

INSPECTION REPORT

BEDALE HIGH SCHOOL

Bedale

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121670

Headteacher: Mr G S Turner

Lead inspector: Mr C Sander

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 7th November 2003

Inspection number: 258561

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	819
School address:	Fitzalan Road Bedale North Yorkshire
Postcode:	DL8 2EQ
Telephone number:	(01677) 422419
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Arthur Barker
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bedale High School is a relatively small, increasingly popular Beacon School with a rising roll. It received national achievement awards in 2001 and 2002 and the Sportmark award in 2002. It is highly regarded locally for the quality of its community provision and has grown in size by more than one third since it was last inspected in 1998. There is a relatively high level of pupil mobility, mainly in Years 7-9, because some pupils from services families join or leave the school other than at the start or close of the school year. The school's socio-economic setting is broadly average, as also are standards on entry to the school. Many pupils travel a considerable distance to the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is below average. The proportion of those pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly average. Approximately one per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. At the time of the inspection the new headteacher had been in post for two months.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4151	Mr C Sander	<i>Lead inspector</i>	
13762	Mr N Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
10782	Mr H Moreton	<i>Team inspector</i>	English English as an additional language
	Mr P Scott	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics
4720	Mr G Carter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science
3755	Mr T Hulbert	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography History
32211	Mr B Geoghegan	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology
2971	Ms K Hooper	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology Special educational needs
3793	Mr J Ratcliffe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern languages Citizenship
20533	Mr D Rogers	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design
22906	Mr B Hodgson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education Community provision
31673	Mr J Gwyer-Roberts	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music
15483	Mr R Butler	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bedale High is an effective, very well led school with very strong community values. It has several very good and even excellent features that create a very good climate for purposeful learning. Consequently, its pupils achieve and learn well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are higher than those found in the majority of schools nationally. The good teaching has some very good features. The pupils enjoy working hard. Very good pastoral care contributes to their very good personal development. The proportion of pupils who continue in full-time education beyond the age of 16 is high. The school's below average budget and above average staffing costs leave little to spare for other things. **It uses its funds most carefully to provide very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership, although in some areas specific aspects of management are not rigorous enough.
- Very good headship and good governance provide very good continuity in the long-term vision for still further improvement.
- The requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is not fully met.

In performance:

- Good achievement and well above average results in national tests at the end of Year 9.
- GCSE results well above those of similar schools.
- Very good attendance and behaviour, and the breadth of pupils' personal development.
- Very good literacy skills that support good progress in nearly all lessons.

In provision:

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and well-applied specialist skills, including the very good support by teaching assistants.
- The very good transfer arrangements at Year 7 and the very good care and guidance thereafter, including the excellent monitoring of attendance.
- The very well managed alternative arrangements for disaffected pupils.
- Excellent links with the community and very good links with parents.
- The powerful impact of additional activities and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, including citizenship, on pupils' very good personal development.
- The monitoring of teaching and evaluation of learning by some subject leaders is not rigorous enough.
- Some aspects of timetabling, resulting in lessons that are either too long or too short for some pupils.
- The quantity of some resources and the quality of some accommodation are unsatisfactory.

Since the previous inspection, the school has become more effective. It has achieved Beacon status. Very good leadership has turned round previously weak subjects and there is now virtually no unsatisfactory teaching. Delegation is still not strong enough, consequently weaknesses are to be found in the management of individual subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	B	A	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Achievement is good at Year 9 and Year 11. Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are higher than those that pupils nationally are expected to reach. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average for all schools nationally and also for similar schools. These results represented very good achievement. Current standards in Year 11 are in line with the above average GCSE results in 2003. These results were slightly lower than in the previous year but show very good achievement when compared with the same pupils' national test results in Year 9. The girls do better than the boys, particularly after age 14. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Attendance is very good. Pupils' mature behaviour and readiness to work well with each other contribute considerably to their good achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good. The very good features that help all pupils to learn particularly well in each year group are the teachers' specialist subject knowledge, their skill in encouraging pupils to do their best, their insistence on high standards of behaviour and the very good work of the support assistants. The quality of care is very good. Heads of year provide very effective support for their pupils' learning as well as their personal development. Curricular provision is good, including very well managed arrangements for a small number of disaffected pupils. The very good extra-curricular activities, the range of long-standing European visits and exchanges and the strong links with the community have a powerful impact on pupils' learning. The quantity of some resources and the quality of some accommodation are unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress is well monitored but they need to know more about how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve further.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Very good leadership defines sharply the school's priorities, expectations and direction. It skilfully turns aspiration into action. The governing body also makes a very strong contribution, helping the school to secure best value in both its performance and provision. Governance is good with a strong emphasis on raising the school's performance still further. The school is in breach of its statutory duty to provide a daily act of worship for all pupils. Partnership and teamwork are two of the school's distinctive features. Subject leadership and pastoral leadership are very good. Evaluation is not always as strong as it should be at all levels, and delegation is not strong enough in some aspects of management. Links with the community are very well managed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high regard for this increasingly popular school. The pupils are similarly positive. Both like the emphasis on hard work, and parents are pleased that their children like coming to school. The very good care, particularly when their children are about to join the school, is much appreciated. Some parents who responded to the questionnaire think the school could do more to

