

INSPECTION REPORT

SILVERDALE SCHOOL

Bents Crescent,
Sheffield, S11 9RT

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107128

Head teacher: Mrs H Storey

Reporting inspector: R E Liley, 2411

Dates of inspection: 13-15 November 2000

Inspection number: 223858

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 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bents Crescent Sheffield
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jon Mordecai
Date of previous inspection:	29 January - 2 February 1996

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PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

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The school promotes and achieves high academic standards in all year groups.
The school has very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
The school has teachers with very good subject knowledge.
The school has an ethos which promotes very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance in the pupils.
The school has good curriculum links with the feeder primary schools.
The school is developing effective links with teacher training institutions to support the quality of teaching and learning.
The school successfully integrates pupils who are profoundly deaf into parts of the mainstream curriculum.
The school has good procedures for child protection and for Ensuring pupils' welfare.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Opportunities for pupils to take more active responsibility for their own learning.
Systems for monitoring and evaluation to inform the effectiveness of its work, with a particular focus on the teaching strategies used and their impact on learning.
Use of pupils' individual performance data to support assessment, set challenging targets and inform teaching and learning practice.
Strategic planning in order to establish clear timelines and success criteria, bring together the various initiatives operating in the school and link them with the major priorities in the school improvement plan.
Meeting statutory requirements to provide ICT across both Key Stages 3 and 4 and religious education in the sixth form.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Silverdale School is a large and popular mixed 11-19 comprehensive school. Currently 1155 pupils are on roll, a similar number to the 1136 pupils on roll during the last inspection in January 1996. The school is full, meeting its admission limit of 180 in each year 7 –11 and with a sixth form of 236 students. The school has been oversubscribed for a number of years. The school also houses a 14-place unit for profoundly deaf pupils from across a wide area of Sheffield. Where appropriate pupils from the unit are integrated into main stream classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 6.8% and is well below the national average of 16%. Twelve per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds which is above the national average and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than most schools. The vast majority of pupils come from local primary schools and additional movement to and from the school is very low for maintained schools. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is in line with national averages. The number of pupils with statements of educational need is 26, including 14 with hearing impairment, which is in line with national averages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Silverdale is a high attaining school by any external indicator. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9) at GCSE (Year 11) and in the sixth form has been well above the national averages for all maintained schools since the last inspection in 1996. The attainment is very high when compared to similar schools. The examination results in the sixth form for 2000 were outstanding. The school promotes effective learning through good relationships between teachers and pupils and because teachers in Silverdale have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Behaviour and attendance are very good. The new head teacher has brought a secure sense of purpose and direction to the working of the school and her ideas are beginning to influence the achievement of the school's clear priorities for development. The school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

The school:

- promotes and achieves high academic standards in all years;
- has very good relationships between teachers and pupils;
- has teachers with very good subject knowledge;
- has an ethos which promotes very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance in the pupils;
- has good curriculum links with the feeder primary schools;
- is developing effective links with teacher training institutions to support the quality of teaching and learning;
- successfully integrates pupils who are profoundly deaf into parts of the mainstream curriculum;
- has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare.

What could be improved

- opportunities for pupils to take more active responsibility for their own learning;
- systems of monitoring and evaluation to inform the effectiveness of its work, with a particular focus on the teaching strategies used and their impact on learning;
- use of pupils' individual performance data to support assessment, set challenging targets and inform teaching and learning practice;
- strategic planning in order to establish clear timelines and success criteria, bring together the various initiatives operating in the school and link them with the major priorities in the school improvement plan;
- statutory requirements to provide Information and Communication Technology across both Key Stages 3 and 4 and religious education in the sixth form.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Until recently insufficient progress has been made in addressing some of the key issues for improvement from the last inspection report. The governors and the new head teacher are now working together to resolve these outstanding issues. The school has continued to maintain high academic standards and has made satisfactory progress in reviewing the curriculum and providing a more coherent structure for the delivery of personal and social education, though the school acknowledges the need for more detailed planning work. After a recent consultation period a whole school assessment handbook has been produced but its implementation is only now in the formative stages. The policy is sound and will support the development of more consistent and regular assessment practice across the curriculum. The required improvement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been unsatisfactory overall. The school is not meeting statutory requirements of provision in both key stages. However, clear progress has begun to be made this term because of the efforts of a new team of teachers and improvements in hardware through successful bids submitted by the school. The school has rightly identified the development of ICT as a priority in the school improvement report. Arrangements for a daily collective act of worship and, in the sixth form, the provision of RE are not in place. The inspection team is of the view that the governors and the school have the capacity to make the improvements still needed.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9), the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE in Year 11) and by students in the sixth form in A level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Key Stage 3 tests	A	A	A	A*
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A*	

Key

Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science, taken at the end of Key Stage 3 show that pupils' attainment is well above the national average and very high when compared to similar schools i.e. those with a similar number of pupils on free school meals. The performance of both boys and girls in mathematics and science is very high when compared with national averages and their performance in English is well above national results.

