

INSPECTION REPORT

HAYDOCK HIGH SCHOOL

Haydock

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104827

Headteacher: Mr S Fullerton

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Chamberlain
7661

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th January 2003

Inspection number: 249111

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clipsley Lane Haydock St Helens
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Scott
Date of previous inspection:	10 February 1997

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7661	S Chamberlain	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
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4749	M Ash	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
15079	A Boys	Team inspector	Science Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
21954	T Chipp	Team inspector	Art and design	
4355	F Earle	Team inspector	History Citizenship	
10209	V Gormally	Team inspector	Design and technology	
32348	B Greenwood	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
32225	C Hough	Team inspector	Physical education	
12183	P Ingram	Team inspector	Mathematics	
13154	D Morton	Team inspector	Music	
12179	L Moscrop	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Religious education	
3731	B Robson	Team inspector	English Assessment of special educational needs	
20497	V Williams	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

An amalgamation with Parr High School has created the present Haydock High School. The school has 933 pupils (452 boys, 481 girls) on roll. Of these pupils only a very small number have English as an additional language. There are 286 (31 per cent) pupils eligible for free school meals, which is high. There are 193 (21 per cent, broadly average) who have learning difficulties, of these 43 (5 per cent, above average) have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have either dyslexia or moderate learning or emotional and behavioural problems. Attainment on entry is below average and has dipped since taking in Parr High pupils. As a result of the merger the school has taken on 17 new staff from Parr High and opened an inclusion base. In March 2002, the previous Haydock High School gained a National Achievement Award for substantially improved results. A City Learning Centre opened in January 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has been challenged significantly as it has been required to absorb over three hundred new pupils. The effect of this substantial change in the characteristics of the school has been well managed as a result of very good leadership. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and good in Years 10 and 11. The needs of all pupils are being considered and good attitudes by pupils have been established. Standards have been affected and staff are trying very hard to avoid and reverse a decline as occurred in last year's examination results. At this time, the school provides satisfactory value for money and promises to improve upon this fairly rapidly.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the school is very good.
- Teaching and learning, in Years 10 and 11, are good.
- The contribution of the community, including the City Learning Centre, to pupils' learning is very good.
- Relationships are good.
- The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good.
- The provision and take-up of extra-curricular activities are very good.

What could be improved

- Attainment is too low.
- Present good practice evident in the special educational needs department to improve assessment of pupils' work could be extended to take on that of all pupils.
- Attendance could improve, especially in Years 8 to 11.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not used widely enough across the curriculum.
- The behaviour of a small, but significant minority, of pupils, mainly boys, in Years 8 and 9 disrupts some lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in 1997, the school has made satisfactory improvement. Enormous effort has been put into making the recent amalgamation run smoothly and this has paid dividends. The school received an achievement award in June 2002, acknowledging improved examination results. Teaching strategies are improving as a result of a clear focus on these by senior managers. There have been improved ICT facilities, not least through the

excellent City Learning Centre. Art accommodation has improved. Overall, accommodation is only just satisfactory given the increase in numbers of pupils.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	C	C	D	B

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

The combination of Haydock High School with Parr High School has introduced a new dimension to results of examinations as from June 2002. Considering solely Haydock High School, pre-amalgamation, but in 2002, results in statutory tests at the end of Year 9 were overall and individually below national averages in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools which have a similar eligibility for free school meals, results were above average overall in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Comparisons with pupils' previous attainment are below average in mathematics and science and well below in English. Contributory factors to the slight drop in results since 2001 is the disruption caused to pupils, having to take on three year groups from a different school in June 2002, and the many distractions this has caused staff. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for English, mathematics and science was below the national trend.

Standards in the work seen are below average in Years 7 to 9 when pupils achieve at a satisfactory level. They are average in Years 10 to 11, where pupils' achievements are good.

In 2002, GCSE results were similar to those in 2001 but were below the national average overall. Girls' results were below the average for girls, and boys' results were close to average for boys. Even though girls' results were higher than those of boys, indications are that the main loss has occurred amongst the girls. Over the last three years pupils' results were close to the national average overall with boys' results below and girls' results close to their respective national comparisons. The trend in the school's average total GCSE point score per pupil was above the national trend.

Targets for 2003 are depressed, as the school brings on board a group whose expected grades overall are lower than those of Haydock High School, pre-amalgamation. The combined result is likely to be around 31 per cent for 5 A* to C grades. Pupils from Haydock High School (pre-amalgamation) would expect over 40 per cent for 5 A* to C grades and be aiming for 45 per cent.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils' attitudes to their work are normally good. Most pupils concentrate well, are attentive and listen to the teacher.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils' behaviour in most lessons is good. In a few lessons some pupils are disruptive and this, along with poor levels of concentration, slows the pace of the lesson so learning is less effective.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well to their teachers and respect each other.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. There are few lessons where all the pupils are present.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and best in Years 10 and 11 where they are good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is satisfactory but least good in Year 8. Learning follows a similar pattern and is lowest in Year 8. The pockets of disruptive behaviour are mostly apparent in Year 8 and have an adverse bearing on both the teachers' and the pupils' focus in lessons and consequently the quality of learning. In just under two thirds of lessons, teaching and learning are good or better. In a very small number of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory and in a few more learning is unsatisfactory, occurring predominately in Years 8 and 9.

Teachers manage pupils well. They have good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Pupils have little self-knowledge of their progress. However, the learning of those with special educational needs is particularly good, as is the learning of those that are gifted and talented. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the school are satisfactory overall, but there is some inconsistency between the subjects. Some of the best lessons were seen in science and art and design. Although some good lessons were seen in English, geography and music, a very small number of lessons in these subjects had short-comings. Teaching and Learning in mathematics and science are good and are satisfactory in English.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum generally meets well the wide range of needs of pupils. There is scope for further development of vocational and work related courses. Extra-curricular, community, careers education and links with partner institutions are all very good. Statutory requirements are met but ICT is not used widely enough. Provision for the development of pupils' ability to live healthily is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Where learning support assistants are present in lessons, they work well to help the pupils make progress. However, the school is aware that the allocation of support needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that it is targeted where needs are greatest and to allow the support assistants to be more aware of the learning objectives in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils to which this applies are catered for effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is catered for well. The provision for their social education is very good. These areas are given a high priority in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has systematic and thorough ways of being aware of developing patterns of behaviour and attendance. Child protection is good. Good communications between staff and a clear understanding of procedures ensure individual pupils are appropriately supported to check performance and achievement. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school is working hard to meet the needs of all pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Leadership by the head teacher is very good, overall. He has a very clear vision for the school. He prioritises teaching and learning. The senior management team has strengths both pastorally and academically. Other Managers present a mixed picture.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very effective in fulfilling their statutory duties. They know well the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very keen to contribute to school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is trying hard to check its performance and take action. This has proved difficult of late because of the amalgamation which has effectively created a new school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Although there is a substantial under-spend, financial control is very good. Plans are in place to use excess funds to advantage now that the school has absorbed pupils from Parr High School. The school has good procedures in place to ensure that best value is sought.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They think their children are making good progress in school. • The school expected their children to work hard and achieve his or her best • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • They think the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not think the school works sufficiently closely with parents. • They are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on • Some believe their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home.

Inspectors **agree** with parents that the school could work more closely with them in helping them understand more about what their children are doing. In other instances where pupils need specific support, for example with disaffected pupils, parents are fully involved. Inspectors **disagree** that the school does not keep parents informed about how their children are getting on. Interim and annual reports and parent progress evenings give good provision. Homework is regularly provided and is adequate in amount. Overall, the school has a satisfactory partnership with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Although the school takes pupils across the full spectrum of attainment, the average attainment of those entering the school is below national norms. From the merger with Parr High School a new school has been formed. Attainment levels need to be viewed in the light of whether they have occurred before the amalgamation or since. To date no external examinations have been taken since the merger and any formal external results reported refer to the old Haydock School. Any work seen during the inspection refers to pupils who come from both schools.

2. Results in statutory tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE at the end of Year 11 were below average, but when compared with similar schools were above average in 2002. Although the trend in the schools average National Curriculum points was below the national trend in Years 7 to 9, it was above in Years 10 and 11. Overall pupils' achievements over time are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.

3. Standards in the work seen are, overall, below average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11.

4. Since the amalgamation, in English, pupils across the school are achieving as well as expected, when taking into account their previous attainment. They are making satisfactory progress, although standards are still below average. Standards in drama are satisfactory, particularly when viewed in the light of pupils' previous experience. They are achieving well.

5. Pupils' standards of literacy vary widely, but, overall, they are sufficient for them to make progress with the work that they are asked to do in different subjects. Most pupils listen attentively but do not speak at length during discussions. They read quite fluently and understand the content of most worksheets and textbooks, although some find this difficult in Years 7 to 9. In all years, most pupils can write at length, but their spelling and punctuation are often inaccurate.

6. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics below the national average and this remains the case at the end of Years 9 and 11. Number skills vary from above average to well below average. The mathematics department has responded well to national strategies and has a unified teaching approach throughout all years in the school. It is successful in raising standards for pupils, some of whom enter the school with very low standards. All new topics in electronic systems start with a summary of mathematical requirements which include number, graphs and the use of equations.

7. Standards of numeracy seen are average. All pupils have experience of number in science. Lower attaining pupils read thermometers accurately and record the results but have difficulty in presenting these results graphically. Higher attaining pupils can re-arrange formulae to find unknown quantities and in general, science makes good use of tables, charts, graphs and calculations. Examples were observed during the inspection in ICT in the use of spreadsheets to investigate the links between groups of data. Simple statistical graphs and the measurement of distances are used in geography in Years 10 and 11 in preparation for GCSE but this work is weak in Years 7 to 9. In health related fitness, in physical education, pulse rates are taken but this information is not used to develop greater understanding.

8. In science, standards are average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory throughout the school. The facility of pupils to recall factual information is quite good and, in the main, they are able to carry out practical work effectively. Standards in top groups, in Years 10 and 11, are only average. Pupils attain average levels in the new GNVQ course on health and social care. Their achievements are good.

9. Standards in art and design are well above average and pupils' achievement is well above average. By the end of Year 9, attainment is above expectations, representing good achievement from below average on entry. By the end of Year 11, attainment is very good and includes some excellent work representing very good achievement across Years 10 and 11. Attainment in the work seen in design and technology by ages 14 and 16 is below expectation and poor in resistant materials; pupils' achieve at a satisfactory rate. However, pupils' achievements are good where they are either gifted or talented or have learning difficulties. Standards in ICT and business studies are broadly average. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory by the end of Year 9 in these subjects but good in ICT and satisfactory in business studies by the end of Year 11.

10. Attainment in geography at ages 14 and 16 is below the national average. Achievement is satisfactory through the course because pupils receive a sound grounding in geographical skills and a good knowledge base over Years 7 to 11. In history, many pupils have difficulties recalling what they have learned in their previous school and are weak at locating events chronologically. Standards are below average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate by age 14 and at a good rate by age 16. In religious education, standards are variable but broadly in line with expectations. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. They have a basic knowledge of some central beliefs attributed to Christianity such as rites of passage.

11. Overall, attainment in French in Years 7 to 10 is below average. In Year 11, the pupils of the former Haydock School are reaching expected standards and are predicted to gain 46 per cent grades A*-C at GCSE. Most pupils are achieving well and making good progress in lessons.

12. In the work seen in music, pupils' attainment is below average across the school. Their achievements are satisfactory. Attainment in physical education throughout Years 7 to 11 is average. Pupils make very good progress by the end of Year 9 and good progress from then on until the end of Year 11. They are challenged and encouraged to achieve success in the set tasks.

13. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress by the end of Years 9 and 11.

14. The standards of work seen for pupils with special educational needs are below average but their progress is as good as could be expected in the light of their learning difficulties and previous results. There are no significant differences in the relative standards attained by boys and girls, by pupils in different classes or by pupils at different stages of need. The good support provided by class teachers and other support staff has a positive effect on standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development at Haydock School are good. This is a similar picture to that reported in the previous inspection. The bringing together of the two schools has introduced some very challenging behaviour for teachers, but within the classroom, good management of pupils has meant most lessons maintain a productive

atmosphere. Pupils enthusiastically support the very good range of activities available at lunchtime and after school, with good representation by both girls and boys. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

16. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mainly positive throughout the school. Most pupils are attentive and work conscientiously on work set. Behaviour is good and at times very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. In a Year 11 French lesson on adolescent life, pupils showed responsibility throughout, keen to answer questions and listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. A small number of pupils in some Years 8 and 9 are potentially troublesome in class but teachers mostly deal with the situation positively and competently. A very lively Year 9 art group worked with enthusiasm experimenting with oil, pastel and paint following a very good demonstration of techniques. There is some loss of pace in less well managed lessons, when pupils are reluctant learners and are not well motivated. This will affect and slow down learning so pupils do not achieve as they should. In a small minority of lessons pupils are very disruptive, constantly interrupting so little or no learning takes place. Here teaching is not of sufficiently high standard to keep pupils interested.