seek their views and would like fuller information about their children's progress. Some pupils say that not all are treated fairly and some do not always behave as well as they should. The inspection team found no evidence to support the pupils' views and judged that they were a reflection of the pupils' high expectations of themselves and their genuine concern for others' well being.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Use assessment more rigorously to improve further the good quality of learning.
- Use time more effectively in lessons and in the organisation of the timetable.
- Extend the management expertise of subject leaders to make evaluation more rigorous.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

- *In this report the word ‘**competent**’ refers to those pupils whose work is broadly in line with the standards expected or usually seen nationally. On entry to this school in Year 7 they comprise approximately one third of the year group.*
- *The phrase ‘**more competent**’ refers to those whose work is higher than the standards usually seen or expected nationally. They comprise just under two-fifths of this school.*
- *The phrase ‘**less competent**’ refers to those whose work does not yet reach the standard expected nationally or is lower than that usually seen in other schools nationally. They comprise just over one third of this school.*
- *Approximately 12 per cent of pupils have identified special educational needs (SEN), below the national average.*
- *The word ‘**results**’ refers to pupils’ performance in public examinations or national tests. They are expressed in terms of averages.*
- *The word ‘**standards**’ is used to define how well the pupils at this school do when their work is compared with what others nationally are expected to know, understand and do at ages 11, 14 and 16. Occasionally the term ‘work’ is used instead. Comparisons and evaluations are expressed in terms of the standards usually found, or expected nationally.*
- *The word ‘**achievement**’ indicates whether the pupils are doing as well as can be expected and whether they are working hard enough. It may also refer to how well they are doing at age 14 compared with what they were able to do when they started at the school at age 11 or at age 16 compared with their National Test results at age 14. Evaluations are expressed in terms such as ‘very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory’.*
- *When the school was inspected the headship had just changed. The reported impact of leadership and management stems from the predecessor headteacher’s role as well as from the more immediate work of the newly in post headteacher. The term ‘headship’ or ‘the school’s leadership’ is used in this report to reflect the impact of the role of both the previous and current post holders.*

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

What do the pupils and their parents say?

Those parents who expressed a view before the inspection said they were very well pleased with the progress and achievements of their children. Many pupils see a strong link between the encouragement to work hard at school and the success they achieve.

What did the inspection team find?

Pupils achieve well, reaching standards higher than those usually found nationally.

What do the school's results show?

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37.0 (34.9)	33.3 (33.3)
mathematics	37.0 (36.1)	35.3 (34.7)
science	35.9 (36.8)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 173 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	55.8 (61.4)	52.6 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97.4 (94.5)	86.3 (95.2)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98.7 (99.3)	94.6 (94.6)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	45.8 (46.9)	34.7 (39.8)

There were 156 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

How do the 2003 results in national tests at the end of Year 9 compare with similar schools?	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE
How do the 2003 results in national tests at the end of Year 9 compare with all schools nationally?	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE
How do the 2003 GCSE results compare with similar schools nationally?	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE
How do the 2003 GCSE results compare with all schools nationally?	ABOVE AVERAGE
Do the boys and the girls do as well as each other?	NO
Are these results at least in line with the school's targets?	YES

Main strengths and weaknesses:

Most pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding. They develop a good range of numeracy and literacy skills, applying and extending them well in many lessons. There are missed opportunities in some subjects to extend pupils' good numeracy skills. Pupils acquire good levels of skill in their practical subjects and very good understanding of citizenship. Many more competent pupils develop good research skills but too little use is made of the library in many subjects. Much has been done to improve the quality of library provision but stock levels are too low for a school of this size. In several subjects pupils apply their ICT skills well.

Key Stage 3 [Years 7 - 9]

- Well above average national test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 with sustained, strong performance over time and further improvement in line with the national trend.
- Results in Year 9 show very good achievement when compared with standards on entry to the school.
- Results are in line with the school's locally agreed targets and ahead of national targets.
- The boys outperform the girls in mathematics and science but not in English.
- The proportion of pupils who reach standards in national tests that are higher than those expected nationally is well above average.
- The more competent boys achieve better than the girls.
- The less competent boys do not achieve quite as well as the girls.
- Standards of work seen in Year 9 were consistently higher than those found in the majority of schools nationally.