GCSE results for pupils attaining 5 or more A*-C grades and 1 or more grades A-G are well above national levels. The average GCSE point score for pupils, at the end of Key Stage 4, is very high when compared to national scores, averaging 13 points above over the last 7 years. Also the school's overall trend of improvement has been greater than the national trend. Over the last four years (1997-2000), whilst the performance of both boys and girls was very high compared to national averages, boys' results were particularly good. A level results are consistently well above the national averages by the equivalent of more than 4 points. The results for 2000 were particularly good and the best the school has achieved.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good in all year groups. They are keen to learn and this makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. When given the opportunity to do so pupils take an active part in lessons and in the wide range of additional activities the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: Pupils respond well to their teachers, showing respect for each other and for staff. They behave well at break and lunchtimes and know and follow the routines listed in the code of conduct.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: Pupils' relationships with peers and adults are very good and a strength of the school. Pupils' personal development is good; they are considerate and co-operative. When given the opportunity they work well in groups and listen to each other's ideas and beliefs.
Attendance	Very good: The attendance rate of 94% is well above the national average (91%) and the unauthorised absence is well below national averages
Inclusion	Effective: The school ethos and code of conduct promotes inclusion through high expectations of courtesy, awareness of others and respect. No bullying or discrimination was seen in the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 94% of lessons with good or better teaching being seen in over half the lessons. No poor or very poor teaching was seen. No unsatisfactory

teaching was seen in the small sample of lessons observed in the sixth form. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is better than in Key Stage 3 with a higher percentage being good or better. The common strength of teaching is good subject knowledge which enables teachers to give clear explanations to support pupils' understanding. Other strengths of teaching are not common to all subjects or teachers. The following good practice was observed: effective questioning in science and religious education; peer evaluation in physical education; good planning that matches activities to programmes of study and the learning needs of pupils in English; good organisation and individualised learning programmes for pupils with special educational needs; independent learning and clear learning objectives that created a vitality of response from pupils and supported their self-evaluation in drama; a good pace in modern foreign languages and opportunities to work independently in design technology.

Opportunities to improve the quality of teaching should focus on widening the range and appropriateness of teaching and learning strategies used across the curriculum. The best practice in the school needs to be more widespread. More opportunities for pupils to take part in enquiry and problem-solving activities are required. Pupils should be further encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and to apply what they have learned in more complex and demanding contexts. The effective implementation of the new assessment policy should reduce the inconsistencies of assessment both within and across subjects. The pace of some lessons is too leisurely and requires teachers to increase the level of challenge given to pupils. The school needs to introduce regular monitoring of teaching and improve its sharing of good practice.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Currently unsatisfactory: However, the school is taking appropriate action to meet the statutory requirement of ICT in Key Stages 3 and 4. The recent change to the school day has given the opportunity for greater breadth and balance. The range of extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory: Staff in the SEN/Deaf Unit are committed to inclusion and inclusive values. Inclusion is exemplified by the integration of deaf pupils into some mainstream year 7 classes and trainee library work in year 8. However, the on-going intervention strategies for literacy support in Key Stage 3 lack clear planning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory: Pupils are generally making sound progress through appropriate support strategies. Urdu lessons are taught during lunchtimes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory: Provision is satisfactory overall though there is no mapping of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities across the curriculum and therefore no systematic development occurs. The school routines are known and followed by the school community making it a secure learning environment.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: The provision made for the care of its pupils is good. Good personal support is given to pupils by tutors, mentors and year staff. Evenings have been held for parents of specific ethnic groups. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy.

INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Beacon status has enabled the school to build on its transition processes in partnership with local primary schools to develop a number of popular curriculum bridging units in English, mathematics and science which enrich the curriculum for pupils transferring to the school. Beacon status has also enabled the further development of effective links with teacher training institutions and the development of a good mentoring system, which mutually benefits both teachers and students. One third of the teaching staff have received mentor training. Involvement in the gifted and talented strand of Excellence in Cities has enriched the curriculum through the development of a much wider variety of extra curricular activities and the provision of a shortened GCSE French course which includes the development of independent learning resources. Funding from Excellence in Cities has supported the provision of two learning mentors for underachieving pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good: The direction and clarity given by the head teacher is good. She has established an appropriate line management structure that has the potential to achieve a coherent whole school approach to monitoring and evaluation. Priorities in the development plan are appropriate but effective strategic planning requires more consistent implementation of whole-school policies at departmental level.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Supportive: The governors work very well with the management of the school and give effective strategic advice. However, the implementation of elements of the previous action plan have been slow and unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory: The monitoring and evaluation processes in the school are inconsistent and unsatisfactory. The use of pupils' individual performance data within departments is inconsistent and not used effectively to inform teaching and learning strategies.
The strategic use of resources	Good: The school uses its resources well and provides good value for money. The high standards expected and achieved by the school and the recent successful bids for curriculum developments have given the school an opportunity to develop expertise and offer more effective learning opportunities for all pupils.

Acting on the findings of the LEA's Ofsted report and an independent audit the LEA have adjusted upwards the school's annual budget share. This adjustment supports the long held views of the governors and will give more flexibility and opportunity for planned curriculum developments in the school. Overall pupil costs are below median levels and the sixth form is cost effective.

Leadership and management in the school have the potential to make significant improvements. Senior managers now need to promote more sharing of practice and consistency of approach, through focused action plans, that bring together many of the effective practices existing in the school. The generic roles of middle managers do not emphasise sufficiently the role of monitoring and evaluation, within departments and year groups, to improve the quality of provision and raise standards even further. The current timetable has some inefficient deployment of staff and does cause difficulties for some sixth formers by requiring them to maintain concentration during 3-hour subject sessions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expectation of the school that their child shall achieve of his/her best • The progress their children make • Their children like the school • The quality of the teaching • Being comfortable in approaching the school • The help given to make their child mature and sensible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how their child is getting on • The school working more closely with parents • The range of interesting activities outside lessons • More balance in the amount of homework • Provision of lockers • Quality of accommodation

The inspection findings support the views of what pleases parents most. The school does have high expectations of hard work and promotes achievement. However, the inspection team felt that reports could be more specific in terms of pupils' individual attainment in Key Stage 3 and what they need to do to improve. The school has recently reviewed the reporting process and structure to gain more frequent and accurate information about pupils and this information will be forwarded to parents. The inspection team supports the need to co-ordinate the provision of homework in order to give better balance and reduce potential overload. The team considers that the school's involvement with parents is generally satisfactory, as is the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Whilst the condition of some of the school's accommodation would benefit from refurbishment and a condition survey, the team did not find significant evidence that it currently impacted adversely on pupils' attainment. However, the original accommodation for science is uninspiring and the smaller rooms do limit the range of teaching strategies that can be deployed. The library is too small to be an effective resource area for the school. Insufficiency of appropriate accommodation is a factor in limiting opportunities to extend the curriculum in the sixth form, in developing more specialist provision for ICT and vocational studies and for the provision of lockers.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school promotes and achieves high academic standards in all year groups.

1 Pupils' results in the national tests for 14-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. The average scores indicate that boys and girls are performing at least two terms in advance of the standards being achieved nationally. The results for 2000 show that pupils are achieving slightly better in mathematics and science than in English. Results in all subjects are very high when compared to similar schools. Historical data indicates a similar performance over the past 4 years with an improving attainment trend in line with, though above, the national trend.

2 Pupils' GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 are consistently well above the national average and the trend of attainment is slightly better than the national trend. The results for 2000 show a similar pattern with the percentage of pupils achieving high grades (5+A*-C) being nearly 30% above those achieved nationally. The recent results indicate that pupils obtain a larger percentage of high grades in all subjects than pupils in most schools do. The GCSE results for boys have been relatively better than those for girls when compared to national figures over the last 2 years. The average point scores achieved indicate that more value is added over Key Stage 4 than over Key Stage 3.

3 Examination results at A/AS level are consistently well above the national average. The average point score for 2000 was 26 and this was the highest ever achieved by the school and very high when compared to national averages. Students achieved 'A' grade in all of the good range of 21 subjects offered at A level.

4 Governors receive, in October, the annual departmental reports on GCSE and A level examination achievements for the preceding year. These reports are helpful to governors because they focus on the actual grades achieved by pupils and indicate how effectively teachers' predicted performance outcomes are fulfilled. The reports also contain reasons for any mismatch. In addition the GCSE results are analysed to indicate how pupils have performed relatively in each subject. This analysis gives school managers and governors a view of strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum.

5 The main school prospectus and the post 16 prospectus present clear statements to the readers, in the sections 'learning at Silverdale' and 'learning contracts', that learning is the primary focus for the school. The school sets high entry requirements in each subject for students wishing to take AS courses. Students are expected to have achieved a minimum of 5+A*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, with a high grade B/C in the AS course they wish to follow.

