with GCSE extended project work and GNVQ assignments in the upper school. However, they need to use ongoing assessment more effectively to target specific learning, and help pupils to use the examination criteria to understand how to improve their grade.
- 116 Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory, given the short timescale the new head of department has been in post. The new Key Stage 3 scheme of work, the department development plan and action plans are very good and demonstrate progress since the last inspection. Good department policies are being drawn up and are beginning to influence practice and raise attainment. However, there is a need to strengthen the vision and sense of direction of the department to fulfil Technology College status. Schemes of work are needed in the upper school, and the GNVQ manufacturing course needs radical reconstruction and

a full staff development programme. The potentially good, new system for monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress needs to be fully embedded in practice and the outcomes used to set targets for pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

- 117 The attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. In Key Stage 4, attainment at GCSE is below the national average. In 1999 the percentage of students obtaining A* - C grades was well below national averages with a high percentage of pupils being ungraded. This was partly as a consequence of poor or incomplete course work. GCSE results in 1999 were well below average when compared with similar schools. Provisional GCSE results for 2000 indicate a considerable improvement in these results. However, there is noticeable underachievement of boys of middle and upper-abilities. The trend over time is one of improvement.
- 118 The highest-attaining students in Year 9 have good knowledge and understanding of recent work on population and can interpret and manipulate data effectively. They are able to apply this knowledge to quite complex models. Lowest attaining pupils in Year 9 have difficulty with some geographical terminology and their language skills restrict their progress at times. The highest-attaining pupils in Year 11 have an understanding of the process of decision making in the location of industry. They appreciate that actions and events in other places can affect the environment and the lives of the people who live there. They show a marked empathy with people from other cultures, particularly those from less economically developed countries.
- 119 In both key stages pupils' attainment has been adversely affected by a legacy of underachievement. However, the rate of progress is accelerating. Subject specific targets for pupils with SEN are set and recorded. This is a recently introduced departmental policy and is resulting in improved progress at both key stages.
- 120 Pupils' attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better in over three-quarters of the lessons observed. In over a third of the lessons attitudes were good. Behaviour was satisfactory and often better in the majority of lessons. Teachers have good classroom management skills. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour relate well to the teacher who is taking them. However, teachers are creating opportunities to share the good practice of others in the department. The quality of teaching was good or better in three-quarters of the lessons observed. In about a quarter of the lessons, the teaching was very good. Teachers set high standards for discipline and they have good subject knowledge and understanding. Expectations of the pupils are generally appropriate with some challenging work being carried out in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Evidence of this was seen at Key Stage 3 in the work on the demographic transition model and at Key Stage 4 in the work on Bangladesh when pupils were required to carry out an enquiry. Lessons are carefully planned by the majority of teachers but a limited range of research and audio-visual activities is used.
- 121 There is a department policy on marking and this is adhered to by the majority of teachers. As a result pupils are well aware of whether their class or homework is of a good, a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory standard. Some supportive targets are given, but these need to be more detailed to show what the pupil has to do to improve. Assessment of National Curriculum levels needs strengthening as there is an over estimation of the levels of pupils at Key Stage 3. The quality of reports is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not report strengths and weaknesses in the various attainment targets. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is satisfactory,

but the range of opportunities is limited.

- 122 Some inspired teaching was seen, but some teachers need to seek ways to bring more sparkle into their teaching if they are to capture the interest of all pupils. Examples of inspirational teaching seen included the use of information communication technology to explore population changes and the use of games to consolidate learning in the rivers topic.
- 123 The leadership and management of the department are good. The recently-appointed head of department has very clear ideas of what needs to be done to raise standards. There is a good department development plan and a good department handbook. Since the last inspection the management of the department has improved considerably and this is having a substantial impact on teaching and learning. The shortage of textbooks is still an issue with the sharing of books still occurring. The department still needs to build on existing good practice in information and communication technology.
- 124 Accommodation is good and display reflects the department's enthusiasm for global issues and the demands for quality work. Pupils have the opportunity to carry out enquiry-based work during a number of field trips. Year 7 pupils study settlement and micro-climate locally and Year 10 go to Malham for a day. The department should further develop fieldwork opportunities and industrial links.