Key Stage 4 [Years 10 - 11]

- Sustained strong performance, with results above the national average in 2003 and well above the average for similar schools.
- The five-year trend in results is ahead of the national trend with well above average numbers obtaining 5+ A*-C and 5+ A*-G.
- More competent pupils achieved well at GCSE in 2003 with more than two-thirds of the year group gaining eight Grades A*-C and one third gaining at least one Grade A*/A.
- The girls do better than the boys, some of whom do not do as well as they can.
- Results in English literature are much lower than in English.
- Standards of work seen were higher than pupils nationally are expected to reach at Year 11.

Commentary

1. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 standards are broadly similar to those that pupils nationally are expected to reach with the girls about one term ahead of the boys. Achievement is good at the end of Year 9 and at Year 11, owing much to the very good links with the primary schools, the consistently good teaching and the pupils' very positive attitudes in lessons. Most take their studies seriously, work hard and complete homework. They want to do well and nearly all do so.
2. Results in the statutory teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average. The standard of work seen during the inspection was consistently higher than is usually seen in the majority of schools.
3. Those who took GCSE examinations in 2003 entered the school five years' previously with lower than usual results in the national tests at the end of primary school. Their performance represents very good achievement when compared with their standards on entry to the school and satisfactory achievement when compared with their national test results at Year 9.
4. Results were well above average in food technology and above average in geography, history, English and design and technology. They were below average in music, English literature and art and design.

What features are boosting achievement?

5. The features giving the most powerful boost to standards and achievement are the high expectations of the teachers and the pupils' readiness to listen, learn and work with one another in lessons. Teachers and pupils share a strong commitment to succeed.
6. Pupils with SEN make good progress because the additional support provided is very well managed.
7. Provision is now much more effective in those subjects where achievement was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. It is vastly improved in music and religious education.

What features are barriers to raising achievement?

8. The gap between the boys' and the girls' performance increases slightly at the end of Year 9 and becomes more marked in Years 10 and 11. The school's leadership is alert to the issue. The gap in performance between the boys and the girls is not as wide as is found nationally.
9. Pupils' lack of awareness of the standards at which they are working, and the frequently long and sometimes very short lessons, are the most significant barriers to raising achievement further, particularly for some less competent pupils.

10. Aspects of curriculum provision contribute to the below average performance in English literature and art and design. Some pupils who do particularly well on the short course in art and design are entered for the full-course examination, but have insufficient time to obtain the higher grades. The heavy demands of two examination courses in English means that some pupils have insufficient time to spend on the literature course.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

What do the pupils and their parents say?

11. The pupils and their parents are in strong agreement. Both agree that pupils like coming to school, are very appreciative of the school’s expectation that the pupils work hard and value what the school does to help its pupils as they get older. Some parents are concerned about bullying and harassment in school. Pupils agree that a few anti-social incidents occur but are always effectively dealt with by staff. Pupils enjoy school and have a strong sense of belonging and feel valued and safe. Almost a third of pupils do not think that behaviour is good enough.

What did the inspection team find?

12. The inspection team is in broad agreement with the views expressed by the pupils and their parents. They found behaviour to be better than the pupils say it is. On only one occasion was a lesson spoilt by the behaviour of a minority of boys. In a small number of lessons, a few boys were distracted for a time but then returned to their work because the rest of the class took no notice.

Pupils’ attitudes, values, attendance and personal development are very good.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Rates of attendance	VERY GOOD
Rates of exclusion	LOWER THAN AVERAGE
Punctuality	GOOD
Behaviour and attitudes	VERY GOOD
The quality of spiritual, moral, social, cultural development	VERY GOOD
How good are the procedures to monitor and promote regular attendance?	EXCELLENT
How well does the school encourage pupils to get on well with each other and do their best?	VERY WELL

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Nearly all pupils like coming to school and work hard.
- Good attitudes and rigorous monitoring produce well above average attendance.
- Such values create a very strong sense of community.
- Very good opportunities to take responsibility, particularly as pupils get older.
- Most pupils behave very well because expectations are clear and applied consistently.
- Very good support for those who do not naturally behave well or who have been unable to settle or succeed at other schools.
- The wide range of opportunities for pupils to get involved and express their views.
- Most are attentive in lessons but some occasionally struggle to maintain concentration in the 70-minute lessons.
- Anti-social incidents occur occasionally but are dealt with promptly and effectively when reported.

Commentary

What features are boosting achievement?

13. There is a firm link in the school's successful performance between the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and their good achievement. This is further cemented by their regular attendance. Their readiness to listen to and help one another in lessons boosts the quality of their learning. The good teaching expects, fosters and builds upon such attitudes. The very good management of pupils' behaviour, the very good lead given by adults as role models and the very good relationships between adults and pupils contribute much to the below average rate of exclusion. Approximately one quarter of exclusions involves pupils who have not settled or succeeded in their previous school. There has been only one permanent exclusion during the last five years. The number of fixed-period exclusions has risen over recent years.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 94.1%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.2
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
804	30	0
6	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0

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

14. The very good provision for personal and social education promotes very good social skills. In one very good lesson, a group of Year 8 pupils themselves organised a lesson that involved a visiting speaker. They showed very good skills of leadership and management in their conduct of the arrangements. Discussion and debate in lessons make a significant contribution to their moral and social understanding.