The school has very good relationships between teachers and pupils.

6 The very good relationship between staff and pupils in classrooms is a strength of the school. Pupils and teachers generally respond very well to each other by working in a climate of shared respect. The observed interactions of pupils and teachers in the classroom are very good in the vast majority of cases because pupils are confident to ask and answer questions with enthusiasm. The productive way that pupils respond to school and their learning is one of the reasons for the very good levels of attainment achieved. Pupils know and generally observe the code of conduct for the school and the home-school agreement for meeting learning conditions.

7 The positive relationships between teachers and pupils were seen in most lessons. In a Year 9 science lesson the effective use of praise and encouragement generated a good pace and enthusiastic involvement of the pupils. Time targets and pair working were used effectively in a physical education (PE) lesson to enable the teacher to give appropriate support for all the pupils and develop critical peer evaluation. Good relationships in a French lesson created a positive learning environment with clear expectations so pupils were able to challenge each other in their use of the target language. In one English lesson observed, considerate, quiet and effective support was given to a low ability pupil to help with a writing task. In another example a pupil's misconception was used sensitively as a teaching point to further aid understanding in a year 9 mathematics lesson. Deaf pupils in a year 10 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lesson were able to express a point of view with the help of a learning support assistant. When given the opportunity to do so pupils take an active part in lessons, particularly in the sixth form, through group discussion work.

The school has teachers with very good subject knowledge.

8 Teachers' very good subject knowledge is evident and used to good effect in the vast majority of lessons. Clear explanations and effective use of everyday analogies help pupils to understand difficult concepts. In a year 11 science lesson a car journey over the Pennines was used to aid understanding of heat energy in some chemical reactions. In a Year 8 lesson on human fertilisation the teacher's very good subject knowledge was used to create curiosity which gave pupils the confidence to engage in debate. In religious education pupils were successfully encouraged to relate the topic under discussion to their own experiences. In English the expressive and energetic reading of a Harry Potter text allowed pupils to follow intently and respond appropriately. In art pupils were effectively trained to identify the particular aspects in the work of an artist and then include them in their own composition.

9 Teachers' very good subject knowledge generates pupils' interest in the subject in most lessons. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress which is further improved by teachers' effective questioning and skilled responses. Lessons frequently begin with an enthusiastic exposition which engages the pupils and gives them a positive attitude towards work. Teachers are quick to pick up on pupils' common difficulties or misconceptions and use them effectively to make a teaching point to the whole class. This helps pupils move on in their learning.

The school has an ethos which promotes very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance in the pupils.

10 The school ensures that the basic principles outlined in its prospectus, to provide a secure and safe environment and high expectations, are in place. The routines of the school are well known by the vast majority of pupils and are followed consistently. The home-school agreement is based on the sharing of a small number of clear expectations, for high standards with regard to respect for others, punctuality, attendance and caring for the environment. This contributes significantly to the school's inclusive ethos, that is one in which the achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter.

11 The school has a wide range of extra-curricular activities designed to develop social skills and help to build relationships in different contexts. These include exchange visits with European schools; European work experience; visits to Boulogne for Year 8 pupils, an annual musical production and visits to university open days. In addition pupils have opportunities to visit local art galleries and theatres; develop their musical skills and participate in numerous sporting activities, at inter-school or inter-form level.

The school has good curriculum links with teacher training institutions to support the quality of teaching and learning.

12 Links with Sheffield Hallam University and Bretton Hall College are in place for many curriculum areas. There are good mentoring arrangements in the school and the feedback from trainees is very positive. The mentoring system consists of three strands which include linking each student with a separate mentor for whole school issues, teaching and learning and subject expertise. The whole-school mentor is the senior tutor who meets with small groups of students to give them a broad understanding of the policies and organisation in the school. This is designed to support in the consistent application of school policies and rules by students and teachers. Teaching and learning mentoring, given by an identified teacher to all students, involves debate on the range of teaching strategies and invites reflective feedback on their own and observed practice. Each student is also linked with a member of staff in the subject department(s) who teaches in their area of study. Subject mentors have received training through the mentoring programme and this now includes approximately one third of the staff.

13 The arrangements for working with trainee teachers are good. In the first week of practice, students observe their subject mentors and give feedback on aspects of good practice which they have seen. The process improves the rigour of dialogue about teaching and learning in the school. For their part the trainees are seen as bringing new ideas to the school. Students continue to meet with mentors over the next three weeks on 2-day visits, this process enables them to become familiar with the workings of the school, the classes they will be teaching and the relevant programmes of study with associated assessment systems. This is followed by a full-time teaching practice in a 5-week block.