HISTORY

- 125 Standards in both Key Stages since the last inspection have improved significantly.
- 126 In Key Stage 3 the number of pupils attaining the expected level 5 or better has improved by 26%. However, attainment is still below the national average.
- 127 In Key Stage 4 the overall trend in the number of pupils gaining GCSE A* - C grades has risen steadily, though there was a slight fall in the 2000 results. The results are still below the national average. Some underachievement in boys' performance is evident from both examination results and observations made during the inspection.
- 128 From the lessons observed the quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. All the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, lessons are well planned, appropriately differentiated and have pace and variety. Some particularly good teaching was observed using historical sources, which enabled pupils to develop significantly their interpretation and inquiry skills. However, two areas in need of improvement are to develop further the skill of extended writing and to widen the use of information and communication technology across the department.
- 129 The department is now fully delivering the Key Stage 3 curriculum due to an increase in time allocation. Pupils' learning is enhanced by a range of out-of-school visits. The department also makes a good contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development through a range of topics such as the native American, Slavery, the Holocaust and Apartheid.
- 130 The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response are always satisfactory and usually good. They respond well to questioning, settle quickly to set tasks and work well on their own.
- 131 The department is well managed with sound policies and schemes of work. The

head of department has successfully tackled all the issues highlighted in the last report, particularly the ones to do with accommodation and resources. His monitoring and evaluation role is now also developing well, particularly in the analysis of pupils' progress within and across key stages.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 132 Standards achieved by pupils in teacher assessment at Key Stage 3 are good. They achieve levels well above those expected nationally in information and communication technology.
- 133 The significant majority of Key Stage 4 pupils take a course in information and communication technology. Examination results in GNVQ IT are good and GCSE IT results are just below the national average, with both showing an improvement on the previous year. Girls consistently achieve higher than boys. Those few pupils not taking an examination in information and communication technology are effectively monitored, gaining a certificate or qualification for units undertaken.
- 134 During the week of inspection attainment in Key Stages 3 and 4 information and communication technology courses was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Elements of the Key Stage 3 programmes of study for information and communication technology are appropriately developed in other subjects, for example control and modelling are delivered in technology, and data logging is delivered in science.
- 135 The quality of teaching in the information and communication technology lessons is good and often very good in Key Stage 3, and good in Key Stage 4. Overall the teaching of information and communication technology in specialist lessons is good. The majority of the lessons observed were well planned, objectives clearly stated and shared with pupils. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and were confident to discuss and give clear explanations that enabled pupils to learn. Pupils are managed well, and teachers foster a good working atmosphere in the classroom. Lessons have good pace, with well-structured and effective summaries at the end of lessons to ensure pupils' learning. Praise and rewards are used effectively. But, on occasions, lessons observed were not as tightly focused and lacked clear objectives, which led to some inefficient use of teaching time, for example restating the objectives and tasks for a number of individual pupils and small groups. Activities offered more of the same and did not challenge, or allow pupils to acquire higher order skills. Opportunities were missed to discuss with pupils reasons for their choices, or allow pupils to be an active part in developing the theme of the lesson.
- 136 The school has taken good advantage of external funding to train a third of its teachers as well as becoming a training centre for the Technology College Trust. Other in-service training has also taken place to ensure a large proportion of the staff have information and communication technology skills.
- 137 Support staff are used effectively, are aware of pupils' individual education plans and the skills and capabilities being developed in lessons. Technical support staff ensure the efficient running of the system and are able to give good support during lessons.
- 138 The quality of learning of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils increase their understanding of information and communication technology, and acquire new knowledge and skills. They are willing to discuss what they are doing and explain the processes involved. They show interest in their work and the majority concentrate on the tasks for

extended periods. Pupils entering Key Stage 4 are competent in the basic operations and can demonstrate a high level of independent working. All pupils show growing confidence with the software used during lessons.