17. Behaviour around the school is occasionally boisterous in overcrowded corridors. This is also the case in the dining room where behaviour is very good but litter on the floor shows lack of consideration for others and for the school. In other instances pupils offer help willingly, are friendly and thoughtful such as when they politely waited for an inspector to finish lunch. In a Year 7 assembly, you could have heard a pin drop as pupils listened to a Chinese visitor talking about her culture. Pupils feel systems for dealing with poor behaviour and bullying are fair and appreciate the systems of rewards and sanction.

18. Relationships in the school are at least good and often very good. They play an important part in helping pupils to learn effectively. In mathematics, geography, design and technology and English lessons, effective relationships help pupils feel secure, they concentrate well, listen carefully to the teacher and each other and respond well and responsibly to the work in hand. They take part in discussion willingly and in a physical education lesson on a very cold day, good humoured and pleasant relationships made for an enjoyable and effective lesson. In other lessons pupils are passive rather than active learners with little response to questions. In some subjects pupils rarely get the opportunity to work in small groups to contribute to existing good relationships with each other, and to contribute to each other's learning.

19. Pupils' personal development is good, because they have an extensive range of social and educational opportunities. Staff give willingly of their time and the openness and shared commitment from staff of both of the merging schools to all the activities provided last year, have helped the successful integration of pupils and staff. Year 8 pupils give valued support to Year 7 pupils to help them settle into school and many others represent the school in sporting fixtures or as prefects showing people around school or helping in other events. A number of pupils raise money for charities every year.

20. Attendance over the last few years has fluctuated around 89 per cent rate with levels of unauthorised absence being lower than other schools nationally. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection. Overall attendance has maintained this level. The last two terms, since the combining of the two schools, there has been shown a significant increase in unauthorised absence, particularly Years 10 and 11. More girls than boys fail to come to school without good reason. Year 7 is the only year at present whose unauthorised absence is lower than other similar schools nationally. The school is responding strenuously and there are some success stories, where pupils have been supported back to good attendance. The school, educational welfare officer and the inclusion unit are working closely with families to identify ways to get pupils to attend.

21. The behaviour of pupils with learning difficulties is generally good and they have positive attitudes to work. They usually have good relationships their fellow pupils and teachers and are well integrated into classes. They usually persevere well with their work and try hard, although some cannot concentrate for long. A few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties can sometimes be difficult in lessons but these incidents are usually handled well by the teachers, so that they do not unduly disrupt learning. These pupils also have individual behaviour plans in order to help them to overcome their difficulties.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and best in Years 10 and 11 where they are good. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is satisfactory but least good in Year 8. Learning follows a similar pattern and is least effective in Year 8. In just under two thirds of lessons, teaching and learning are good or better. In a very small number of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory and, in a few more, learning is unsatisfactory, these happening predominately in Years 8 and 9, as the result of disruptive behaviour by a small group of boys.

23. Very good teaching was well represented in an English lesson, in Year 9, when the teacher's starter activity made very good links between aspects of Macbeth, keywords and spelling for pupils' homework. The teacher made good use of mini whiteboards to test and share knowledge, teaching the lesson at a good pace, keeping pupils interested, involved and suitably challenged. An excellent lesson, in science, was very well planned considering fully how to meet the needs of all pupils by providing a good variety of activities that enabled pupils to participate actively. They used a textbook very effectively to aid discussion and showed that they had learned a great deal. In an art and design lesson, the teacher demonstrated very well techniques in the style of Barginat. A very good questioning session extended pupils' knowledge and enthused them to try out newly learned techniques. The lesson concluded with a very good plenary, when the teacher pointed out which qualities to look for and gave time for pupils to circulate and learn from each other's work.

24. Characteristics of lessons that were unsatisfactory include those in an English lesson where a lack of sufficient challenge, too little focus on a poet's use of language and a task that required no more than re-organisational skills was evident. In one geography lesson, the aims were not specifically identified, opportunities lost to get pupils to test their understanding by allowing the use of the overhead projector as a teaching and learning aid and a lack of discussions or consolidation of lesson objectives. Teaching and learning are clearly affected by the very difficult and challenging nature of some groups. This, as in an ICT lesson, can make the pace of lessons painfully slow. In one lesson in music, at no time in the lesson were all pupils focused on the activity. Virtually no learning took place.

25. Overall, teachers' knowledge and understanding are good. They are able to draw on a wide experience and consequently make clear to pupils the lesson objectives and expected outcomes. For example, in an ICT lesson in Year 10, the outcomes are listed on the wall next to a list of tasks the pupil are asked to perform. The focus of the lessons is clear. Basic skills are taught best in Years 10 and 11. For example, they include number work in French and word searches and writing frames to structure plans for experiments in science.

26. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Most are using a three part lesson, introduction, middle and summary. They check how much pupils have learned at the end of the lesson. In ICT, the teacher uses the summary early to check the progress of different groups. Having started from base, this short plenary served to re-focus pupils and gave them a further opportunity to attack the topic with renewed energy. Pupils are often encouraged to research and work independently particularly when working on coursework portfolios. In resistant materials careful attention is paid to reinforcing steps in pupils' understanding. As a result,

learning was consistent and purposeful in a class which contained a high proportion of lower attaining pupils. They responded very well to well ordered activities, very good relationships and a brisk pace. The teacher used one-to-one teaching and was sensitive to the needs of the individual.

27. In physical education, pupils are encouraged to improve their gymnastics; they are offered good verbal explanation to improve style and confidence. Good learning is apparent by the end of lessons. In art and design, pupils were encouraged to be creative when learning about drawing for different purposes and that African masks were not intended to be realistic. In music, pupils in Year 9 made effective, if simple, music after being actively encouraged by the teacher.

28. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory but limited to a few subjects that apply a consistent use of number and graphical work. Most teachers are aware of the need to improve pupils' literacy skills and do this in a satisfactory manner. Pupils learn to listen, read and write sufficiently well to enable them to move forward in other subjects.

29. Pupils with learning difficulties have full access to the National Curriculum. The sensitive teaching they receive helps to ensure that they can benefit from this access, as does the good support provided by the learning support assistants. The work provided for pupils with special needs usually stretches them appropriately and is well matched to their needs in most lessons. The teachers are well aware of the pupils' needs because they set appropriate targets.

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

30. The curriculum is good overall. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum has a good structure and has been improved since the previous inspection. The key issues raised in that report including the length, frequency and number of lessons in the weekly timetable and the balance of time given to subjects at Years 7 to 9 have been suitably addressed. Drama is now taught to all pupils as a separate subject. Religious education, personal and social education and ICT are also taught as separate subjects to all pupils.

31. There are opportunities for high attaining pupils to study two modern foreign languages. The introduction of drama has resulted in the time for English being reduced and this affects the opportunities for wider reading in the subject. There is limited time available for the teaching of music in Years 7 to 9 which needs tackling as the allocation of time is well below the national norm for the subject. The provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory overall but application across the curriculum is very variable and is an area for development.

32. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good. However, the amalgamation of two schools has had some effect on the curriculum. Year 11 pupils from Parr High and Haydock High Schools who follow different GCSE syllabi or study different topics on the same syllabus have to be taught separately. The school has catered for their needs very well. However, the unsatisfactory accommodation and resource for some of the technology options reduces the scope of the curriculum that can be offered.

33. Although statutory requirements are met, in ICT the subject is not fully applied across the curriculum. A suitably wide range of GCSE subjects are offered within a core and two options. The school offers a small but increasing vocational element within the options available and pupils in Year 10 have been given more opportunity to study vocational courses

than previously. For the first time part-time off site provision has been provided for a small number of pupils with behavioural and other special needs. This is good practice.

34. Overall the curriculum is developing flexible, varied and relevant programmes of study across the ability range with increasing emphases on the needs of low attainers through applied practical courses run in partnership with a number of local providers including St Helen's College.

35. The head of ICT is also responsible for co-ordinating the use of ICT through other subjects of the curriculum but there is no time allocated to this responsibility. Overall, the planning, use, and checking of ICT across the curriculum is weak. In modern foreign languages, art and design, and religious education staff are confident and access to ICT is satisfactory. ICT is planned into the modern languages, art and design, and religious education curriculum. In physical education though, graphical work, which could be done using spreadsheets, is done by hand. In science the data logging equipment is old. There are opportunities for computer aided design but not for computer aided manufacture. The delivery of control technology is weak. There are some good examples of ICT used to deliver lessons but these are the exception, such as the use of interactive white boards to involve pupils in their learning. Special funding has been used to improve teachers' information technology skills. The Head of ICT provides advice to heads of department on matters of computer hard and software and there are dedicated pieces of software and CD-ROMs for specific use in subjects. There is also clear guidance to departments on how best to use the Internet to support learning in their subjects.

36. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good. Gifted pupils are initially identified by consultation with feeder primary schools in Years 5 and 6 and invited to join activities at Haydock High. The group is finalised in Year 7 and accurately reflects gender, race and socio-economic groupings. Consultations are held with departments to identify pupils with particular talents. Gifted and talented pupils in all year groups are currently under review as a result of the amalgamation with Parr High School. As an interim measure all gifted and talented pupils from both schools are given the opportunity to take part in special visits and activities.

37. Specific funds for gifted and talented projects are equally available to all subject areas but there are wide variations in their use. Art and design and physical education make good use of the funds to bring pupils into contact with professional artists and coaches. Geography has yet to develop strategies for extending the experience of gifted and talented pupils. A good range of extra curricular activities are provided including clubs for technology, music, modern foreign languages and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

38. Good partnerships have been formed with external organisations. Gifted and talented pupils attend workshops, lectures and taster days at Further Education establishments. Six pupils in Year 9 are involved in the Shout project, organised by Oxford University, which introduces pupils to the potential of Higher Education.

39. There is very good and varied extra-curricular provision. It is particularly good in the arts and sport. There are a wide range of school productions such as "Art Attack" and "The White Feather" performed by drama pupils, and the annual music festival, show and carol service where members of the recorder, small choir and ensemble groups perform their music. There is a very good range of team sports available for pupils and they are very well supported by pupils who perform well in inter-form, local and regional school competitions. There are good additional study facilities available for pupils including homework, study support sessions, extension classes and revision classes that take place during lunchtimes and after school in a number of subject areas. There are also many other enrichment

opportunities, including visits to theatres, museums, the clothes show for design and technology pupils, fieldwork trips such as the history excursion to Chester Castle and visits to Everton and Liverpool Football Clubs. There has also been an in-house theatre performance of Romeo and Juliet, poetry workshops and the launch of a good standard school magazine "The Buzz" this session. Residential visits to Winmarleigh Hall in Lancashire, France and Spain for modern foreign languages and Bled in Croatia for skiing and general activities add further enrichment to the curriculum offered.

40. The school has developed very good links with partner institutions. Links with feeder primary schools are particularly well developed especially in English and mathematics. The school works extremely effectively to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from primary to secondary education through the pastoral transfer liaison arrangements that include a primary activity day in Year 5, new pupil intake days for Year 6 pupils and an induction and open evening for Years 5 and 6 parents. There is also a termly newspaper sent to parents of pupils in Years 4 to 6 of the feeder primaries. There is now need to extend the successful relationship that exists to the new partnership primary schools. At post 16 links with St Helens College are well established and are developing progressively in the area of vocational education. There are sound links with Carmel, Winstanley and Wigan and Leigh Colleges. However, more needs to be done to establish curriculum links within subjects with these colleges to ensure a smoother transition for pupils.

41. The provision for careers education and vocational education is very good. A well-considered programme exists in Years 9 to 11 provided through the personal social education programme. However, there is no overall careers coordinator with the result that the checking of the whole programme to ensure that all pupils have knowledge and understanding of relevant careers opportunities and are well prepared for entering the world of work is not adequately done. The guided choice programme in Year 9, involving pupils and their parents with the school in deciding on options for Year 10, is especially good and this is acknowledged by pupils. The careers advisory service offered by Connexions staff is of very high quality and provides very valuable professional guidance and advice on careers through individual and group interviews. All pupils undertake a well organised and valuable two weeks work experience in the local community in Year 11 arranged by Trident.

42. Overall the contribution of the community to pupils learning is very good. The school has an extremely effective partnership with the community and the City Learning Centre makes an important contribution to this. The strong links with community primary schools and the range of work experience placements in local business and industries are significant providers of enrichment to the curriculum. There is an industry day when industrialists, representatives of the local Chamber of Commerce and voluntary organisations provide advice and support.

43. The school is developing its policy for teaching literacy across the curriculum. At present its implementation is inconsistent, partly because of the recent amalgamation of two schools. Most teachers are aware of the need to improve pupils' literacy skills and the teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Learning support assistants teach literacy progress units well to several pupils in Year 7 and they improve their basic literacy skills as a result. However, the lack of detailed information from some primary schools means that valuable time is lost in identifying the most appropriate units to teach these pupils. The school did not run a literacy summer school this year because of the pressures of amalgamation. Most teachers emphasise the importance of specialist vocabulary and keywords in their subjects and pupils use these well. However, they do not always spell them accurately in mathematics, history and geography, where teachers do not correct them systematically. Pupils have good opportunities to read aloud in ICT, music and history. They improve their skills of scanning texts for important information in modern languages but

opportunities for this are often missed in geography. English teachers encourage pupils to read widely in Year 7 but do not emphasise this enough in later years. The teaching of writing skills is also inconsistent. In modern languages, science and ICT, teachers help pupils to draft and re-draft their work effectively. They provide clear guidelines and support to enable them to plan and structure their writing. However, in geography pupils are not given enough help to improve their extended pieces of writing.