The school successfully integrates pupils who are profoundly deaf into parts of the mainstream curriculum.

14 Teachers in the deaf unit have regular meetings with the head teacher whom they see as particularly supportive of their work. Strategies to help the integration of pupils with profound deafness into mainstream school activities include a deaf awareness session for all year 7 pupils, which is also available to all staff. A lunchtime 'signing club' includes members of staff, pupils from most year groups but particularly sixth formers and some deaf pupils. A number of year 9 girls have formed a signing group and developed friendships with deaf pupils.

15 The school's strategies for the integration of deaf pupils means that they can join in at least half of the curriculum in Year 7. Deaf pupils are included in science, PSHE, technology, drama, physical education, art and mathematics. Pupils are supported in these lessons and are involved in the same tasks as the other class members. In those cases where pupils do not make sufficient progress, the amount of integration is reduced. Staff make this judgement based on established performance procedures for pupils with deafness e.g. the Durham Midyis scheme and the BPUS Edinburgh scheme.

The school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare.

16 The school ensures that pupils are well known by at least one teacher through the tutorial system because pupils stay with their tutor and also their year tutor for five years. This arrangement supports the building of secure relationships between pupils and teachers. Parents also welcome this continuity. A pilot scheme for tracking pupils' progress at three assessment points each year has recently been introduced into year 7. This provides tutors with an up to date academic profile of the pupils in their tutor group and enables more regular feedback to be given to parents/carers. After review it is proposed to introduce this scheme across all year groups.

17 The school pursues close links with the Local Education Authority on child protection issues. Staff are aware of the designated senior member of staff who has responsibility for the arrangements for child protection. Clear procedures exist for identifying pupils at risk and all staff know these. The procedures are published in the staff handbook which is available to all staff including temporary teachers and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students. Funds from the Excellence in Cities initiative are used to support two learning mentors who counsel pupils with health and behavioural problems. An updated Health and Safety policy is in place as are appropriate procedures for monitoring health and safety issues which include involving governors.

18 The Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme has been improved since the last inspection. Beacon school funds are being used to develop teaching units. The developing spiral curriculum promotes social inclusion through units on racism, behaviour and a range of personal safety and healthy lifestyle topics. A feature of the course is the use of local agencies and community organisations to help raise the pupils' awareness of the support facilities available for the area. During the inspection an informative talk on the use of drugs in the Sheffield area was given by the South Yorkshire police and was well received by Year 12 students.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning;

19 Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning were seen in design technology and textiles when pupils made decisions in designing artefacts using both traditional and computer driven schedules and made good progress. In a science lesson small groups of pupils discussed critically their experimental results, to explore any variance from expected targets before sharing their results and explanations of errors with the class.

20 However, in the majority of lessons, the planned programme does not include sufficient opportunity for pupils to take responsibility, make choices and solve problems. Given the positive attitudes to work shown by all pupils this is a missed opportunity. For example, teachers did not regularly give a time frame for pupils' to develop and complete pieces of work. When teachers did provide time frames they were frequently not adhered to. Few opportunities were offered to pupils to discuss their work reflectively and critically. In some lessons insufficient time is allowed for class discussion or for pupils to speculate or offer their own ideas. Pupils are not always given clear feedback about what to do to improve and so the opportunity to work with pupils to establish short-term targets to raise their performance is missed.

21 Pupils are given limited opportunities to use ICT independently. The use of computers and the opportunities they bring for pupils to work independently from disks and, with more senior students distance learning is not fully realised.

Systems of monitoring and evaluation to inform the effectiveness of its work, with a particular focus on the teaching strategies used and their impact on learning.

22 Because effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not taking place senior staff do not have an informed evidence base of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. The school does have a secure line management structure that effectively supports a professional development approach in line with the expectations of the Investors In People status of the school. Effective and on-going systems which inform on the quality of

classroom practice and which disseminate the best practice to all staff require further development.

23 The school does have some discrete systems which do inform the monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice debate. For example, many staff, in applying to meet threshold standards were observed teaching by the head teacher but this was essentially a one-off process. There is a good model of joint-observation of teaching and work sampling by mentors and trainee teachers taking place which ensures a satisfactory level of practice is maintained throughout the period of teacher training.