- 139 The use of computers in other subjects to enable pupils to develop their information and communication technology capabilities in a range of contexts is inconsistent. Good use was seen in science where students were offered a range of activities in sensing, data logging, using CD-ROM to explore the human body and using spreadsheets to plot graphs from results in science investigations. Population graphs were produced as part of a geography lesson and the teacher made good use of a projector to demonstrate a more sophisticated population model. In art, pupils used a digital camera and purposeful use was made of e-mail in modern languages. Although information and communication technology is written into the schemes of work of all curriculum areas, insufficient use of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection. Some activities did not develop pupils' higher-order skills.
- 140 The school has addressed a number of issues since the last inspection and is making some progress. A recent initiative with local primary schools in developing strategies for information and communication technology should bring positive benefits. Technical support is effective. Provision of computers is better than the national average and accessibility is satisfactory, although there were limitations in religious education, music and history. Effective links with local businesses are used to support the teaching of information and communication technology. More progress and rigour needs to be made with the assessment of pupils' work. Marking does not inform pupils of the National Curriculum level of their work nor explain what they need to do to progress to the higher levels.
- 141 The information and communication technology department has strong leadership with very effective links with the senior management team. Schemes of work are well structured to allow pupils to make progress, building on prior learning in earlier key stages. Departmental planning is good, and the Internet policy is effective, and shared with staff, parents and pupils.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- 142 The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 was well below the national average in both French and Spanish in the 1999 GCSE examinations. Results in the year 2000 show an improvement in grades in Spanish but there are fewer A*-C grades in French than in 1999. Standards are very similar to that described in the previous inspection report. Girls are more successful than boys in both languages.
- 143 In the lessons observed during the inspection standards being achieved by pupils in Key Stage 4 were still low, but there are signs that they are beginning to pick up. In Key Stage 3 there is a more significant improvement in learning and attainment in both languages. For instance, in Year 9 the more-able pupils can follow relatively complex instructions in the foreign language, can express their feelings, and can write with reasonable accuracy.
- 144 The quality of teaching observed was always sound and was more often judged to be good and on one occasion very good. This applies at all levels and across all year groups. It is significant that the modern languages faculty has gone through a period of considerable staff disruption and change over the last few years, with heavy use of temporary supply staff and little continuity for pupils. Last year a new head of faculty

was appointed and in September 2000 three new permanent staff have taken up posts. The impetus and stability that these changes have provided is already showing in the quality of teaching and the coherence of the languages programme.

- 145 New schemes of work have been developed with clear guidance to teachers and these are being taught effectively. There is regular use of the foreign language for teaching, although this aspect of work needs further attention, and the work given to pupils in most cases, is sufficiently challenging to ensure progress. The planning of lessons is thorough and, guided by the new schemes of work, is purposeful and systematic. The pace of lessons is usually good. Classroom relationships are always sound and are often good, and this encourages the generally good attitudes pupils show to the subject. The quality of pupils' learning was often judged to be better than their current attainment levels and this, if maintained, augurs well for the future.
- 146 As a result of the unsettled teaching and poor attainment, the present staff are sometimes forced to begin at a lower level than the year group would imply. The process of raising standards appears to have begun, but the issue of building further on these beginnings needs to be addressed through raising the expectations of all pupils, using assessment systematically to identify weaknesses, making the maximum use of the foreign language in class and maintaining the systematic progress which has now begun.
- 147 The faculty is now well managed and effectively led. Good documentation to support teaching is in place and the language suite provides a lively and interesting area for pupils to work in. A realistic development plan has been drawn up, which identifies appropriate areas for development and the commitment of the current teaching staff to carry this through is clear. The time allocated to modern language teaching is below average and this inevitably has an impact on progress. Homework is regularly set but the amount of time allocated to this is also relatively low. At present it is not possible for pupils to study two languages, which is unfortunate for those students wishing to take foreign language learning further. The overall judgement is that the modern languages faculty, as it is currently constituted, has the potential to raise standards to a much higher level.