15. The opportunities to work together extend beyond the classroom, embracing a range of fund-raising activities and providing opportunities for many Year 11 pupils to act as prefects. They provide very good role models to the younger pupils. Many pupils also work as 'listeners' and 'counsellors' to other pupils.

16. The school also provides many opportunities for pupils to extend their horizons, both within and beyond school. Assemblies are held regularly but not every day for all pupils. These provide very good opportunities for reflection and confirm the very strong sense of community that pervades this school. The provision of a short course in religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 is a good feature, helping pupils to appreciate and understand the beliefs of others. Well-established foreign exchange visits, trips abroad and residential opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

What features are barriers to achievement?

17. Anti-social incidents occur occasionally but are dealt with promptly and effectively when reported.
18. Just very occasionally, some pupils, usually unintentionally, make remarks that might be interpreted as racist or insensitive. The school is particularly alert to such issues and has a well-managed proportionate response. Policy and procedures are in place, and incidents and action taken are recorded diligently. The breadth of some pupils' appreciation and understanding about life in a culturally diverse society is unsatisfactory.
19. A small number of pupils arrive late, usually during the first few minutes of registration. The few, who at times are not ready for their taxi, miss school for the whole day because public transport does not serve their locality.
20. The number of exclusions is lower than the average for similar-sized secondary schools but numbers have risen over recent years. Nearly one in every four exclusions relates to disaffected pupils who had previously been transferred from other schools.
21. The effectiveness of the school council is inconsistent. It works well in Years 10 and 11 but some pupils are disappointed with its effectiveness in Years 7 to 9. Consequently, some aspects of the school's arrangements to seek pupils' views are unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of provision is **good**.

What are the most important features that are boosting standards of achievement?

- Very good leadership.
- Excellent monitoring of attendance.
- Good teaching.
- Lots of extra-curricular and community activities.
- The very good pastoral care.
- Very good links with parents and with partner primary schools.
- The governors' role in shaping the future direction of the school.

What are the most important barriers to raising standards of achievement?

- Budget constraints and insufficient delegation reduce the effectiveness of some aspects of management.
- Assessment is not used enough in lessons to inform pupils of the standard at which they are working and what they need to do to improve.
- Not enough use is made of assessment to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Some features of the school's timetable, particularly the length of lessons.

Teaching and learning

What do the pupils and their parents say?

22. The pupils say they are well taught, emphasising very strongly how hard they are expected to work. Their parents agree. Most are satisfied with homework arrangements but the degree of satisfaction is lower in Years 10 and 11. Some parents expressed concern that textbooks were

sometimes not available for pupils to complete work at home. In response to previous surveys approximately one third said they found some of their lessons dull.

What did the inspection team find?

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Sometimes it is very good, occasionally it is excellent. Very rarely is it unsatisfactory.

What is the quality of teaching and learning at Bedale High School?	GOOD
What proportion of teaching seen was very good?	ONE FIFTH
Can most pupils identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses in their work?	NO
Do all pupils have sufficient knowledge of what they need to do to be more successful?	NO

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The best teaching was seen in Year 9 where learning was very good in almost one third of the lessons seen.
- The high quality of much of the subject leadership and very good classroom management.
- The best teaching results in very good learning because nearly all the pupils have very positive attitudes, want to do well and appreciate what the school offers.
- The best learning was observed when pupils were encouraged to organise parts of the lesson themselves and take responsibility for its success.
- Only in the very good lessons was the close as strong as the start.
- Only in the very good lessons was discussion a prominent feature in the teaching methods.
- The pupils work very hard and get plenty done because high expectations set the right tone from the start.
- Very good subject knowledge is very well used to develop good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding, apart from ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- The great care taken to encourage pupils to get involved in lessons benefits all pupils.
- Pupils with SEN learn well because the additional support is very well managed.
- Marking is frequently good but there is inconsistent understanding of how assessment can be used to improve the quality of learning and raise achievement.
- The length of lessons is sometimes too long and at other times too short for effective learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 115 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3%)	21 (18%)	56 (49%)	32 (28%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

23. The profile of teaching and learning seen during the inspection reflects accurately the overall quality of provision. This is more effective than at the time of the last inspection. The criteria by which it is evaluated are much tougher than in 1998 but the school has maintained its good quality rating.

24. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced since the last inspection. This is partly because, as the school has increased in size, far fewer teachers have to teach more than one subject.