24 The school ethos promotes inclusion through respect and awareness of others' feelings and beliefs. However, there are currently no systems to determine the impact that activities associated with the school's Beacon Status and the Excellence in Cities initiative are having on pupils' learning. Strategies being used in a number of subject areas, for supporting gifted and talented and underachieving pupils, should also be evaluated. Such evaluation would provide evidence of good practice to be shared with all staff in the school. The monitoring and evaluation of the PSHE programme is, as yet, informal and without the necessary rigour. The recent appointment of a teacher to support and monitor the progress of ethnic minority pupils is recognition that this work needs to be more appropriately focused.

Uses of pupils' performance data to support assessment, set challenging targets and inform teaching and learning practice.

25 For the first time the school has accurate and reliable assessment and performance data to enable it to develop detailed pupil profiles and make clear predictions for pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations. At present, however, individual targets are not in place for all pupils. Consequently, pupils targets do not inform teachers' planning and delivery, particularly in Key Stage 3. Pupils' learning would be enhanced if they were made fully aware of the criteria for performing at an expected level at Key Stage 3, or a grade at GCSE.

26 The school has used assessment information successfully to identify a group of gifted and talented pupils yet this is not fully exploited in English. So, for example, pupils are not entered for the extension paper in English and this sets a ceiling on their achievement. Extension tests, which set more challenging targets leading to the achievement of level 8 (well above average), are used in mathematics and science. Teacher assessments for high achieving pupils at the end of Key Stage 3, are not consistent across the core subjects. Estimates for pupils achieving level 6 or better are more secure in mathematics and science than in English.

27 Currently Key Stage 3 reports record pupils' performance in relation to National Curriculum levels. But since the nationally expected level is currently achieved by 80% of the cohort and exceeded by 60% this does not provide a meaningful assessment profile. The reports do not inform pupils and parents how well the child is doing relative to their capability. However, at Key Stage 4 the school does use a reporting model that gives information in relation to expected outcomes. The school is aware of these inconsistencies and plans are in place to improve the coherence of assessment.

28 At Key Stage 4 indicative GCSE grades are distributed to all departments but teachers need to use this information more effectively to improve the match of the work they set to pupils levels of understanding. Currently insufficient work is seen that gives an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in the class.

29 The quality and effectiveness of marking pupils' work varies both within departments and across the whole school. Where comments are made they are usually short and do not convey what has to be done to improve. A better understanding of pupils' potential performance would help to improve this situation. Better use of assessment data would enable teachers to plan more accurately for pupils differing levels of ability and reduce pupils reliance upon the teachers.

Strategic planning, with clear timelines and success criteria, which brings together the various initiatives operating in the school and links them with the major priorities in the school improvement plan.

30 The four priorities in the school improvement plan are appropriate for the school at this time. The plan outlines many school initiatives in train to raise standards even further. A more consistent and coherent approach is now needed to bring these together through strategic whole school planning. Detailed action plans are required showing how each of these initiatives and their specific targets, will feed into the existing planning framework. The school should operate with one planning document, which contains clear timelines, criteria for measuring effectiveness and success, debates of the expected monitoring process, who will take responsibility for the work and the identification of the evaluation process expected for each target.

31 All departments should include in their plans specific targets for relevant whole school initiatives arising from the previous action plan, the action plan for this inspection and Beacon School and Excellence in Cities initiatives. Departments need to review their current plans to ensure they deliver:

- action for the provision and implementation of strands of ICT in Key Stage 3;
- action for the provision and implementation of ICT in Key Stage 4;
- strategies for ensuring Year 7 transition arrangements are effectively implemented;
- strategies for teaching pupils who are identified as gifted and talented;
- strategies for teaching pupils who are identified as underachievers;
- links between the mentoring process with teaching and learning programmes in Key Stage 4;
- strategies for regular classroom observation and the monitoring of pupils' work.

Each of these action plans has a link with at least one of the four school priorities currently in each departmental plan.

32 The inclusion of these actions and strategies in departmental plans will create a more coherent strategic planning structure. Detailed monitoring and evaluation processes within the plan will identify best practice and support dissemination across all teaching departments in the school to help further improve the quality of learning and teaching.

Statutory requirement to provide ICT across both Key Stages 3 and 4 and RE in the sixth form.

33 Lesson observations and discussions with teachers indicate that there is insufficient planned use of ICT across the curriculum. There is no scheme of work for delivering ICT in KS3 and so the school cannot identify how the various strands of the subject are planned and delivered across all subjects.

34 At Key Stage 4 there is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum to fulfil the programme of study. Whilst the key skills programme of lessons is making a contribution to pupils' learning in this area, through using appropriate software to develop presentation skills and the use of spread sheets in a business context, it does not in itself provide the required

breadth and depth. A planned programme of delivery for ICT is required across all subjects so that pupils can both acquire and apply ICT skills and knowledge.