MUSIC

- 148 Standards in the music department are beginning to rise after a long period of underachievement. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have been well below national averages and examination groups have been small. However, the 2000 results at grades A*-C reached above 50% for the first time and next year's results are estimated to reach this level again. The large GCSE group in Year 10 is currently working well in practical aspects of the course and the new department is working hard to combat the deficiencies in pupils' previous music education. Year 10 pupils now benefit from appropriate challenge and use a variety of technical, subject specific terms correctly and with confidence. They retain knowledge of the rudiments of music with understanding and are fluent with their use of notation. Their attainment is enhanced by listening in silence with attention to detail; this aids their response to dictation of rhythm and pitch. Key Stage 3 assessment has been carried out in accordance with national requirements. Previous results indicate that there are few pupils achieving at the highest levels. Younger pupils sing well, aided by good teacher role models and appropriate warm-up exercises. The pupils are becoming increasingly confident in their reading and performing of rhythm from notation. Written work is often untidy, particularly when pens are used for staff notation. Key Stage 3

pupils arrive at the school with limited musical experience.

- 149 Since the last inspection, singing has improved in quality and frequency at Key Stage 3. Numbers receiving peripatetic lessons have increased and participation in school-based ensembles is enthusiastic and often of a good standard. Classroom practice has improved because of a significant rise in the quality of teaching. Listening at GCSE has also improved, but would benefit from better quality equipment. Resources are improving but the department needs to address the lack of access to sufficient appropriate information and communication technology resources in order to fulfil completely the requirements of the National Curriculum. Improvements in accommodation may result from a new building planned for the performing arts.
- 150 Teaching observed was good in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 very good. Pupils at both key stages benefit from well-planned, well-paced lessons. Teachers question well, ensuring all pupils are involved and that knowledge is being consolidated. They are consistent in their use of music vocabulary and insist on correct fingering at the keyboards. As a result, pupils are familiar with a range of Italian terms and are becoming fluent and increasingly accurate whilst playing simple melodies. The good pace and variety of activities ensure that pupils are on task and maintain a good work rate. Teaching, particularly at Key Stage 3, would benefit from clearer objectives being shared with the pupils. The needs of lower-ability groups in Years 8 and 9 should be addressed at the earliest opportunity. They are immature in behaviour and attitude to work; their learning and progress are impeded by their inability to concentrate for any length of time and their lack of respect for instruments. Only good classroom management and pace prevent these pupils from being disruptive. The majority of pupils, however, make better progress, behave well in lessons, and are keen participants in music lessons and in a range of extra-curricular activities. Relationships are good; mixed ability classes, in particular, make the most of opportunities and pupils are keen to answer questions, safe in the knowledge that their answers will be valued. These pupils, especially those in Year 10, help each other and work productively in pairs and groups. The department is well supported by peripatetic instrumental teachers, specialist information and communication technology tuition and LEA advice.
- 151 Planning within the scheme of work shows coverage of the National Curriculum although significant details are omitted from the current documentation, for example singing. In practice, however, all aspects are present and singing has a high profile. The lessons provide a full range of opportunities that integrate aspects of composing, performing and listening. Whilst statutory curriculum requirements are being met, the lack of access to appropriate information and communication technology facilities means that the opportunities to create, manipulate and refine sounds using information and communication technology are severely limited. The documentation is at an early stage of development. It links with the new curriculum, but does not contain sufficient information on a number of aspects. The department has the capacity for significant improvement over the next few years and should now prioritise its plans.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 152 The 1999 GCSE examination results in physical education show that standards of attainment are above the national average with 53% of pupils achieving A* - C grades and have improved to 66% this year.
- 153 Attainment in physical education is in line with national averages in Key Stages 3 and

4. In Year 9, in games the most-able pupils are already working at the expected level for their age. They are developing analytical skills and are able to comment positively on the use of skills and techniques in a game and how to improve. Pupils demonstrate a good standard of play when practising and developing skills in isolation and are able to use these skills effectively during full and small-sided games. In netball pupils demonstrate the ability to catch, turn and throw whilst on the move and to accurately block and intercept the ball. In football pupils show control and precision in passing and tackling. Pupils work co-operatively with those of lower-ability, encouraging and applauding their efforts and successes. In a Year 11 hockey lesson, pupils of all abilities were challenged with a variety of tasks. The more able pupils were able to select and combine advanced skills and techniques, and adapt them appropriately to the demands of the game. In a Year 10 rugby lesson pupils of all abilities were able to demonstrate successfully a variety of advanced skills.