25. Of greater significance has been the change of leadership in music and religious education. Provision in both subjects is much improved. The very good leadership and management of the school's SEN provision have resulted in very good improvement in the role and effectiveness of the

learning support assistants. The school's leadership has addressed very successfully the weaknesses identified at the last inspection.

What features are boosting achievement?

26. The strongest features in the quality of teaching are the very good subject leadership that sets high and consistent expectations, good management that develops effective team work, the teachers' skilful use of their specialist subject knowledge and the skilful use of questions to engage pupils' interest and extend their understanding.

27. The strongest features in the quality of learning are the pupils' very good attitudes, their good basic skills and their readiness to listen and work well with each other. The application of ICT skills was a very powerful feature of the excellent learning in a Year 10 French lesson.

28. Modern foreign languages and science provide a very good range of stimulating activities that interpret creatively the requirements of the National Curriculum.

What distinguishes the very good teaching and learning?

29. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in approximately one fifth of lessons seen. The involvement of the pupils was particularly striking. Their eagerness to learn and readiness to do things for themselves or work very productively with each other was matched by the teachers' very good management of classroom discussion and skilful use of questions to probe and encourage understanding. These very good features were observed in several mathematics lessons and on one occasion in design and technology, where the pupils were encouraged 'to think like technologists'. Such very good teaching in geography extended greatly the pupils' grasp of the wider implications of the topic they were studying. On several occasions, such very skilful teaching helped less competent pupils to make good progress. In a Year 8 PSHE lesson, a truly memorable feature was the way in which the pupils showed skills beyond their years in organising the visit of a guest speaker and managing much of the lesson themselves. Progress was rapid in these lessons and all achieved very well.

What distinguishes the excellent teaching and learning?

30. On four occasions learning was excellent because teaching was truly inspirational. Pupils' attention was not just engaged, it was captivated. This very high quality was observed in English, mathematics, French and physical education and across the full range of pupils' competence. Superb subject knowledge was combined with excellent choice of methods, first-class relationships and a very high degree of challenge and expectation. As a result the pupils worked very hard indeed, making very rapid progress both in the amount of work covered and the depth of understanding achieved.

What features are barriers to raising achievement?

31. On two occasions, after a satisfactory start to the lesson, the quality of learning deteriorated and the close of the lesson was weak. This occurred in a Year 9 English lesson where a rare instance of unsatisfactory behaviour was not well managed and, consequently, the lesson ended in disarray. In a Year 11 science lesson, the pupils' initial interest was lost because the unsatisfactory use of questions did not promote understanding. Learning was unsatisfactory because the narrow range of teaching methods did not engage the pupils and the close of the lesson was too abrupt, allowing no time for them to look back on what had been learned.

32. The well-devised individual education plans (IEPs) are not always as well used to plan provision for those with SEN, when additional support is not present in the lesson.

33. Many 70-minute lessons are well organised. Sometimes the pace drops, particularly in the middle part of the lesson. Pupils' interest and productivity also drop. It is the length of the lesson rather than any lack of challenge that provokes some pupils' response that learning is sometimes dull. Very occasionally, a narrow range of teaching methods does contribute to dull learning.

What stops some satisfactory teaching and learning being good?

34. Some aspects of assessment are not as well developed as those of planning and marking of work. The school's leadership provides detailed assessment data but this is not always interpreted and used to match work to pupils' needs or measure their progress. Some more competent pupils had a sound grasp of the standard at which they were working, particularly in Years 10 and 11, but others were much more hazy about it and unclear about what they needed to do specifically to raise the standard of their work. The pupils' most common response was 'I need to work harder'.

35. The end of satisfactory lessons is not as good as the start. After a strong start, which often linked very well to previous lessons, plenty of activity and pupils' active involvement in learning, the final third of the lesson was less effective because not enough time was given to looking back at what had been learned, identifying what had worked well and deciding what needed to be done differently next time. Given the pupils' maturity, very good self-discipline and eagerness to learn, this represents a significant missed opportunity to raise achievement further.

The curriculum

What do the pupils and their parents say?

36. Pupils and parents appreciate the broad and balanced curriculum provided by the school. Most pupils feel generally well guided in their choice of courses and careers.

What did the inspection team find?

Curricular provision is good with some very good features.

What is the quality of the school's curricular provision?	GOOD
Does the curriculum meet the needs of all the pupils?	YES
Are there enough well qualified teachers to teach the curriculum?	YES
Is there enough additional technical and support staff?	NO
Are accommodation, books, materials and equipment sufficient?	NO
Are the pupils prepared for furthering their education or entering employment?	YES
Are there enough activities outside lessons to interest and involve pupils?	YES

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The range of learning opportunities provided by well-qualified teachers caters well for pupils' needs, aspirations and interests.
- Very good provision in modern foreign languages, science and citizenship.
- The very good range and quality of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school help to create a strong school community.
- Some aspects of timetabling impede progress and performance.
- The very well managed alternative arrangements for disaffected pupils.
- Careful prioritising of limited funding means that resources are of high quality but are somewhat limited in quantity in some areas.
- The well qualified staff.
- The school library does not provide enough facilities for research and enrichment, despite significant recent improvements.
- Some pupils do not take the opportunities to get involved in lunchtime activities.