35 The duty to provide religious education in the sixth form taught in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus is not place.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To improve further the school should:

- 1 provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning (paragraphs 19-21);
- 2 develop more effective systems of monitoring and evaluation to inform the effectiveness of its work, with a particular focus on the teaching strategies used and their impact on learning (paragraphs 22-24);
- 3 develop more sophisticated use of individual pupils' performance data to support assessment, set challenging targets and inform teaching and learning practice (paragraphs 25-29);
- 4 develop a coherent system of strategic planning, with clear timelines and success criteria, which bring together the various initiatives operating in the school and link them with the major priorities in the school improvement plan (paragraphs 30-32);
- 5 fulfil the statutory requirement to provide ICT across both Key Stages 3 and 4 and provide RE in the sixth form (paragraphs 33-35).

INSPECTION FOCUS

INITIATIVES TO RAISE ACHIEVEMENT AND PROMOTE INCLUSION

36 The staff handbook gives a clear set of criteria and statements to describe an inclusive school. Evidence that the school meets the key principle of challenging intolerance to difference, came from all pupils who felt secure in an environment that celebrated fairness, achievement and hard work. The inspection team found pupils' attitudes towards the school to be very positive and relationships between all pupils and adults a strength. The school clearly works hard to keep its pupils in school and there are no unauthorised absences or permanent exclusions. Appropriate support is provided for all pupils including those with English as a second language and pupils that are profoundly deaf.

37 Silverdale School has accessed two standards fund programmes to help raise achievement and promote inclusion. First the school is involved in two strands of the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative, 'gifted and talented' and 'learning mentors'. Initial activity in the gifted and talented strand has concentrated on developing a range of extra curricula provision. Some of these activities are school based and open to all pupils. Other activities are more focused and have involved pupils from other schools. As yet the only mainstream curriculum provision is a Year 10 French group who will take their GCSE examination at the same time as other pupils but will have received fewer taught lessons. Mentoring of pupils is in place in year 10 with an identified group of underachievers and for pupils with either health or behavioural problems.

38 Silverdale School is now in its second year of funding as a Beacon school. It has focused its activities on two particular areas, transition from Key Stage 2 and working with higher educational institutions on initial teacher training (ITT). In both areas the school has developed effective links with other educational organisations as well as building upon and extending existing practice. The head teacher sees Beacon status not as a philosophy but as a resource by which aspects of the school, and those of its partners, will be improved by working closely together.

Extent to which the programme-funded initiatives contribute to the school's mainstream provision

39 The programme funded initiatives make a good contribution overall to the school's mainstream provision by meeting the needs of identified pupils and raising their achievement and by promoting inclusion.

40 Beacon funding has been used well to enable teachers to link with colleagues in primary feeder schools to produce bridging units between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in mathematics, English and science. Year 7 pupils value these curriculum initiatives because they help the move from primary to secondary school through joint working with teachers. Beacon funding is used in science to provide time and support for the 'bubbles' project, which has effectively developed primary pupils' confidence in science through practical approaches. Other examples of valuable curriculum initiatives include the 'building blocks' process in mathematics which is started in Year 6 and completed in Year 7. In addition, a literacy summer school was held, primarily to support pupils attaining less than level 4 in English SAT2, which was linked to initial work in year 7. Similar transition work in PE helps raise pupils' self expectations and gives them the confidence to engage immediately with activities when they start in year 7.

41 The partnership with teacher training institutions has driven the development of curriculum information packages for trainee teachers and an effective mentoring scheme

within the school. The trainee teachers are appreciative of the mentoring process because it is tiered and shaped to give a whole school and subject perspective.

42 The Excellence in Cities programme is used effectively to support the mentoring of pupils at academic and pastoral levels. Programme funding has enabled the school to appoint 2 learning mentors who currently provide effective counselling for pupils with either health or behaviour related problems.

43 The gifted and talented initiative is supported by a cross-curricula working party. The identified cohort of pupils benefit from an increased range of extra-curricular activities but curriculum initiatives are currently limited to a fast-track group in GCSE French.

Extent to which the programme-funded initiative supports the development of more effective teaching;

44 The ITT mentoring initiative effectively supports the development of more effective teaching in the school. Student teachers receive good support from a 3-tier mentoring system. A senior member of staff leads induction on whole school issues. Discussions on generic-teaching skills are led by a middle manager and each student has a subject mentor. This process has led to approximately one third of the teaching staff receiving mentoring training which includes sharing criteria for effective teaching. Students and subject mentors are initially involved in a two-way observation process when joint feedback is given on practice. Beacon supported work on the transition projects, Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 has generated discussion between teachers and has led to a better understanding of the similarities and differences in primary and secondary practice.