44. Provision for the development of numeracy is satisfactory overall. Some subjects make good and consistent use of number and graphical work but this provision does not extend to all subjects. The mathematics department has made a presentation to all staff but there has been a lack of co-ordination of the response to this in all subjects

45. Overall the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. The school has done a lot of hard work in this area. This work includes an audit of subject departments in order to highlight how they can make a contribution to this aspect of school life.

46. The provision for spiritual development is good. The general ethos is such that this is a valued area of school life. The local churches are active in assemblies and at other times and the school has its own prayer box. Times of reflection occur in assemblies. Here the pupils are given the opportunity to sit and reflect on such issues as the holocaust. Opportunities for reflection also occur in subject areas like in religious education and in English. In both subjects the pupils are encouraged to explore topics like the meaning and purpose of life, and other issues about values and beliefs. Other opportunities for reflection also occur in art and design, drama, personal and social education, and science. The wider sense of the 'spiritual' is also evident in the school as the school works hard at raising self-esteem and supporting pupils on an emotional level. The spiritual provision could be strengthened further during tutor and registration times as some of this time is not used to its best advantage in this respect.

47. Provision for moral development is good. The school expects its pupils to behave well and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school code underpins this expectation as does the clear and fair system of procedures to deal with pupils who fail to match its expectations. The personal and social education programme has significant units of work which have a strong moral emphasis. These include work on crime, drugs, sex education, behaviour and discipline, bullying and vandalism. Many assembly themes also have a strong moral emphasis. The staff themselves set good examples. Subject departments also contribute to this provision. In information technology, for example, the pupils are made aware of internet rules, and in religious education the pupils study a number of moral codes in different world religions. Geography also makes a contribution in helping the pupils to think through issues like the use of aid in the Third World. In business studies pupils look at the ethics of the work place. Debates in the School Council often cover topics of a moral nature. A lot of work in English literature also covers strong moral issues.

48. Provision for social development is very good. The pupils are encouraged to develop positive relationships through the many clubs and activities that take place at lunch times and after school. An understanding of citizenship comes though taught units of work on UK and EU citizenship and a study of local and national government. Work experience also helps the pupils to know and understand what is needed to function effectively in a working environment. The pupils have opportunity to take responsibility through the prefect system, helping at school open evenings and as school council representatives. A sense of responsibility is also fostered through the many community activities in which the pupils participate. These include partnerships with primary schools, charitable activities at

Christmas and at other times, and supporting causes such as the Macmillan nurses and Children in Need. The school Breakfast club is also a valuable source of social development.

49. Provision for cultural development is good. Visits to museums and galleries help the pupils understand the context in which they live. Displays within the school such as the 'Beatles' and 'Home Front' displays help them to understand local and national history. Visitors to the school provide the pupils with a more varied exposure to culture than they might have had. These include drama groups and visiting poets. Provision for the pupils to acknowledge and celebrate the multi-cultural aspect of Great Britain itself is not a particularly strong aspect of this provision and there is room for further development in this area. Nonetheless a lot of work in subject departments does include a broader multi-cultural study. In religious education for example, the pupils study many world religions. History includes work on the Muslim world and in art and design, the pupils engage in work on African masks and Native American symbols. Music includes work from the Chinese, Indian and black traditions, and food studies in technology has a multi-cultural component in its work. Other multi-cultural elements around the school include displays on the Maasai, the US Presidential elections, and a record of school visits to places like Spain and France.

50. Pupils at all stages of need are well supported. Individual plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that targets reflect the progress made. However, these targets are not always specific enough to help the pupils to get the most out of their learning.

51. Where learning support assistants are present in lessons, they work well to help the pupils to make progress. However, the school is aware that the allocation of support needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that it is targeted where needs are greatest and to allow the support assistants to be more aware of the learning objectives in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The quality of care provided by Haydock School is very good. Teachers' understanding and sensitivity to pupil's needs mean relationships are good and pupils feel well supported. This area continues to develop and improve on the findings at the last inspection and is a strength of the school. The successful merger with Parr High school and the support provided through integrating activities reflects accurately the ongoing effort by the staff of the school to make Haydock a fully inclusive school, for all pupils. A number of support agencies work closely with staff. This means pupils have a number of specialists as well as teachers that they can turn to for help and advice.

53. The underlying emphasis of the pastoral system is clearly on raising pupils' attainment through making sure pupils attend school regularly and providing support for the individual needs of each pupil. The checking of pupils' personal development is very good with, records incorporating responsibilities and awards to share with parents on annual reports. The very good personal and social educational programme makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development. It is reviewed annually and a regular structure of meetings enables a sharing of ideas and support for tutors. Pupils and parents value the provision of careers advice and the opportunity to experience work at first hand for two weeks during Year 11.

54. The school council offers pupils the chance to have a say in decision making but at present particularly for younger pupils it is not being as effective as it could be. Older pupils are proud of their status and responsibility as prefects and younger pupils welcome the support of Year 8 buddies. A well attended range of booster classes and lunchtime clubs encourages personal improvement. Daily lunchtime homework classes are well attended.

55. There are very good comprehensive systems to encourage pupils to behave well. Very good individual help is given to pupils with particular social and personal needs through the inclusion centre, learning mentors and counselling provision. Since the combining of the two schools teachers have worked very hard to improve pupils' behaviour. The procedures are clear and progressive so that all pupils know what to expect if they contravene any of the stages set out in the policy. Parents are quickly involved in the early stages of unacceptable behaviour to contribute to drawing up behaviour plans as appropriate. A system of reporting supports improvement both for individuals and whole class needs. Although in the early stages of implementation as a new school there is some evidence of a significant degree of success, as pupils respond with improved behaviour and attendance in a small number of pupils.

56. Attendance is a high priority in the new school and procedures are very good, with effective use of data to pinpoint deterioration in behaviour. The staff, including the educational welfare staff employed by the school, are working tirelessly to encourage pupils to attend school more regularly through rewards, frequent reminders to parents and target charts for each class. Despite these efforts a small number of pupils do not have good attendance records and often their parents do not ensure their children attend school regularly. During the inspection of the classes observed, very few had 100 per cent attendance and overall only Year 7 had an acceptable level of unauthorised absence. However the school is successfully maintaining its overall attendance level despite the previous very low level of the integrating school. Staff monitor successfully internal truancy with register checks during the day, for pupils who have registered but fail to attend lessons.

57. Child protection procedures are thorough and the named person, along with senior staff are all recently trained and experienced. Staff show a high degree of care and concern for the individual needs of pupils and are aware of those who are particularly vulnerable. There are seven members of staff trained in first aid, adequate for the needs of the school, but, although there is a quiet area outside the office, there is no first aid room. This is unsatisfactory.

58. The provision for the pupils' health and safety is satisfactory. The procedures are thorough and records of regular safety checks are retained and recorded efficiently. Whole school risk assessments are carried out but staff have not had training to assess the risks in their area of work. Governors have responsibility for concerns raised to ensure work is carried out so that pupils are safe, particularly in workshop areas where there is dangerous machinery.

59. The system for assessment, recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress has evolved in recent years and is now satisfactory. A new policy for whole school procedures for assessing, monitoring, and supporting pupils' academic progress was introduced in September 2002: general advice is given to help departments organise their own systems. Assessment information is used to guide curricular planning by some departments, but this is not extended to all departments. There is a whole school marking policy, which gives clear guidance to teachers. Some departments also have examples of pupils' work at different levels.

60. Some departments have more developed assessment procedures than others, but most are satisfactory. The systems in modern foreign languages and history are good, but in English and geography they are unsatisfactory.

61. Heads of year organise reporting to parents. There is a satisfactory level of reporting: interim reports are sent to parents during the year for pupils in Years 7 to 10, with a full report in the summer term. Interim reports are given to Year 11, and parents meet tutors to discuss

their child's progress. Reports give details of academic and other progress, and the information is generally good and helpful to parents. However, the academic targets set for pupils in some subjects are not sufficiently precise. The heads of year review the performance of pupils, and take action if there is a cause for concern.

62. The headteacher has a strategy which includes the appointment of an assessment manager. Once appointed, the manager will review existing procedures and set up a data base which will give a complete profile of each pupil.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. Parents feel the school provides a good education for their children. They are happy with the progress their children make and feel the school expects them to work hard and to achieve the best they can. They recognise the impact the amalgamation has had on the school but feel the school has coped and managed the changes well. They feel that their children are helped to become mature and responsible young people and have no problems approaching the school with concerns, confident they will be listened to. The inspection team agrees with the positive views.

64. Parents expressed some concerns about homework. They feel that in some year groups there is an insufficient amount set. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were either happy with the amount or more often felt they had too much homework. The inspection found the setting of homework to be generally satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies in relation to the timetable. Pupils find this difficult, at times having too much one night and little another night. Homework diaries are used effectively as planners and regularly signed by parents and checked by tutors. They are not used to any extent as a useful means of communication with parents.

65. Some parents feel that the school does not work closely with parents. There are very effective working relationships with parents of pupils with specific social and personal needs and for parents of new pupils who are invited into school soon after their children have started school. There is also good information and contact and with parents of pupils making decisions about their future choices. Informative letters are written to parents to celebrate pupils' excellent attendance or achievement. There are too few informal opportunities for parents to come into school and with the discontinuation of the Friends of the School a potentially valuable link with parents and the community is lost. This is partly through lack of interest by parents.

66. Information for parents is satisfactory. Parents receive a copy of the behaviour policy and there is a shared commitment to pupils' education through the jointly signed home school agreement. A recent survey commissioned by the school has provided parents with a very good opportunity to make their views known. Regular attractive newsletters keep parents updated on school events and achievements.

67. Parents are provided with good opportunities to meet staff to discuss their child's progress. Attendance at parents evening is very variable with a recent Year 8 meeting being supported by less than 50 per cent of parents. Attendance at other year group meeting has been over 75 per cent. There are a significant number of parents who the school is not managing to communicate with regularly or involve closely enough in their children's progress. Although annual reports provide good information for parents the quality of information and style vary from year to year and subject to subject. The best reports, Years 7 and 8, provide useful and helpful information about the course work and the achievements and areas for improvement for their child. Other reports do not always provide information of what is expected of pupils or give specific enough targets for improvement.

Interim reports provide a very good mid term report. It would be useful if national curriculum comparatives grades as well as class grades were provided so parents have a clear picture of progress.

68. The school has appropriate arrangements for involving the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Guidance has been written to help parents to support their children in reading and spelling. The school's policies and procedures in relation to special educational needs have been made available to parents and they are invited to all reviews, although less than half choose to attend. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through the review process and through the normal consultation appointments. They can also arrange speak to staff informally and they are alerted at an early stage when problems occur.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The school has been through a difficult time during an amalgamation and unanticipated changes in leadership. Despite these challenging circumstances, it has survived and is beginning to build a strong foundation. Leadership by the head teacher is very good overall. He has a very clear vision for the school. He prioritises teaching and learning and, in order to achieve high standards in these, he realises that it is initially important that ex staff of Parr High , and those of Haydock, integrate well. Mostly this has been achieved in a relatively short time. Pupils, too, are mixing well in Years 7 to 10 but those in Year 11 find integration more difficult. The need to keep GCSE classes separate because of the use of different examination boards and syllabi has not encouraged pupils to mix effectively in Year 11. Management is good. The senior management team is a professional group whose members' skills are used very effectively. It is a balanced team with strengths both pastorally and academically. All members contribute well to the smooth running of the school. Other managers present a mixed picture. Staffing shortages have meant that some have not been in post very long. Although management at this level may lack lustre, generally all work very hard and are trying to improve what has been a difficult set of circumstances, not least having to deal with an amalgamation. A strong group of governors is very aware of the needs of the school and are fully alert to its strengths and areas for improvement.

70. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory and has been significantly developed during the present school year. All members of staff have been interviewed by the headteacher and job descriptions given to all teachers during the autumn term 2002 and to support staff in the spring term 2003.

71. The arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school and the provision for the training of new teachers are satisfactory overall. The review of all staff carried out by the headteacher indicated that more could have been done to introduce new teachers to the school following the recent amalgamation of teaching staffs of the two schools. The school is taking action to modify its procedures in response to the staff review. The arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers to the school and for teachers in training are good and acknowledged by these teachers.

72. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Considerable care was taken by school management to secure an effective integration of the staffs of the two schools. The school has had considerable absence of staff including one member of the senior management team, bursar and some subject heads during the past two years. The provision of supply teachers has been managed well and all subjects now have a more stable staffing position than in the school year 2001-2002. Support staff is satisfactory overall. There is good provision in the school offices, support assistants for pupils with learning difficulties, and technicians for design and technology, art and design

and information and control technology. One technician to support science is inadequate. The learning resource centre requires a full time instead of a part time assistant to re-organise it as an effective support for pupils' independent learning.

73. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. The City Learning Centre is very well appointed for its purpose and the accommodation for music is very good, however there are no practice rooms. The accommodation for art and design is good, with lessons taught in two rooms in the newly refurbished Haydock Library. The teaching area for woodwork is too small and design and technology lessons for Year 8 are being taught in non-specific areas, which have (serious) implications for health and safety. In the school areas generally, the allocation of toilet facilities appears inadequate for the number of pupils. There are broken locks on cubicles and doors are often not labelled correctly. The short-term measure of locking toilets during lesson times is creating difficulties. Pupils who need to use toilets during lessons have to go through a laborious process of accessing a key through their head of year. Consequently, there is queuing for facilities throughout break. The dining area is now proving too small for the increased numbers of pupils. Displays around the school add welcome variety to corridors and subject rooms and they are informative. Doors to classrooms and offices are clearly labelled, often with pictures to aid identification.

74. Financial control is very good. The bursar, although relatively new in position, has a good understanding of the budget and additional funds. Clear records are kept of proposed spending and precise processes are used to ensure that planned expenditures are prudently predicted taking account of the need to provide good value financially combined with fitness for purpose. The large under-spend has occurred as a result of savings during the unstable time around the amalgamation when new plans had to be put on hold. All specific grants are used for their intended purpose. Financial planning is always approved by the senior management team and governors prior to purchase. Approval results after consultation and tendering procedures have been applied.

75. Expenditure upon learning resources is satisfactory. Funds from a range of other sources such as parents, neighbourhood renewal, and standards funds are used to increase resources. With the amalgamation with Parr High School, the capitation budget has increased by one-third.

76. The basic essentials to support learning, such as text books are widely available. There is a good display of pupils' work to reinforce learning. The bursar undertakes an audit of classroom equipment with heads of department and equipment is renewed on a rolling basis. The City Learning Centre provides an excellent modern and a spacious resource to support independent learning. It is heavily used by teaching and pupils from other schools, particularly primary schools. They have an opportunity to develop their computing skills to a good level. Television, video, overhead projectors, smart boards and other multi-media to enrich lesson delivery are not widely available. The ratio of pupils to computers (7:1) is average.

77. The learning resources centre or library houses a number of computers linked to the main computer network. This resource is widely used by pupils, as is all the main computing facility in the school. The library book stock is in need of up-dating.

78. Visits are seen as an essential part of each pupils' learning experience and these are supported from school funds as appropriate.

79. The gifted and talented programme is managed well though the co-ordinator has only recently begun specific training for her role. The budget is effectively monitored in conjunction with the school bursar. The weekly allocation of two lessons for co-ordinating the project is below the recommended amount and leaves insufficient time for thorough pupil interviews.

80. The overall management of special educational needs in the school is effective and the co-ordinator has provided good leadership since her recent appointment. Good progress has been made in updating the school's provision for pupils with special needs, after a period in which there was no co-ordinator in place. Procedures for identifying the pupils' needs are good and the annual reviews are carried out effectively. Documentation is being updated and there is a policy for special educational needs provision that gives a clear rationale for the school's procedures and this helps to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the requirements among all the people involved. The school has sufficient specialist resources for learning problems and funds are used appropriately. Computers are available for use by pupils with special needs in the learning resource centre and they help pupils with writing difficulties to access the curriculum.

81. At present, a graduate in training teaches some of the lessons for pupils with special educational needs. This has allowed the co-ordinator extra time in which to carry out reviews of progress and to write individual education plans. Without this support it would be difficult for her to carry out these duties effectively in the time available.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. In order to improve further the standards achieved by pupils, governors, the headteacher and staff should seek to:

- (1) Improve attendance, particularly in Years 8-11 by:
 - welcoming poor attenders at the door
 - considering alternative means of transport for some of the pupils
 - speeding up the first day response initiative
 - involving parents more fully.(Paragraphs: 15, 20)

- (2) Promote the use of ICT across the curriculum by:
 - allocating more time for the ICT co-ordinator to implement the planned developments
 - auditing present use of ICT
 - mapping appropriate use of ICT across subjects
 - assessing pupils' progress and recording their levels, ensuring appropriate coverage is taking place
 - evaluating the success of the programme, and moderating the portfolios pupils produce.(Paragraphs: 35, 160)

- (3) Address some behavioural issues involving a small but significant minority of pupils, mainly boys in Years 8 and 9 by continuing the good practice that has been initiated.
(Paragraphs: 16, 17, 24)

- (4) Raise attainment further by:
 - ensuring a consistency of approach by both staff and pupils to the programmes of study
 - raising the profile of literacy and numeracy strategies
 - expanding courses in Years 10 and 11 to meet the needs of new clientele(Paragraphs: 1, 31, 32, 88, 104, 164)

- (5) Develop further the good practice of assessment used currently with pupils with learning difficulties by:
 - sharing National Curriculum levels with pupils
 - making it clear how they can achieve the next level
 - encouraging them to assess their own work
 - recording the progress of individual pupils and using this information to help each make further progress(Paragraphs: 60-62)

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

83. Procedures for assessing pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The recently appointed special needs co-ordinator has established clear systems for assessment and these now meet most of the recommendations of the new Code of Practice. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and efficiently. Most are known before they arrive in the school because the co-ordinator visits primary schools during the summer term to obtain detailed information. Spelling and reading tests are used appropriately, to provide further information when pupils enter the school. As a result, clear criteria are used to decide on the level of support that pupils require.

84. The co-ordinator writes individual education plans for all pupils who need "school action" or "school action plus" support. These plans provide targets for pupils to improve their basic learning skills and advice for subject teachers about ways in which they can help pupils in their lessons. However, the targets are not sufficiently specific and suggested methods of support also lack the precision needed to help teachers plan their lessons. The link between assessment and what the school provides therefore needs to be developed further. Individual behaviour plans, for pupils with behaviour difficulties, are more precise and effective. Pupils' targets are much clearer and their progress towards them is reviewed regularly by learning mentors and the behaviour support counsellor. By comparison, there is not enough time available for the special educational needs co-ordinator to review pupils' progress as regularly as the Code of Practice recommends.

85. Annual reviews of pupils with statements are carried out efficiently and subject teachers, pupils and parents contribute information about pupils' progress. The school maintains close links with the educational psychologist who supports these procedures well. Some statements recommend regular individual tuition for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The school provides this, but only once each week and this is insufficient to enable these pupils to make as much progress as they might.

86. Overall, much progress has been made since the amalgamation of the two schools. Procedures for assessment are developing well but there is a need to ensure that this assessment then leads to appropriate provision for all pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	75

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	23	68	54	5	2	0
Percentage	1	15	45	35	3	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	933
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	286

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	43
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	193

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	106
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.3
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	1.2

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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	68	80	148

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	42	47	48
	Girls	41	42	48
	Total	83	89	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (64)	60 (66)	65 (69)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (26)	36 (34)	22 (24)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	34	27
	Girls	42	36	24
	Total	81	70	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (28)	47 (71)	34 (39)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (21)	28 (30)	10 (14)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	80	48	128

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	21	75	77
	Girls	24	44	45
	Total	45	119	122
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	37 (40)	93 (93)	95 (96)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	35.6

per pupil	National	39.8
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	928	50	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The 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)	52.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	644

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	83
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23
Key Stage 4	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	2 102 833
Total expenditure	1 962 138
Expenditure per pupil	3 005
Balance brought forward from previous year	300 219
Balance carried forward to next year	440 914

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2.4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	653
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	40	10	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	42	52	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	45	5	3	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	55	10	5	3
The teaching is good.	33	50	7	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	43	20	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	45	10	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	30	5	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	30	42	15	3	10
The school is well led and managed.	42	38	5	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	45	0	0	15
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	38	5	0	17

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is satisfactory overall, and some lessons are very well taught.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- Teachers work very well as a team to overcome recent staffing difficulties.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' standards of attainment are not as high as they could be.
- The quality of teaching is not consistent enough.
- The department does not monitor pupils' achievement closely enough, or set them clear targets for improvement.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT.

87. In 2002, prior to amalgamation with another school, pupils' attainment in Year 9 national tests was below the national average, but above the average for similar schools. Their results were similar to those in mathematics and science. In GCSE English, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was below the national average, but in line with attainment in similar schools. Results in English literature were well below the national average. These results were significantly worse than previous years. Staffing problems and the poor attendance of numerous boys, meant that pupils did not achieve as well as they should. In most years, girls attain higher levels than boys and the difference is usually greater than that found nationally. In 2002, this gap in attainment was very wide at GCSE but, unusually, boys did as well as girls in Year 9.

88. Since the amalgamation, pupils in all years are achieving as well as expected from their previous levels of attainment. They are making satisfactory progress. Current standards, by the end of Years 9 and 11, are still below average but this is because, on entry to the newly amalgamated school, pupils' attainment in all years was below average.

89. In Year 9, most pupils listen carefully to the teacher and each other. They answer questions willingly but usually make short responses and lack confidence to speak at length. Most pupils read well enough to understand the plot and relationships between characters in stories. In one lesson, higher attaining pupils made close reference to the text to analyse the development of the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. They identified ways in which Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking speech echoes earlier dialogue in the play. However, even they find it difficult to discuss the way in which writers use language for effect. Average and lower attaining pupils have little knowledge of poetic or literary devices. Very few pupils read widely. Writing standards are also below average. High and average attaining pupils, especially girls, are able to write at length. However, only the more competent write easily in a range of styles. Much of the writing of other pupils is restricted to summarising the events in chapters of set texts. Lower attaining pupils make basic spelling and punctuation mistakes, although they improve their handwriting between Years 7 and 9.

90. Year 11 pupils continue to listen attentively but most still lack confidence when speaking. Some higher attaining pupils responded enthusiastically to a recording of John Agard's poem *Half Caste*. They had a good grasp of specialist vocabulary and discussed the poet's use of dialect and how he writes phonetically. However, in most classes pupils prefer

to write their responses to poems rather than discuss them. Pupils read aloud accurately and fluently when given the opportunity but most find it difficult to develop a personal response to set texts. They are able to identify figures of speech but need a lot of support from teachers to explain how writers use such techniques for effect. Pupils' standards of writing are better than their reading or speaking. Some high attaining pupils write good, extended essays. They draft and re-draft their work effectively, often improving their writing significantly as a result. In their media essays they made good use of specialist vocabulary when comparing film versions of *Romeo and Juliet* by Zeffirelli and Luhrmann. Average and low attaining pupils can also write at length but do not use vocabulary very imaginatively. They have difficulty structuring their answers to questions but respond well to the help that they get from teachers. As a result, some low attaining pupils wrote clear essays to compare events from Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band* with Dahl's *Lamb to the Slaughter*. Several pupils study for an entry level certificate in English as they find GCSE literature work too challenging. With support, they are able to write business letters accurately in the appropriate format.

91. Gifted pupils achieve as well as expected, but few pupils gain the highest grades at GCSE. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. They make good progress and receive good support from a specialist teacher in some lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and most achieve a GCSE grade in English.

92. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work in English and, with occasional exceptions, behave well. A few are finding it difficult to settle in a new school and need close supervision. However, they respond well to opportunities to discuss moral and social issues. For example, Year 9 pupils discussed the morality of Macbeth's actions with interest, in small groups. The department runs a reading club and Year 11 pupils recently attended a poetry reading by poets whose work they are studying. These opportunities make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT.

93. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although it is good in Years 10 and 11. Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory and some very good lessons were observed but there is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching. Teachers manage classes well. They ensure that even potentially challenging pupils concentrate well and listen to instructions. Their own knowledge of texts is very good, so that pupils improve their own understanding by following teachers' clear explanations. Teachers plan the content and resources for lessons well. However, at the beginning of lessons, they rarely explain the purpose or objectives clearly enough. Neither do they help pupils to evaluate how successful their learning has been at the end of lessons. As a result, pupils are not sure about what they are supposed to achieve, or how well they have done. Teachers provide supportive comments when they mark pupils' writing but do not provide enough advice about how pupils can improve, or set targets for them. Most pupils are therefore unsure about the standards they are achieving, especially in Years 7 to 9. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils the opportunity to develop their own ideas through a good variety of individual, small group and whole class activities. However, at other times, especially with lower attaining pupils, teaching methods lack variety and an over-reliance on worksheets results in a lack of pace and challenge.

94. The subject's response to previously raised issues has been satisfactory. The recent introduction of drama as a separate subject means that requirements for teaching drama skills are now met. Pupils' still have insufficient opportunities to use ICT when studying English.

95. The department is well led. The head of department has a clear vision for future developments and has already established important priorities such as the completion of schemes of work to meet the requirements of the Years 7 to 9 framework for English. The

department now has a full complement of teachers who are working very well together as a team. The recent, sudden amalgamation with another school has made the management of the department difficult. At present, subject management is satisfactory but closer monitoring of teaching now needs to be organised to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching. The monitoring of pupils' achievement also needs improvement, so that realistic targets can be set for attainment in the subject.