- Sports facilities are very good and there has been recent refurbishment in art, geography ICT and science. However, music is sometimes taught in non-specialist accommodation and that for design and technology is barely satisfactory.

Commentary

What features are boosting achievement?

- The very good links with primary schools, including three visits for those who attend schools in the locality, help teachers to match the curriculum very well to pupils' needs in Year 7.
- The strong role of heads of year in monitoring curricular provision makes a very good contribution to pupils' progress.
- The range of courses meets the needs of all pupils in all years. Provision in Years 10 and 11 is strong because it offers short courses as well as full GCSE courses. This helps to raise further pupils' overall performance.
- The successful off-site arrangements for a small number of pupils to take work-related courses and activities provide alternative opportunities that encourage pupils to attend and remain involved in their education.
- The wide range of activities offered during the longer than usual lunchtime, as well as the regular opportunities for trips and visits, contribute much to the pupils' very good personal development. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Consequently, the curriculum shapes attitudes and promotes personal qualities as well as developing a good range of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Pupils have satisfactory access to guidance from Connexions and the school maintains effective links with three local colleges.

What features are barriers to achievement?

- The organisation of the school timetable results in lessons that are too long for some less competent pupils to sustain concentration. Some 'single' lessons of 35 minutes are too short for effective learning.
- The demands of two GCSE English courses in the timetabled time result in some pupils spreading their efforts too widely. Consequently, pupils do less well in English literature than in their other subjects.
- Some pupils enter for the full GCSE examination in art and design but study the subject only for half the recommended time. This restricts their level of performance in the examination.
- Money is very tight. As a result, there are some shortages of texts. This particularly affects the otherwise very good homework arrangements. Some pupils do not always have the necessary books to complete homework. The provision for technical support in practical subjects is low. There have been several improvements in specialist accommodation since the last inspection but music is sometimes taught in non-specialist rooms; facilities for drama and design and technology are barely adequate. The library is too small to meet the needs of a school of this size. The hall is too small to enable the school to hold an act of collective worship for all pupils on a daily basis.

Care, guidance and support

What do the pupils and their parents say?

37. Most pupils think that they are very well looked after; their parents share this view. Nevertheless, approximately a third of pupils do not think they are treated fairly. Pupils say that their work is assessed helpfully and most feel that the school is interested in their views. Parents value the excellent communications which the school has established with them, especially so in the case of those parents who have children with SEN. All pupils have a good and trusting relationship with an adult in the school. There were very few issues of racial harassment raised by parents, or otherwise recorded by the school.

What did the inspection team find?

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are very good.

How well does the school monitor its pupils' achievements and personal development?	VERY WELL
How well does it use this information effectively to support, advise and guide its pupils?	VERY WELL
How well does it support pupils with SEN?	VERY WELL
Does the school have a written policy on race equality which it monitors?	YES

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good leadership and management of pastoral care and teams of tutors by the heads of year.
- Excellent communications with parents.
- Form tutors' knowledge and understanding of their pupils' individual needs.
- Well-planned procedures for child protection.
- Effective arrangements for health and safety.

The feature underlined above is a big improvement on the findings of the last inspection.

Commentary

What features are boosting achievement?

38. This very good provision has a powerful impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils care about their work and their school because they are certain that others care about them. The strong emphasis upon community values is well led and managed by heads of year. Their involvement in the academic progress, as well in as the personal development of their pupils, boosts achievement. This very effective provision contributes much to the calm purposefulness that is a distinctive feature of this school.

39. The school's pastoral care provision is very well led and managed and makes an important contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. There is further comment on some of these strengths in the sections on leadership and management and teaching and learning and also in some of the subject reports in part C of this report.

What features are barriers to raising achievement?

40. The inspection team identified no significant barriers to raising achievement in the way that the school cares for its pupils' welfare and support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is very good. They have a high regard for the school.

Links with the community are excellent.

Links with other schools and colleges are good.

What do the pupils and their parents say?

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
Staff expect pupils to work hard [95]* Pupils like school [94]* Good induction arrangements [92]* Progress made by pupils [86]* Leadership and management [85]*	School's strategies to seek parents' views [41]** Information about pupils' progress [31]**

* percentage pleased

** percentage wanting improvement

41. Nearly all parents who expressed a view before the inspection were very appreciative of what the school provides and achieves, particularly the quality of teaching and the academic progress and personal development of their children. Some would like to know more about their children's progress and would like to be consulted more regularly. Some pupils also felt they would like more opportunities to express their views.

What did the inspection team find?