Extent to which the programme funded initiative impacts on the achievement of the targeted pupils or groups of pupils, and, where appropriate, all pupils;

45 Mentoring of pupils in last years GCSE cohort who were identified as gaining 4+A*-C grades were given support which resulted in all achieving 5+A*-C grades. A similar group of 'underachieving pupils' has been identified for support in Year 10. As yet no quantitative evidence of improved achievement can be linked to the gifted and talented initiative for the current group of pupils.

Extent to which the programme funded initiatives are being effectively managed by the school to extend opportunities for pupil and teachers to raise achievement and promote inclusion;

46 The management of both programmes is satisfactory. Each initiative is in place with identified lead staff and information networks. The ITT link with higher education is particularly strong and the mentoring work with students, including observing practice and feeding back strengths and weaknesses, provides mutual benefit. Monitoring of the arrangements in the Beacon programme are satisfactory and the responsibility of a senior manager. However, systems for evaluating the impact of Beacon activities and the Excellence in Cities strands on teaching or pupil's attainment are currently unsatisfactory because they are informal and do not give the school a clear and informed view of the differences that occur as a result of the initiatives.

Extent to which the programme funded initiatives encourage and support effective links with parents; other schools or educational providers; and local agencies and the community;

47 Links with other agencies and parents are satisfactory. Activities identified for gifted and talented pupils are made available to a number of other local comprehensive schools, primarily those with established collaborative curriculum links. The existing links with feeder primary schools have been enhanced and this experience has the potential for use with the wider family of primary schools. Mentoring links with Hallam University and Bretton Hall College are strong and developing. The school has recently become part of an Information Technology training centre for ITT students with a dedicated training base to which the school has access during the day. Links with the Local Education Authority, through appropriate advisers, are active and developing for both initiatives.

Extent to which the schools use of programme funded initiatives contributes towards its overall effectiveness and represents value for money.

48 The programme funded initiatives are in place and are increasingly improving the quality of teaching and learning by greater dissemination of information and practical involvement of teachers and teaching programmes. Substantial amounts of Beacon funding have been used effectively to support links with higher education institutions and local feeder primary schools. Developments for Excellence in Cities initiatives are in place and taking on greater clarity following the appointment of a new co-ordinator this term. The school now needs to replace the current informal evaluation processes and develop a clear self-review strategy to evaluate the overall impact made on teaching and learning. In spite of this, the school's use of programme funded initiatives is satisfactory and represents sound value for money.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	10	43	38	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	919	236
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	79	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	227	8

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	104

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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
	00	105	80	185

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	85	95	92
	Girls	69	70	71
	Total	154	165	163
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83.2(84)	89.2(87)	88.1(82)
	National	63(64)	65(62)	59(54)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	56.2(42)	63.8(68)	70.8(58)
	National	28(28)	39 (38)	29(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	85	89	93
	Girls	73	66	74
	Total	158	155	167
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85.4(87.2)	83.8(90.1)	90.3(85.6)
	National	64(64)	66(64)	62(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40.5(55.9)	63.2(71.4)	63.8(57.4)
	National	31(31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	85	98	183

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	68	82	83
	Girls	75	87	95
	Total	143	169	178
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	78(81)	92(98)	97(100)
	National	49.0(46.6)	88.8(90.9)	94.4(95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score Per pupil	School	50.95 (54.1)
	National	38.7(38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	0
	National		N/A

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	53	49

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	24.3	27.9	26.0 (21.9)	N/A	N/A	N/A (7.8)
National			(17.9)			(2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	0
	National		0

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	0
	National		0

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	32
Black – other	31
Indian	14
Pakistani	38
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	11
White	1002
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	4	0
Black – African heritage	3	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	65.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	12.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	307

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	28.3
Key Stage 4	21.9

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	2574333
Total expenditure	2642663
Expenditure per pupil	2311
Balance brought forward from previous year	-39951
Balance carried forward to next year	-108281

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1141
Number of questionnaires returned	245

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	55	11	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	50	5	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	57	8	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	56	14	5	1
The teaching is good.	25	60	5	2	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	38	24	9	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	48	9	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	18	46	23	5	7
The school is well led and managed.	23	49	10	2	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	58	9	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	42	19	6	11

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were concerned to co-ordinate the amount homework to achieve a balance across the term or year rather than the currently perceived situation of peaks and troughs. A number of comments were made at the parents' meeting expressing the view that the accommodation is less than adequate and that there is a need for student lockers.