Drama:

96. The school has just begun teaching drama to all Years 7 to 9 pupils. Pupils can also choose the subject for GCSE and the first class of Year 10 pupils is studying drama this year. Standards in each year are satisfactory, especially in view of pupils' limited previous experience, and they are achieving very well. They have little awareness of dramatic techniques and conventions but they are learning quickly and improving their performance skills. For example, Year 10 pupils portrayed the complex emotions of two parents whose child has just died. They showed developing maturity in their concentration on role, effective use of silence, movement and tone of voice. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are also improving as they gain confidence. Although a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate, most enjoy drama lessons and many who previously showed little interest are now able to work co-operatively in small groups.

97. The quality of teaching is very good and has successfully established drama as a serious, but enjoyable, subject. Teachers manage pupils well. They insist on them listening attentively so that they follow their instructions and very clear explanations. Their planning is excellent and they explain the purpose of lessons to pupils so that they know exactly what they are trying to achieve. At the end of each lesson, pupils are then helped to evaluate how well they have done. A very good variety of teaching methods maintains pupils' interest and keeps them working at a good pace. For example, the Year 10 class increased their understanding of how to portray emotion by listening to emotive music by Eric Clapton, reflecting on the teacher's own experience of being a parent, developing their work in groups and performing a script after an introduction from more emotive music by Coldplay. Throughout this excellent progression of activities the teacher had very high, but appropriate, expectations of what pupils could achieve and they responded well to this with realistic self-evaluations of their work.

98. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of drama and provides excellent support and guidance for two non-specialist teachers. Schemes of work and assessment procedures are progressing well. A drama club is becoming increasingly popular amongst pupils and a Christmas "Art Attack" production recently raised the status of the subject for pupils and parents alike. The subject is therefore having a strong, positive effect on pupils' personal development. A well equipped drama theatre provides good accommodation for the subject, but the lack of carpeting means that acoustics are poor and makes class management more difficult than it should be.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good so that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good

Areas for improvement

- Marking is inconsistent and does not give pupils enough guidance on standards or ways of improving.
- There is not enough use of ICT.

99. Standards at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11 are below average. In 2002 in national tests at the end of Year 9 at the former Haydock High School, attainment in mathematics was below the average for all schools but above that for similar schools. In the previous four years, 1999 to 2001 attainment in national tests at the end of Year 9 varied from being in line with national averages to below them in comparison with all schools. Attainment of girls was higher than that of boys in 2001 but the position was reversed in 2002. Attainment in mathematics was comparable with English in 2002 but below that in science.

100. In 2002 in GCSE at the former Haydock High School, attainment was below average for all schools. The proportion of pupils obtaining the higher grades A* to C was below average and the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* to G was in line with national averages. Attainment of girls was higher than that of boys in 2002 with attainment for both boys and girls showing a significant increase over 2001. Attainment in mathematics was below that in English and science. Eight higher attaining pupils obtained higher grades in GCSE statistics in 2002 as well as in mathematics.

101. In comparing attainment at the end of Year 9 with that of those pupils on entry, achievement of those pupils was satisfactory. Similarly, a comparison of GCSE attainment in 2002 with attainment in national tests in Year 9 in 2000 indicates that the achievement of those pupils was satisfactory.

102. Inspection evidence in the amalgamated school indicates that attainment at the end of Year 9 is below national expectations. In a Year 9 class pupils understood the links between different types of statistical data. In another Year 9 class, good use was made of spread sheets. In a Year 8 class pupils showed good skills in converting fractions into decimals and the reverse process. Pupils with learning difficulties in a Year 7 class had considerable difficulty with counting to find the area of a rectangle despite good support. Higher attaining pupils move through a wide range of topics including more difficult algebraic equations, other pupils require considerable repetition of number processes to make progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

103. In work seen during the inspection, attainment in the amalgamated school by the end of Year 11 is below national averages overall. In a Year 11 class of higher attaining pupils, pupils were able to construct and describe the movement of points according to certain conditions. In a Year 11 class of lower attaining pupils, pupils were prompted by the teacher to calculate the area of rectangles and triangles. They had difficulty in placing the decimal point correctly in the final answer. In a Year 11 class in which straight line graphs were plotted pupils were able to deal successfully with positive numbers but had difficulty with negative numbers. No significance was observed in attainment of boys and girls.

104. Pupils' skills of listening and speaking are good. Pupils attempt to use mathematical terms in response to teachers' questions. Apart from some extended writing in investigations in Years 10 and 11, writing standards are unsatisfactory with few opportunities for writing sentences. Not all mathematical terms are spelt correctly even when words are written on the board. When pupils enter the school their standards of number work vary considerably from a good knowledge of four rules to considerable weaknesses to counting skills up to ten. Pupils make satisfactory progress in improving these skills due to the focus of teachers on them. One good example of the use of ICT equipment to improve mathematical understanding was observed and its use is included in schemes of work. However this use is not fully developed.

105. In general, pupils' behaviour is good and they relate well to each other and their teachers. Textbooks are respected but some work is untidy in exercise books. Pupils listen to their teachers and respect the answers of other pupils. Pupils are prepared to work examples on the board.

106. Pupils with learning difficulties and gifted and talented pupils make good progress because of the provision made for them. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support in class and some are taught in small groups in Years 8 and 11. Gifted and talented pupils reach the higher levels in national tests at the end of Year 9 and similar pupils in Year 11 are entered for the higher tier of GCSE and have the opportunity to take statistics in addition to mathematics in GCSE with success.

107. Teaching and learning are good and both are better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have secure knowledge and classes including some potentially disruptive, pupils are well managed. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and want them to succeed. Good question and answer technique is used in starting the lesson and in developing topics but some questions to summarise learning are too general. Although in all lessons learning was satisfactory, learning in some classes in Years 7 to 9 was adversely affected by potentially disruptive pupils who required good management by teachers to control them. Homework is set which is related to the topic of the lesson. Marking is inconsistent. Some marking includes comments as to how work can be improved but other marking relies heavily on the checking of work by pupils in response to teachers' answers. Errors in the spelling of mathematical terms and lesson titles are not always corrected. While marks and effort grades are given work is not related to national standards. Pupils' standards as measured in end of module tests are used to assess pupils' progress on a regular basis. The junior mathematics club meets at lunchtime and revision classes for test and examination work are provided.

108. Leadership and management in mathematics are good. During the last two years standards have been maintained while the two schools were amalgamated. During 2001 to 2002, two teachers were absent for long periods and a newly qualified teacher made a successful start to teaching. Since September, teachers from both the former schools have worked as a team and are committed to the improvement of standards. Schemes of work have been revised in response to national policy changes and the department is aware that ICT must be more fully integrated into teaching. Separate provision has been made in Year 11 for the different examination requirements of the pupils coming from one of the schools. The department moved into new accommodation from different parts of the existing buildings in September 2002. Some of this accommodation is new and very good but some rooms are in need of refurbishment. Now that the department is in a much more settled situation for staffing, resources and accommodation, attention should be given to strategies which will share good practice in teaching, marking and relating pupils' work to national standards. A good start has been made in sharing good practice in teaching by the help given by the local authority adviser.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching
- Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to match the work to pupils' needs
- The real life applications of science are emphasised, to make the subject interesting and relevant.

Areas for improvement

- Computer equipment is not yet being used widely enough to help the pupils to learn
- There is a need for more systematic monitoring of teaching and learning at departmental level

109. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9, in 2002, results were average for all schools but below the average for schools that had pupils with similar results on entry to the school. However, results were well above those of schools in similar economic circumstances. The results were similar to those in mathematics and English. Results have improved over the last four years at a greater rate than the trend, although the 2002 results were lower than 2001. There were no significant differences in results achieved by different groups of pupils.

110. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average for all schools but they were in line with the results of schools that had pupils with similar previous test scores at the end of Year 9. The pupils' results in science were slightly better than in their other subjects. Although girls did better than boys', the difference was not significant when compared to the national picture. GCSE targets set for the subject were not achieved.

111. On average, pupils throughout the school, including those with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language, achieve results that would be expected when compared with their results at the end of the previous key stage. This shows that they are making satisfactory progress in their learning and their achievement is satisfactory.

112. Standards achieved in lessons and in pupils' written work are average by Year 9 and by Year 11 in their knowledge and understanding of materials, life and physical processes and in experimental and investigative science. Pupils are regularly tested to assess their progress and careful records of these results are kept. However, these test results are not yet being used effectively to set objectives for the pupils to improve their learning. Marking pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always give pupils guidance on how to improve. Homework is set regularly according to the school policy. This encourages high standards and helps pupils to make progress.

113. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 generally have quite good recall of work they have covered previously and some can answer factual questions in detail. For example, in one Year 7 lesson the pupils remembered the work they had done on reproduction and could answer questions using the correct scientific terms. In another lesson, Year 9 pupils showed they understood the cause of inherited diseases and the role of the female as a carrier. When carrying out practical work, these pupils pay due regard to safety, handling acids and equipment such as mercury thermometers carefully. Their ability to interpret and evaluate the results of experiments is more limited although some have these higher skills. Pupils generally co-operate well with each other in group work, as a result of good relationships between pupils and the teacher, and the generally good classroom management seen in most lessons aids this.

114. Many of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 also remember previous work well. In one lesson, for example, the pupils were able to successfully carry out calculations on the energy values of fuels and to interpret their results. This was aided by the teacher's effective support and skilful questioning that encouraged pupils to think for themselves. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to plan experimental work effectively, taking due note of safety precautions and the need to carry out fair tests. In one Year 10 lesson for example, the pupils planned and carried out an experiment to compare reaction rates with different strengths of acids. They showed good knowledge of fair testing and recognised anomalous results and the need to check them. The teacher's very good organisation and classroom management helped this, so that the pupils made good progress in their learning.

115. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good and best in Years 10 and 11. There is some very good and excellent teaching. In many lessons, the teachers use examples from everyday life that help to make the work relevant to the pupils, so that they are more motivated to learn. A variety of teaching methods are used, including the use of some ideas from a national initiative to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 and this helps to involve pupils actively. They generally respond well to the teaching, especially when it is well planned to meet their needs.

116. A minority of pupils can be difficult and disruptive in lessons but these situations are usually handled well by the teachers, so that the learning of other pupils is not badly affected. In some lessons the objectives are not made clear at the start and insufficient time is allowed at the end for reviewing progress and summing up what has been learned.

117. Work in science develops pupils' literacy and numeracy in appropriate ways. Pupils throughout the school have a good grasp of relevant scientific vocabulary and they have suitable mathematical skills to carry out their work, including the ability to draw graphs and carry out calculations. The use of ICT is not sufficiently well developed in science and there is a particular need to improve the use of data logging to support learning in experimental and investigative science. This is being done at present but there is a need for more up to date equipment.

118. There have been considerable changes in the staffing and organisation of the department since the last inspection and satisfactory improvement has been made. The department is well led by the acting head of department, who has made an impact in establishing a clear direction and positive ethos since his relatively recent appointment. A development plan identifying priorities that are focused on continuing improvement has been drawn up and is being implemented. The principles of the national initiative are beginning to be incorporated into teaching and their impact can be seen in the variety of approaches taken in some lessons. Checks on teaching and learning are carried out by senior staff in the school but there is a need for the head of department to be more involved in this, so that good practice can be shared effectively. The work of the science teachers is well supported by a full-time science technician, who makes a positive contribution to the smooth running of the department.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good learning and teaching in Years 10 and 11 lead to very good achievement.
- Excellent leadership and very good management set a very clear direction for developing art and design.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 are unclear.

119. Standards by Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement from below average standards on entry in Year 7 and a reversal of falling standards over recent years. An emphasis on exploring materials and techniques allows lower attaining pupils to achieve well despite limited drawing skills. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 successfully experiment with digitally photographed portraits to inform their Warhol style paintings. Girls attain higher than boys overall though both are represented across the full range of attainment. By Year 11 attainment is well above average. This represents very good achievement over Years 10 and 11 and maintains the high standards attained before amalgamation. Pupils in Year 11, who are continuing from the old Haydock School, are building on their experience and attaining higher standards overall than those pupils who joined in September. Vigorous figure paintings in oil pastel and acrylics are often of an excellent standard while bold, multi-layered designs combining collage and printmaking show pupils' positive response to experimentation. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of good individual support and, where appropriate, they are included in the artists' workshops and visits arranged for gifted and talented pupils. Good strategies for promoting literacy are in place and are making an impact on pupils' written work though there are insufficient opportunities for extended writing. Numeracy skills are adequately taught as required as in the planning of repeated prints and the layout of Pop Art designs. Pupils make effective use of ICT as a creative tool to extend their image making. They make good use of the computer suites at the city learning college but do not have access within the department.

120. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. In Years 10 and 11 pupils show very good attitudes in their enthusiastic and purposeful approach to their work. A small number of pupils in Years 7 to 9 present unsatisfactory behaviour but this is well managed by the teachers and disruption is minimised. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

121. Learning and teaching are very good. In Years 7 to 9 stronger lessons show the teachers' very good knowledge of the subject. Very good demonstrations and explanations of techniques extend pupils' understanding and build their enthusiasm. Recent instability in staffing has led to less effective lessons where supply teachers and non-specialist art and design teachers are teaching in inappropriate rooms. Very good support through guidance, lessons plans and resources maintains a satisfactory standard but the range and depth of pupils' art and design experiences is restricted. At GCSE level learning and teaching are very good. Very well-structured projects, with a clear emphasis on experimentation and expression, lead to very good achievement for pupils at all levels of attainment. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' effort and commitment. Both lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties benefit from the very good individual support that is a feature of most lessons. Workshops with artists in residence extend the experience of gifted and talented pupils. The resulting displays raise the prestige of the subject within the school and the wider community. Assessments of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 are broadly accurate but are based on teachers' experience and intuitive knowledge of standards rather than on close

comparison with National Curriculum level criteria. There is no folio of levelled work to standardise assessments amongst a changing staff and to involve pupils in levelling their own work.

122. Leadership and management are very good. Excellent leadership has established a very clear direction and ethos for the department and the popularity of the subject is rising. The head of department is very enthusiastic and committed and sets an excellent example for staff and pupils. Projects are planned to be accessible to all and additional tuition is available through extra curricular art clubs to the extent that six pupils are taking art and design as an extra curricular GCSE.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Citizenship is identified and planned into the personal, health and social education programme.
- It is taught to all pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Completion of the audit process
- Training of staff in how to implement the programme of study for citizenship.
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to show responsibility and initiative.

123. Not all pupils have yet had lessons in citizenship, since these are taught on a programme of lessons timetabled throughout the year. It was not possible to observe lessons during the inspection. Examination of pupils' work, however, indicates that most pupils are at least meeting the expectations set out in the programme of study. The standard of attainment of a majority of pupils is average and the written work of some is of a high standard. Pupils in Year 9 understand some key features of the legal system, they are aware of the moral implications of making life-style choices and the way in which minorities may be stereotyped in the media and the wider society. Pupils in Year 10 understand some of the main features of the local government system and the provision of services. They have a basic understanding of key features of the parliamentary system and have studied the role of voluntary organisations such as trade unions. Pupils in other years have yet to take the citizenship module. The achievement of pupils at both key stages is satisfactory. Adapted materials and appropriate methods of teaching enable pupils with learning difficulties to make progress and their achievement is satisfactory

124. Teaching is satisfactory. The evidence from pupils' written work shows that teachers have approached citizenship in a number of different ways, drawing upon their teaching skills and knowledge of their pupils. There is little evidence that as yet teachers are planning for the full range of requirements set out in the National Curriculum orders for citizenship. They generally plan well for pupils' acquisition of knowledge, but planning to develop skills of enquiry and communication and of participation and responsible action is less well-developed.

125. Pupils have some opportunities to use their initiative and to make a contribution to school and community life. This is particularly strong in some areas of extra-curricular activities and in raising funds for charity. An audit of opportunities has been done in Year 9 where a wide range of possibilities for further action has been identified, and a large proportion of the year group involved. Many pupils have the experience of exercising responsibility through the prefect system. A school council has recently been created, but as

yet the organisation of this is largely the responsibility of teachers and pupils do not hold office or play any significant part in running it.

126. The school has good links with the local community, but there is not a strong link with the more formal aspects of local and national government. Consequently pupils' understanding of the democratic process is more theoretical than practical.

127. Opportunities for contributing to the citizenship programme have been identified by some subjects, but not by all, and the audit of provision through subjects needs to be completed and an action plan drawn up. Provision is in an early stage of implementation and is not planned coherently to meet the full range of knowledge and competencies set out in the programme of study.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- The management of the department is good.
- Attainment in textiles is above average.
- Basic skills in numeracy and literacy are effectively improved.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in GCSE resistant materials is well below average.
- Some classes are taught in unsuitable non-specialist rooms.

128. The department has undergone a period of stressful change as a result of the recent amalgamation. This has placed a serious strain on the provision of specialist workshops and has involved the assimilation of staff and pupils new to the school and major adjustments to the curriculum.

129. At the end of Year 9, attainment is below average. In teacher assessments, the percentage of average and above average levels awarded is lower than that attained nationally. However, these results represent satisfactory achievement in relation to general standards of attainment on entry to the school.

130. In work seen, there is evidence of above average attainment by small numbers of pupils in all areas within the department. In textiles, pupils show good skills and imagination in designing and making, for example attractive cushion covers. Attainment in this area is above average. A strong feature of pupils' work is the development of numeracy and literacy skills, especially in electronics where 'maths starters' have reinforced numeracy. Pupils show a wide range of computer skills. They are able to access programs and use them in their work. 'Publisher', for example, is used widely. However, they do not get sufficient experience of computerised design or manufacture.

131. Progress to Year 9 is good and for pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils it is very good. In both cases, pupils benefit from the unrestricted nature of their projects. These allow some degree of success at a wide range of levels and place no constraints upon the highest attainers who benefit from sensitive individual help and tuition.

132. In Years 10 and 11, attainment again is below average generally, but is variable between different design and technology subjects. In textiles, results in the most recent year in GCSE were above average, but in resistant materials were well below average, with results in food technology below average. This pattern has been consistent during the most recent years. No pupils in the graphics and electronics options have yet taken GCSE examinations since transfer at amalgamation in September last.

133. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory generally but is adversely affected, particularly in resistant materials, by absenteeism and, in some cases, pupils' negative attitudes. The progress of girls, who constitute the majority of pupils taking textiles, is much better than that of boys who form the majority in resistant materials. As in the earlier stage, and for the same reasons, pupils with special educational needs and those with special talent make good progress. In child development, GCSE results in the most recent year were well below average but, in work seen, pupils are making satisfactory progress.

134. The quality of teaching in the department is good. Teachers know their subjects well. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. A main strength is the quality of relationships between the members of the teaching staff and between teachers and pupils. Teaching schemes are imaginative and lessons thoroughly prepared. Objectives for lessons are clear and are made clear to pupils. Assessment is thorough, detailed and informative but tracking of pupils' progress is inconsistent within the department.

135. Pupils' learning in response to the teaching is good. They are attentive and concentrate well in lessons. A feature of pupils' attitudes is the way in which they co-operate and help each other in class and show good moral responsibility in their concern for the care of their own work and for the work of others. Behaviour in classes is very good overall.

136. The department is well managed by the head of department. Documentation is comprehensive and covers all aspects of school policy. A shared sense of purpose is evident, strongly influenced by sensitive subject leadership.

137. Although staffing is adequate for the coverage of the curriculum, as at present constituted, there is significant dependence upon part-time teachers, particularly in graphics, and accommodation is unsatisfactory in the same area. This latter problem is linked to the increase in numbers following amalgamation and has an adverse impact on learning. Two classes are taught in non-specialist rooms. Resources for learning are adequate on the whole but there are insufficient resources for the teaching of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture.

138. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good rather than satisfactory, tasks are now well defined and expectations no longer low. Improvement is therefore satisfactory. The coverage of literacy and numeracy is a new area of strength and performance at GCSE is no longer below average in all areas. The department is coping valiantly with a period of great change and shows a united determination to make progress.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teachers are committed, supportive and caring of pupils.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and their peers are good.
- Teaching and learning overall are sound and there is a strong knowledge base.

Areas for improvement

- Day to day assessment and the thorough marking and grading of pupils work is inconsistently applied.
- Requirements are not met for fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 and ICT Years 7 to 11.
- There are limitations in teaching and learning methods and shortfalls in learning resources.

139. Recent GCSE results of Haydock High School prior to amalgamation show that the proportion of A*-C grades varied widely from well above to very low against the national average. Few pupils achieve the highest grades but the proportion gaining an A*- G grade is well above the average. When compared with other GCSE subjects within the school geography results have mostly been above the average but were below in 2002. The subject is not a popular option, with the take up proportion well below that nationally. The small number of pupils studying the subject makes comparisons against national averages unreliable.

140. Standards of work seen in the amalgamated Haydock High School by the end of Year 9 are below average. Pupils' achievement over Years 7 to 9, in relation to their below average standards when they join Year 7, is satisfactory. Variations exist. High attainers make unsatisfactory progress because the work is not challenging enough for them. However, low attainers and pupils with special educational needs make good progress as their work is appropriately demanding and they are given good guidance and support. Many boys in Years 8 and 9 with low motivation do little work and underachieve. By the end of Year 9, pupils receive a sound grounding in geographical skills. Most use and interpret Ordnance Survey maps satisfactorily but much more practice is needed in the graphical presentation and analyses of statistical data. Pupils of all attainment levels have a very weak understanding of spatial patterns. For example they do not realise that similar climates throughout the world usually result in similar environments. Their knowledge of location such as the main mountains, rivers and cities of the United Kingdom is satisfactory although lower attainers find this difficult.

141. By the end of Year 11, standards are still below average. However, this shows satisfactory achievement over Years 10 and 11. It is due to much good teaching by subject specialist teachers and pupils who generally work hard. By the end of Year 11 most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the main physical and human processes studied. The best independent study projects for GCSE, based on fieldwork are of sound quality. But some pupils do not produce the work of which they are capable due to absence and low motivation. These need closer checking to meet deadlines. Revision and examination test material is very well used in course work to gauge the level of knowledge and understanding of work covered

142. Pupils' attitude to learning is mainly positive and most pupils' work conscientiously. Behaviour overall is good and in Years 10 and 11 very good. A number of pupils, usually boys, are troublesome in some classes in Years 8 and 9 but teachers generally deal with it competently. However, it reduces the pace and productivity of class learning very

significantly. Relationships with teachers are constructive except with the boys in these classes in Years 8 and 9. Pupils relate well to each other but rarely work in groups to develop this strength.

143. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in Years 10 and 11. There was some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 8 and 9. Staff are committed, caring and supportive of their pupils. Experienced teachers communicate their subject knowledge well and their classroom management and control is generally very good. Lessons are built on a very solid information base but learning would improve if there were more emphases placed on pupils being involved in their own learning with far more discussion, group work and independent resource based learning. Often lessons although of sound quality are too teacher led and didactic in form. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate and assess situations for themselves. Pupils rely too heavily on the competence of their teachers. Lessons need more variety and a greater range of approaches to learning. Where there is good dialogue between teacher and pupils as exemplified in Year 11 lessons on tourism in Spain, this extends pupils' knowledge and understanding significantly. Teachers' presentation is often enthusiastic, with good pace and appropriately high expectations, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Learning overall is satisfactory but when pupils have low motivation and are reluctant learners, as in some Year 8 and 9 classes, it is unsatisfactory. On these occasions the teacher spends time on classroom control and the persistent interruptions significantly reduce the amount of work produced and the learning of the whole class is seriously curtailed. Learning in Years 7 to 9 is limited by insufficient use of local Ordnance Survey maps, local examples, and atlases to help pupils' understanding of spatial patterns and processes. Class learning would also be improved with more regular re-enforcement of teaching points visually on the board and more use of visual aids in teaching such videos, maps and diagrams. re-enforced with a master chart on the overhead projector. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory overall but have scope for developing further. There is no coherent ICT programme of work. In some classes homework is rarely set.

144. The subject is satisfactorily led by an experienced teacher who has significant responsibilities elsewhere in the school that has reduced the capacity for developments in the subject. This needs reviewing, as the subject needs marketing, with a more detailed subject development plan and teaching schemes. Teaching within the department and the scrutiny of pupils, work are not checked often enough. Staffing has not been stable for some time due to illness and this has adversely affected the continuity and progress in learning in many classes, despite the best efforts of the management. The assessment policy is unsatisfactory as the quality of marking is poor and many books are not marked at all. There is no grading of the work of pupils against school or national norms. This is unacceptable as pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9 do not know how they can further improve their work. Teaching rooms are located together allowing good opportunities for professional dialogue. There is a need for an overhead projector and screen in both specialist rooms as standard equipment, a set of text books in Years 7 to 9 and a fieldwork budget. The fieldwork undertaken in Year 10 in North Wales provides most effective learning and greatly stimulates pupils' interest in the subject. However, provision for fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 is inadequate. Overall there has been some progress since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Management and leadership of the subject are good.
- The commitment of teachers is strong.
- The attitudes of most pupils are positive.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of pupils at GCSE is too low.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are weak.
- The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

145. Attainment in the GCSE examination prior to the amalgamation has been well below the national average at the higher grades. Overall results, however, though still below the national average, have improved over the last two years. Girls' results are better than boys. In the past two years girls' results overall have matched the national average. In the most recent examination nearly three-quarters of those entered achieved or exceeded their predicted grades. Erratic attendance and non-completion of course work by some pupils affected the overall pass rate.

146. In the newly-amalgamated school the standard attained by pupils in Year 9 is below average, though in their class-work higher attaining pupils match the national average. Most pupils have a basic knowledge of the themes and periods studied, they can describe important events and personalities, placing events in chronological order and making simple judgements about the past. They are weaker at selecting and evaluating historical sources independently and forming and expressing their own views, supported by reasons. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. Many have difficulties in recalling what they have learned about history in their previous school and are weak at locating events chronologically. Most pupils are making progress in their knowledge and understanding of history and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from well-targeted support which enables them to make appropriate progress. The achievement of these pupils from Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.