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Excellent links with the community that extend the horizons of the pupils and the breadth of the curriculum.
- Very good links with parents contribute greatly to pupils' progress and personal development.
- Good links with colleges and other agencies contribute to the high proportion of pupils continuing their full-time education after the age of 16.
- Standards of achievement are not always clearly stated in reports to parents.
- Some minor requirements are not included in the school prospectus.

Commentary

What features are boosting achievement?

42. The very good partnership with parents contributes much to the well above average attendance and the good completion rates of homework. The 'planner' is a strong, practical channel for good communications between home and school, and it is very well used.

43. The well-managed response to parental enquiries results in prompt and effective action. Consequently, any issues are quickly resolved and pupils' good progress or happiness is maintained. Parents of pupils who have statements of special education needs are very well involved in the annual review.

44. The very good partnership with parents is also illustrated by their contribution to the curriculum by participating as guest speakers in lessons. They also give tremendous support to various events and performances, both dramatic and sporting. Some parents are also involved as providers in the school's work experience programme.

What features are barriers to raising achievement?

45. School reports do not provide a simple, clear picture of performance expressed in terms of the National Curriculum standards for the subject. Some parents have expressed a wish for guidance about how they can more effectively support their children with work at home.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

What do the pupils and their parents say?

46. Parents very much appreciate the high quality of the school's leadership that has brought about a good degree of further improvement since the last inspection. They value the good management of communication between home and school. The pupils particularly value the school's interest in their views but approximately a quarter of those who completed the questionnaire said that not everyone was treated fairly.

What did the inspection team find?

The leadership of this well managed school is very good.

- **Leadership is very good.**
- **Management is good.**
- **Governance is good**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good headship defines precisely the school's values, priorities, expectations and direction.
- Very good planning to meet the needs of all pupils so that they achieve well.
- The governors' very strong contribution in defining the future direction of the school and securing best value.
- The powerful partnership between the governors and the school's leadership has managed very successfully the recent change of headship.
- The school does not fulfil all its statutory requirements because it does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- Leadership skilfully turns aspiration into action but does not always demonstrate rigorous evaluation in all aspects of its work.
- The very good contribution of the deputy headteachers in leading aspects of the school's work and in supporting the smooth changeover of headship.
- Very good subject leadership in many subjects, including greatly improved leadership of music, religious education and provision for SEN.
- Very good team work.
- Very good leadership and management of pupils' care, support and guidance.
- Delegation is not strong enough in some aspects of management.
- The links between performance management and other strategies to monitor quality and standards are not strong enough.
- The very good management of links with the community.
- The use of the school's excellent assessment data ranges from very good to unsatisfactory in the management of subject departments.
- The school improvement plan does not provide sharp enough targets by which to measure rigorously success, progress or improvement.
- The levels of administrative support are insufficient for a school of this size.

Commentary

What features are boosting achievement?

47. A strong spirit of community pervades the school. This stems in the first instance from the school's very good leadership over time. Its continuing development is a priority of the new headteacher. Teamwork is very good because strong relationships are founded upon shared understanding and mutual respect. This is reflected in the work of the school as a whole and in the quality of learning in the classrooms. Unity of purpose stems from shared values and high levels of commitment. Consequently, expectations are consistently high and provision is good.

48. The good governance of the school has many strengths. The commitment to the principles of best value is very strong and well illustrated in the rigour with which governors monitor the school's results. They demonstrate a very high degree of commitment to raising standards further and meeting the needs of all pupils. All governors share responsibility for the provision for special educational needs. The committee structure is strong and recently further enhanced by the establishment of a school improvement committee. The governors have considered most carefully the logistics of providing a daily act of worship for all pupils. Current accommodation presents an insurmountable barrier. The quality of assemblies which are held is very high, contributing much to pupils' spiritual and personal development.

49. The leadership and management of the recent change of headship illustrate very well the increasingly strong role of the governing body. It provided them with an opportunity to look closely at the school's achievements and future direction. They demonstrated exemplary leadership in the care with which they undertook this task.

50. The role of the deputy headteachers has been very significant at this critical point in the school's history. They have quickly established a highly effective partnership with the new headteacher. Their generous readiness to share their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, to contribute towards defining the next stage of the school's development through the re-negotiation of job descriptions and to provide support for other colleagues in the management of change are strong features of their leadership.

51. Strong teamwork pervades the school, individual departments and lessons. It is well illustrated in how well recent changes at the school have been managed. Some recent changes in departmental leadership and the leadership of careers education have gained much from the advice and support offered by the previous post holder.

52. The school takes a regular, critical look at its performance. This has been a strength of headship since the last inspection. The rigorous use of data to identify areas for improvement and the need for action is well illustrated in the much improved national test results in mathematics and the much better results in GCSE English in 2003.

What features are barriers to raising achievement?