- 154 More emphasis needs to be placed on developing pupils' skills in evaluating and improving performance and in developing choreography, coaching and officiating skills throughout both key stages. Further work needs to be done in developing the teaching of gymnastics.
- 155 Teaching and learning is good in Key Stages 3 and 4, with some very good teaching seen in almost half the lessons. In the majority of lessons teachers provide a variety of challenging activities at a good pace, which motivates the pupils and sustains their interest and enjoyment. Learning objectives are clearly stated and all activities are related to them. Pupils, in answering questions and through practical demonstration, indicate that they have an understanding of the activity they are engaged in. Clear explanations and demonstrations enable pupils to become quickly involved in the lesson. Quiet praise to individuals and to the whole group encourages good work and further effort. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. The good relationships developed between pupils and teachers enables pupils of all abilities to contribute to the lesson. The majority of teaching observed contributed to the development and consolidation of the skills, knowledge and understanding required in all activities. Where teaching is less effective the tasks are too challenging for the ability of the group, little is gained in skills and knowledge and therefore little progress is made.
- 156 The head of department provides very strong leadership. There is a clear vision for the future of physical education within the school shared by all departmental members. The high expectations of all pupils, both in curricular and extra-curricular activities, have already raised the profile of physical education within the school and of the school in the local community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 157 Standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with the expectations of the Wakefield Agreed Syllabus and recent national guidelines. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills, in relation to the study of a range of themes, in some of the major religions of the world. By the end of Key Stage 3 the most-able pupils are able to explain how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed in a variety of forms, using correct terminology. Most pupils make sound progress in their work in religious education in Key Stage 3.
- 158 In Key Stage 4 all pupils follow a full or short GCSE course and the trend over the last four years shows a steady improvement in standards year-on-year. In 2000 the most-able pupils in Year 10 were entered for the GCSE short course with very good results. Those pupils for whom GCSE is inappropriate are able to achieve a Certificate of

Achievement accreditation.

- 159 Pupils are able to respond to questions and discuss difficult concepts such as why people believe in God, with confidence and fluency. They quickly settle to tasks set, responding well to time limits imposed. Paired and group work are used effectively to enable pupils of all abilities to work collaboratively and reflect on a range of religious perspectives. Pupils with SEN are satisfactorily supported, though the less able struggle with some of the concepts and technical terms. Progress in lessons is generally satisfactory and often good. Pupils' attitudes to religious education, and their behaviour in lessons observed were generally good and often very good. Pupils listen attentively, remain on task and are willing to share their own ideas and views with their peers and teachers.
- 160 Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the department. Two new teachers have been appointed, the scheme of work has been completely revised and the GCSE short course has been introduced. These changes are already beginning to have a significant impact on standards in religious education. The assessment system is at an early stage of development and needs to contribute more effectively to planning for continuity and progression through all key stages. The marking of pupils' work still needs to be more diagnostic so that pupils know where they are and what they need to do to improve. By using the new national standards for religious education as part of the planning and assessment process teachers will be able to set more challenging targets for individuals and groups of pupils, especially the most able.
- 161 The quality of teaching is at least sound and more often good. Teachers are well prepared and well organised. In the majority of lessons observed there was clarity in the presentation of tasks and a logical development of ideas. In many lessons the good variety of activities promotes high standards. Videos, artefacts and visitors also provide good stimulus for pupils' learning and supplement textbooks very effectively. A particular strength of the department is that teachers frequently praise and reward pupils for their positive contributions and achievements in learning new skills and concepts.
- 162 The head of department is committed to high achievement, has energy, enthusiasm and vision. She leads her team very well and has developed systems and strategies to deliver an exciting, stimulating and relevant religious education curriculum. Planning for continued improvement in teaching and learning in religious education is clearly identified in the departmental development plan.
- 163 The availability and use of information and communication technology to support learning in religious education is underdeveloped. Accommodation and resourcing is good, the department having three well-equipped and displayed specialist teaching rooms. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.