147. The attainment of pupils in Year 11 is below average, overall, though a significant minority attain standards in line with the national average and some exceed this. Girls generally attain a higher standard than boys, especially in the detail and presentation of written work. Most pupils are acquiring appropriate knowledge of the past, can derive relevant information from written and visual sources and can write a connected narrative of historical events. Higher -attaining pupils are able to write at length and can express views about the causes and consequences of historical events and developments in ways which show that they understand what they are learning, for example, about the achievements and failures of major political figures. They are less confident in expressing their own opinions in lessons and in supporting their answers with good reasons. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11, including those who have learning difficulties, is good.

148. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good with some satisfactory teaching. In Years 10 and 11 it is good and on occasions very good. Staff absences and reliance on a number of supply teachers, some of whom were non-specialists, have had a negative effect on the attainment and progress of some pupils. This is most noticeable in the written work of some higher attaining pupils in Year 9. At the time of the inspection staffing had improved. All staff are now trained specialist teachers of history. They teach with enthusiasm and commitment, prepare lessons carefully and manage pupils effectively. This means that

lessons are purposeful, most pupils concentrate on their work and have a positive attitude to the subject. The planning of some lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9, however, is too concerned with the content of history and though these lessons satisfactorily develop pupils' subject knowledge they do not provide sufficient opportunity for them to develop skills of analysis, evaluation and interpretation. Most pupils are willing to respond to teachers' questions and their answers are generally accurate. However, teachers do not always take the opportunity this presents to help pupils develop their speaking and listening skills by giving fuller answers, commenting on each others views or using specialist terms with confidence. Lessons develop other aspects of pupils' literacy skills through the use of key words, glossaries and writing frames.

149. Good teaching in a lesson in Year 11 on the economic problems of Weimar, Germany helped pupils to understand the idea of inflation and its impact on society. The teacher's good subject knowledge enabled him to handle this theme with confidence and to use several imaginative teaching methods in explaining this to pupils. Very good teaching in a Year 10 lesson on the D. Day landings made very effective use of video and archive film to help pupils develop their observational and analytical skills, and to draft a brief narrative of events based on this evidence.

150. Assessment is very well organised and now meets statutory requirements. Pupils are regularly assessed against the requirements of the national curriculum for history. They are also required to identify their own learning targets for each unit of work they study, though this is not yet consistently applied across all classes. Works is regularly marked. Good guidance is given to pupils in Years 10 and 11 on how they may improve. In Years 7 to 9, however, assessment does not always indicate clearly how a pupil may improve, especially in the skills of historical analysis.

151. Pupils' classroom experienced is enriched by visits to historical sites and other places of historical importance. They are also encouraged to reflect on social and moral issues as these arise in their studies, for example in work on factory conditions, child labour and the slave trade.

152. Management is good. There have been several changes of staff in recent years and some long-term absences have been covered by supply teachers. This has sometimes meant that policies, for example on assessment, have not always been consistently applied. The current head of department has been in post for two years offers the department effective leadership. Clear targets for improvement have been set and plans for further development concentrate on raising attainment and the quality of teaching and learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching, procedures for assessment, the time allocated to the subject and in textbook resources. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory. This is an improving department, able to meet the targets set for raising the attainment of pupils and the quality of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Leadership of the department is good.
- The effectiveness of teachers' planning is good.
- Procedures for raising standards at GCSE are good.
- Boys' and girls' achievements at GCSE are good.
- The contribution of the City Learning Centre to the quality of the provision is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Systems for ensuring the delivery of ICT through subjects across the curriculum are limited.

153. Standards seen during the inspection are average throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry and it is good for those pupils taking GCSE by the end of Year 11. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and positively support their learning. The department has responded very well to the merger and ensured that the learning needs of all pupils are met.

154. Results from teacher tests at age 14 are well below average and have declined since the time of the last inspection. The prior attainment of pupils now entering the school is below average. Tests in 2002, at the end of Year 9, show 48 per cent of pupils obtained the expected National Curriculum level 5 or higher. This is well below the national average of 66 per cent. Boys' attainment is slightly lower than girls.

155. In 2002, pupils' GCSE results at the age of 16 were above the national average for A*-C grades. This is a significant improvement on the previous year. Boys' attainment has risen sharply. The head of department has successfully introduced a new target setting and progress checking system. Support classes to assist boys to complete their course work have complemented this.

156. Standards seen in the majority of lessons are average. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils can select, organise and process information for specific purposes. For example, they can use word processing packages, and spreadsheets and databases to format, and process data at a simple level. Some higher attaining pupils are able to use and refine information and identify the advantages and limitations of different information handling applications. Pupils can use the Internet and e-mail with some success.

157. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is satisfactory and is good for those pupils taking the GCSE ICT course. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because they are well supported by learning support assistants, and individual education plans, which specifically address their learning needs. A small number of pupils in Year 8, with learning difficulties, progress less well because learning tasks are not well matched to their needs. The progress and achievement of higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory but there is a lack of tailor-made tasks to stretch them.

158. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In Years 7 to 9 pupils learn well because teachers use well-designed and presented resources. Teachers' rapport with pupils is good and hence pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and positively contribute towards learning. Pupils enjoy ICT and take pride in their work. ICT rooms and equipment are valued and treated with respect. In Year 8, the teaching and learning of a small number of pupils with special educational needs is not well managed. Where teaching is good, teachers have good

subject knowledge, managed class time carefully, and use a variety of resources to build sequences of steps to develop pupils' understanding so that they can then take control and make fast progress. In a Year 9 lesson on constructing a PowerPoint presentation, the teacher kept the exposition to an absolute minimum, testing pupils' understanding through well judged questions, then setting pupils on individual work while giving close support.

159. In Years 10 and 11, where teaching is good and better than in Years 7 to 9, lesson planning takes note of the full range of ability in the group and teachers adapt their subject knowledge to both the learning needs of the pupils and the requirements of the examination syllabus. Time is carefully managed with particular emphasis placed upon brief but careful explanations of key concepts and techniques which pupils then follow-up through practical tasks designed to develop and embed understanding. For example, in a Year 11 class considering the design of data capture forms, examples of well and poorly designed forms were considered as part of a carefully structured discussion. This quickly set a framework of understanding by which pupils could then confidently design their own for their project.

160. The head of department is a strong leader. There is good team-work. There are clear teaching schemes for ICT in Years 7 to 9. A great deal of thought has gone into the creation of units of work in Years 7 to 9. Staff routinely share good practice through meetings and watching each other teach. The continual checking of achievement in Years 10 and 11 has successfully raised achievement. There are plans to extend this type of system to Years 7 to 9. The computer network is managed competently. The department organises a range of computer clubs for the pupils. These are very well attended. The central computer resources are modern and fully networked. There is a good range of applications software suited to the learning needs of pupils. The City Learning Centre makes a significant contribution to the provision. Systems for ensuring the delivery of ICT through subjects across the curriculum are unsatisfactory as is access to ICT National Curriculum entitlement for some Year 10 and 11 pupils.

161. The current ratio of one computer to every seven pupils is average. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. ICT is taught as a specific subject in Years 7 to 9 and has sufficient time to implement it fully.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership by head of modern languages is very good.
- Teachers work well as a team, producing good materials for learning.

Areas for improvement

- Some teachers need to use more pair work and the foreign language in the classroom.
- Pupils need to check their written work more carefully to avoid basic errors.
- The department lacks sufficient computers.

162. When pupils enter the school they study French, and continue with it to the end of Year 11. In Years 8 and 9 top band pupils also study Spanish: they can continue with it to the end of Year 11. In Year 11 one pupil is disapplied from studying French.

163. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 were below national standards in French in 2002. In comparison with national standards, French GCSE results were below in 2002, and GCSE results in French were lower than standards in similar schools in 2002.

They were also lower than most other subjects in the school. Staff changes have had an impact on standards in recent years. Overall performance in the lessons seen by the end of Year 9 of the amalgamated school showed pupils working below national standards. However, the most able in Years 9 are working above national standards. In Year 11 the standards of former Haydock pupils were in line with national standards, and it is expected that their GCSE results will reflect this.

164. Pupils are better at listening, speaking, and reading, than writing. Year 8 pupils could talk confidently in French about holidays, saying where they had gone, with whom, and how they had travelled. Pupils in Year 10 when listening to a French tape, could pick out the type of ticket, platform, price, and departure time for rail journeys. When reading French, pupils could understand detailed information about the lives of young people. They were able to write a paragraph in French about their personal life.

165. German is no longer taught as a second language, therefore no pupils were studying German in Year 9 in 2002. German GCSE results were well above national standards in 2002. Results in German were well above standards in similar schools in 2002. They were also well above most other subjects in the school.

166. By the end of Year 9 performance in the Spanish lessons seen showed pupils working below national standards. However, by Year 10 standards were higher than those nationally. There are no pupils studying Spanish in Year 11. When listening to the teacher speaking Spanish, Year 9 pupils understand details about the rooms in different houses. Year 9 pupils discuss school life in Spanish, and give reasons for liking or disliking various subjects.

167. Overall, there is a satisfactory amount of written exercises and sustained writing in French and Spanish: however, pupils make unnecessary errors in grammar and spelling. Pupils do not check their written work carefully enough: the errors pupils make in written work are preventing pupils from achieving higher standards. There are no significant variations between pupils of different ethnicity, background, nor ability. Pupils have regular reading sessions. Pupils spend most of their time using the foreign languages in listening, speaking, reading and writing: this contributes to their literacy skills, but these are at lower levels than they would be in English. Numeracy activities have been incorporated successfully into schemes of work, and are used by teachers. At present pupils have good access to computers: they enjoy using them, and produce good quality work.

168. The overall quality of teaching in French and Spanish is good. The overall quality of teaching in French is good. All of the lessons seen were satisfactory or good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The overall quality of teaching in Spanish is good. In both languages the quality of teaching is improving standards. Pupils are achieving well and making good progress.

169. In French and Spanish teachers are proficient in the foreign language, have good accents, and project their voices clearly. They use the foreign languages for parts of the lesson to develop pupils' listening skills. Most use a little English to check understanding or explain grammatical points, but sometimes they use English too much. They plan a well organised sequence of activities, which involve the pupils in their learning. They use overhead projectors and other resources effectively to increase learning. Standards of discipline are good, but a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate sufficiently. Time is used well, and some teachers are good at encouraging oral work in pairs: this improves listening and speaking skills, and develops confidence in the pupils. However, some teachers do not use pair work enough. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, and results inform subsequent teaching. Useful homework, which reinforces what pupils learned in lessons, is set regularly. The teaching of

those with special educational needs is good, and meets the needs of these pupils as well. Teachers manage classes well, and give pupils a variety of experiences in the classroom, including songs, role plays, videos and class surveys. Teachers ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress. They provide challenging tasks for the higher attainers, and give support to those with learning difficulties. Most pupils, including the higher attainers and those with learning difficulties, make good progress in lessons throughout the school.

170. Most pupils behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration, and develop good study skills. Their response is usually good throughout the school. Many pupils show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well in pairs, and sometimes have opportunities to use their initiative in creating role plays and working independently. Their positive attitudes are enabling them to improve their performance. However, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate and achieve their potential.

171. The organisation of the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The head of modern languages checks on the progress of pupils in French and Spanish. The department is very well led and organised, has prioritised development plans, and works well as a team to produce resources for effective learning. Teachers take pupils on visits to France and Spain, this encourages social interaction and personal responsibility, and improves language competence. The text books and other materials used, together with visits abroad, help develop awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures. The quality of teaching, the attitudes of most pupils, the visits abroad, and the leadership of the head of modern languages have a positive effect on standards. However, insufficient use of pair work and the foreign languages by some teachers, lack of laptops and computers, and the errors pupils make in written work are preventing pupils from achieving even higher standards.

172. The department has made good progress on the issues raised in the previous report. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Visits abroad have been organised. Accommodation, resources and staffing have also improved.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teachers keep a good check of pupils' achievement through regular testing of previous learning.
- Teachers ask pupils at the end of lessons to confirm what they have learned.
- There is a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough.
- The control of classes in Years 7 to 9 is uncertain and results in significantly poor behaviour and ineffective learning in instances where pupils are especially difficult to manage.
- The planning of some lessons in Years 7 to 9 does not take account of the learning needs of pupils.

173. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. Pupils enter the school with limited experience of classroom music. Much of the teaching in Years 7 to 9, whilst satisfactory, lacks the flair and imagination to capture pupils' interest with the result that their desire to learn is slight. In the most demanding circumstances this leads to poor behaviour that makes effective learning impossible. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is, therefore, no better than satisfactory; that is, they do not add sufficiently to what they know, understand and can do in relation to their starting point when they entered the school. In consequence, those who start the GCSE course at the beginning of Year 10 are left with too much catching up to do. Pupils struggle with the demands of the course and overall standards are still below average at the end of Year 11. Although teaching is usually good in these years, the starting point in Year 10 for all but the highest attainers is too low and as a result, overall, pupils' achievement remains satisfactory.

174. At the time pupils begin in the school the department sensibly tests their knowledge, understanding and skills in music. This is a fair test that brings disappointing results. However, the planning of lessons that ensues takes insufficient account of what the tests show pupils need to learn. This is seen in the content chosen for some lessons and the approaches to teaching and learning that are adopted. For example, a study of Gregorian chants does not mean much to 11 year olds and the principles of musical 'intervals' make little sense to a lower-attaining group of 12 year olds. This is especially difficult for young pupils when the work is presented to the whole class much as an illustrated lecture. The department's current policy with the youngest pupils of restricting practical music-making in pairs or small groups prevents them using their energy and imagination to organise sound and time to express their own musical ideas or interpret themes or musical moods. It is rare that pupils get the buzz and pleasure that successful improvisation or composition can bring and in consequence some actually state that they find music boring.

175. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The good teaching leads to effective learning. A little teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. A Year 9 class was engrossed working at keyboards in pairs on simple ragtime melodies in an exercise that also taught them the time values of different notes. However, this is an activity that could be tackled by Year 7. Another Year 9 class, after listening to some professional blues singing, was quickly active at keyboards working on the bass-walking blues of the left hand whilst their partners developed a blues melody to go over the top of the repetitive blues rhythm. In this instance teaching had sparked an interest that engrossed pupils. A number of higher attainers were using two hands to play blues rhythm and melody

simultaneously. There was a mood of creative endeavour during this work but this was not sufficiently typical of much of the work seen during the inspection. Yet, in Year 11, pupils learned to use written music to play the melody of the theme tune of 'Eastenders' and higher attainers amongst the group added simple chords to support the melody. Two boys, recognised as gifted and talented in this subject and on track for high grades in their GCSE examination, transposed this music to a different key. The secret of the success of lessons like these rests in pupils actively making music within a structure given by the teacher, in which they can succeed. Boys and girls become equally engaged with this approach to learning, yet often it is the boys who are marginally more successful than the girls.

176. The addition of pupils from a closing school has caused some difficulty. The musical experience of these pupils, like some of those from the old Haydock School, has been mixed. Where the experience has been less than good it has left pupils with a negative view of school music. A number of these pupils have behavioural learning difficulties, but there is no additional learning support for them in music lessons; they sometimes find it difficult to cooperate with the purposes of the lesson. This presents an enormous challenge to teachers. The challenge has not always been met with success, behaviour has deteriorated and the task for the teacher, as a result, has become a hard one. In instances where the difficulties have largely been overcome, the work has blossomed and shown promise. There is evidence, for example, in recordings of musical compositions by pupils in Years 7 to 9, of work that is characterised by musical control and successful performance. Herein, lies a clue towards more widespread success with younger pupils. After a stimulating opening session, pupils respond positively to well-structured practical work in pairs or small groups, well supported by the teacher moving from group to group, teaching, during the second part of the lesson. Then, in the last five or ten minutes, teachers get pupils to describe how successful or not their learning has been in the lesson.

177. In 2002 there were no GCSE entries as insufficient numbers chose the course for it to be viable to run. In the previous year, 2001, a small group achieved grades in the examination that, overall, were close to the national average; given their starting point, this is a rare example of good achievement. In 2000 the results were well below the national average.

178. Members of staff are aware of what needs to improve and continue to strive for success. The now very good accommodation and good level of resources have helped recent improvement. Improvement is hampered by insufficient curricular time in Years 7 to 9, as at the previous inspection, for the most to be made of this essentially practical subject. Arts festivals and concerts enrich the cultural life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The overall provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils of all age groups show an enthusiastic attitude towards physical education.
- The physical education curriculum shows good range and breadth.
- The extensive programme of extra-curricular activities is readily accessible by all pupils.

Areas for development.

- Sharing the best teaching practice throughout the department.
- The allocation for physical education in the timetable for Years 10 and 11.
- Implementing assessment systems effectively for pupils in each year group.

179. In 2002 at the end of Year 9, the results of teacher assessments show attainment that is below the national average, with no significant difference between boys and girls; achievement is very good. Those with special educational needs make good progress. At the end of Year 11, the standards attained by students in general physical education lessons is satisfactory. The GCSE results for 2002 were below the national average. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

180. Since the amalgamation of the two schools in September 2002 the addition of pupils from another school has created significant changes to the nature of pupil cohorts. From lessons seen, there are now small numbers of pupils in Years 9 and 11 who do not participate regularly in lessons. Any difficulties that arise from this are contained and dealt with prudently. There is no evidence from lessons observed to suggest any difficulties with integration amongst the year groups.

181. By Year 9, standards observed during lessons are average. Pupils have sound basic skills and are progressing well towards building on these, developing them further into specific techniques. They apply these effectively in response to the challenges of competitive game situations and this serves to enhance the overall level of performance. In Year 9 pupils successfully learned the new, defensive skill of tackling in rugby. They applied this successfully and enthusiastically within the constraints of a structured game, which resulted in a visible improvement in the level of play in attack.

182. By Year 11 standards are average in both the GCSE classes and the non-examination classes taken by all students. All students have access to a very good range of physical education options, which give them the opportunity to make their own choices of activities and to work independently. However, the timetable for these year groups allows for just one lesson each week, resulting in less than the recommended two hours of physical activity. In one lesson seen, Year 11 students organised themselves into two equal teams for a game of football, taking responsibility for the selection of teams and the refereeing of the game. Students of varying levels of ability played together as a team, showing a good awareness of basic game strategy and encouragement of one another.

183. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In Years 7 to 9 pupils have access to a good range of activities in excess of statutory recommendations. There is evidence that lessons are well paced, with content that is appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. However, pupils were not always encouraged to evaluate their own and other's performances. On the occasion where this did take place, pupils reflected on what they were being taught, understood how to apply teaching points more effectively and pupils of all abilities achieved the learning objectives. In a Year 7 swimming lesson for the least able group, teaching tasks were structured towards the development of a specific skill. The targets set were achievable and ensured that all pupils experienced success. This generated a great deal of enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the lesson. Through the use of task cards for evaluation, pupils could explain how to improve one another's performance and learned how to do the breast stroke leg kick correctly.

184. Within Years 10 and 11 there is evidence of students being challenged and encouraged towards higher levels of achievement and praise is readily forthcoming from teachers. Year 11 students working in the multi-gym were challenged to set their own levels of resistance and endurance and record the results on a spreadsheet. When completing the circuit to time, they applied maximum physical effort, encouraged through the personal example of the teacher.

185. Within the examination groups there is work to be done to improve the depth of written work and the linking of practice with theory. There are problems posed by students following two different syllabuses, arising since the schools' amalgamation. In work seen, there was little evidence of students working towards interim targets and marking was not sufficiently informative to tell students how well they were doing. Greater application of ICT, for example when presenting results, would improve the presentation of written work and make data more readily understandable.

186. The leadership of the department is good. Departmental paperwork is very well presented and all requisite policies are in place. However, the literacy, numeracy and ICT policies are not fully applied. Good management gives staff opportunities to develop their strengths and lead in areas that use their capabilities to the full. Assessment systems for years 7, 8 and 9 are now in place, as are the means for self-assessment. It is planned that these will be implemented before the end of the school year. At the moment there is no form of assessment for Years 10 and 11. This will be put right when physical education grades are introduced to the annual school report. Sources of additional funding have been accessed both for the enrichment of extra curricular activities and the further development of gifted and talented pupils. There are good links with the community and feeder primary schools, nurtured both through staff contacts and the use of a School Sports Co-ordinator, who is funded by the local authority. Recent approval granted for the building of a multi-use games area on the school site will provide considerable improvements to existing facilities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- There has been good progress since the last inspection
- The lessons have strong religious content
- There have been good contacts with community groups

Areas for improvement

- Emphasis on learning from religions as well as learning about them is limited.
- Structured tasks for the pupils to complete in the classroom are insufficient.
- Learning objectives for each lesson are unclear.

187. The standard of attainment at the end of Year 11, in 2002, was well below expectation. About 120 pupils were entered for the short course examination in that year. About 20 per cent of these gained the higher grades of A* to C. These results are well down on the two previous years where the results for similar numbers were 55 per cent in 2000 and 67 per cent in 2001. In the newly amalgamated school, the standard of attainment seen during the inspection in the lessons and in pupils' books is variable but broadly in line with the standards expected at this stage, though sometimes below this. The pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of some of the central beliefs of Christianity and they talk about these in a meaningful way. The pupils also have a working knowledge of some of the practices of Christianity such as rites of passage and different forms of worship. The pupils are able to make intelligent verbal responses to the information presented to them. Their written work is more variable and in some instances not a lot of developed and extended written work has been completed both in individual lessons and over a longer period of time.

188. In the newly amalgamated school, the standard of attainment at the end of Year 9 is variable but broadly in line with the standards indicated in the agreed syllabus. Overall the pupils have an adequate knowledge and understanding of many aspects of world religions, including Christianity. Pupils talk meaningfully about many aspects of these religions, such as

festivals and other special days. Pupils use some religious language in a meaningful way and they understand the use of religious symbols. Their knowledge and understanding is stronger in terms of knowing about the religions than in being able to see how this knowledge and understanding might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. The pupils are competent in verbal communication but in some instances their written skills are not so strong and there is a limited amount of written work in their books.

189. Overall the achievement of the pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 to 11 is broadly satisfactory. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory as appropriate tasks enable them to proceed with the work set. There is some inconsistency in the setting of this work however, and also in the setting of extension work for gifted and talented pupils and the more able.

190. The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils is usually satisfactory. Occasionally it is unsatisfactory. Where it is unsatisfactory, the pupils lose their concentration and do not apply themselves to their work. This usually happens if they are not given sufficient opportunity to do work for themselves and to respond in a structured way to the information being presented. Where the behaviour and attitudes are good, the pupils are more personally involved in the lesson themselves and they are given tasks to do which keep them engaged. In general across the majority of lessons, the pupils respond much more positively when they are engaged in the lesson in this active and constructive way. Otherwise the pupils are largely well behaved and are respectful of the teacher and of each other. They also respect other peoples' views and opinions.

191. Overall the teaching and learning are satisfactory but best in Years 10 and 11. An overall good characteristic of all the teaching is its strong religious content. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, the teaching allocates a disproportionate amount of time to giving information without allowing the pupils the opportunity to process this information during the lesson time. As a result, the pupils lose interest and their learning is limited. Another characteristic of weaker teaching is that the pupils are uncertain as to what is to be learnt by the end of the lesson. This happens when the aims and objectives are not clearly communicated to them at the beginning of the lesson both in verbal and written form. Where the teaching is good, the lessons are well prepared and the pupils are given structured work to do for themselves during the lessons and they know what has to be completed. They are also led to see how their learning might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. Some monitoring of teaching is done but it is limited. Homework is set and there is an assessment policy. The use of information technology in the teaching is still in its early stages. The teaching actively contributes to the standards of literacy in the school with the pupils reading from various texts. The teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural learning in its examination of many issues like the meaning and purpose of life and the study of moral issues in world religions.

192. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Statutory requirements are being met in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 to 11. In this respect progress since the last inspection has been good. No other specific issues were raised then. Resources are good and the accommodation is very good.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Health and social care

Overall, the quality of provision in health and social care is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils are making good progress
- The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and effective.

Areas for improvement

- none

193. This course commenced last year and the first public examinations will be taken at the end of this school year. There are, therefore, no previous examination results to report. Year 11 pupils are following the GNVQ Intermediate course, whilst Year 10 study the GCSE course. In the three lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning were at least satisfactory, with some good teaching. The pupils generally work well in lessons, applying themselves willingly to the tasks set. On the basis of the assessments carried out to date, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are making good progress with the course. This progress is regularly reviewed, and further targets for learning are set. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has undertaken training from the examination board in order to prepare herself to deliver the course. Good links have been established with outside agencies and guest speakers are used to enhance the pupils' learning. Resources for teaching the subject are good.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision for business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning.
- Departmental organisation.

Area for improvement

- Differentiated learning materials.

194. Standards seen during the inspection are average. Teaching and learning are good overall. Achievement is satisfactory and attitudes and behaviour are good.

195. Pupils' GCSE results at age 16 in 2002 are below average. This marks a decline on the previous year.

196. Standards seen in lessons are average. There is a very broad range of prior attainment in the groups. For instance, in a lesson in which pupils engaged in a project on advertising and promotion one pupil quickly identified the possibilities of diversifying services to establish a more secure business while another pupil struggled with basic understanding.

197. Given the wide range of prior attainment in these groups, progress in lessons is satisfactory and achievement is also satisfactory overall.

198. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are invariably well structured to match the learning needs of pupils. The use of learning resources produced by the business teacher is a strong feature of the lessons. These now need to reflect the even wider range of prior attainment and learning needs of pupils. Questions are well structured to get pupils thinking and develop their understanding. There is a good balance of teacher explanation followed by individual pupils' work. The emphasis is upon application and a wealth of real life examples is introduced to aid progress. The rapport between teacher and pupils enhances learning. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by a specialist from the Local Education Authority.

199. The management of the department is good. There is a good range of display in the classroom base. Learning resources are carefully deployed to try to maximise achievement. The attendance to lessons of some pupils is unsatisfactory. Staffing in the department is adequate.