53. The degree to which the governors hold individual subject departments to account is not yet rigorous enough. The new leadership team has already identified the need to link individual governors with specific subject departments, so that lines of accountability are strengthened.

54. The school development plan defines priorities very clearly, placing the emphasis on learning and reflecting the core aims of the school. Although it builds on the previous year's plan, it has two significant weaknesses: it does not provide a clear picture of the longer-term strategy nor define sharply enough the intended results by which the success of action and expenditure can be measured.

55. There has been satisfactory improvement in the degree of delegation across the school. The leadership and management of assessment and timetabling were retained by the headteacher until summer 2003. The careful collection of data provides both a broad profile of performance and the pattern of individual pupils' progress. More recently, data on all pupils' individual performance has been available to every teacher. Its full potential to raise achievement is not yet realised. Not enough attention is given to the monitoring of different groups of pupils, for example boys and girls, or the more or less competent pupils.

56. Subject leadership is stronger than management because some heads of department do not have the necessary technical understanding to interpret data. The exceptions are in geography and physical education. Departmental development planning reflects the same weaknesses as the school plan. Heads of subject have insufficient time to undertake the planned monitoring of standards and assurance of quality. Consequently, the links with performance management are weak.

57. The reasons for this are linked in part to the school's income. This is in the lower quartile of secondary schools nationally, providing limited funds for additional posts of responsibility and limited time for management tasks. Because the school is successful, it does not qualify for the recently introduced leadership incentive grant. This restricts the opportunities to delegate responsibility. Staff willingly do what they can but the quality of leadership and management does sometimes suffer, for example in citizenship and in the co-ordination of numeracy across the curriculum.

58. The amount of administrative and clerical support is low because there is not enough money available to increase it. One important consequence is that the school cannot extend further workload reforms.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,484,515	Balance from previous year	116,683
Total expenditure	2,545,104	Balance carried forward to the next	56,094
Expenditure per pupil	3,162		

59. The school manages its finances very well and directs them according to its agreed priorities. There is little room for manoeuvre in a very tight budget and there are limited opportunities to address issues of workload. Learning resources are short in some subjects. Staffing costs are high, partly because the school pays more to attract high calibre staff who will sustain and further improve its very good performance. The school's high commitment to providing additional support for those who need it is reflected in its additional expenditure in the provision for SEN.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Community provision

Community provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
- Very good leadership and management.
- The high numbers of pupils and adults involved in community activities.
- The very good range of activities available for pupils and adults.
- The well-organised programmes of youth and adult education.
- The low involvement in the good range of family activities offered.

Commentary

60. Bedale High School is at the heart of community education for the town and surrounding area. Working in conjunction with Askham Bryan College, The Workers Educational Association and the Leisure Centre, Bedale Community Education provides a wide range of very well led and managed opportunities for young people and adults. The variety and quality of provision for sporting activities are very good. Some are recreational classes, others give young people the opportunity to take the Community Sports Leader Award, and soccer refereeing and coaching qualifications. The youth centre is popular, with over 50 young people attending regularly, some taking Duke of Edinburgh Awards. All these activities have a strong impact on the pupils' personal and social development.

61. The range of artistic and musical activities also makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Many pupils have been involved in activities that spread the work of the school across the community, including the creation of an attractive mosaic in the entrance hall of the local swimming pool and displays of art work for the nearby RAF base at Leeming. The school is well used as a centre for external music examinations. Throughout the year pupils from Bedale High School perform music in local churches and in the market square.

62. The school also acts as a provider for sports clubs and teams. The gymnastics club, which is sponsored by Bedale Community Education, is helping to promote more girls' participation in sport. There is very good partnership with the local district council in the development of a multi-use games area on the school site, which will provide further opportunities for both young people and adults in the community. The local soccer team, in conjunction with the school, has a well-planned scheme, to improve the facilities for their teams with new changing rooms and better playing fields.

63. The readiness of the school to work in partnership with its community is matched by the very good communications that characterise the complex network of activities. A good range of family activities is offered but involvement is low in some of them.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well in English language, attaining higher standards than expected nationally.
- Standards in drama by the age of 16 are above the national average.
- The attitudes of pupils are a significant factor leading to high standards.
- Standards in English literature by the age of 16 are not as good as English language.
- Pupils could do better if the expectations of all teachers were high.

Commentary

64. Achievement is good. Standards at Year 9 are higher than those usually found nationally and show a significant improvement on the school's previous results, especially those obtained by more competent pupils. Results in GCSE English language and drama in Year 11 are above average. Results in English literature are below the national average. The proportion of pupils taking the examination is much higher than in most schools, and the pupils take two GCSE subjects in the same amount of curriculum time as others elsewhere might have to complete one GCSE.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Parents and pupils are right in their view that teaching in English is generally of a high standard. Most teachers have high expectations and most pupils work hard. The climate for learning in lessons is usually positive. Only once, in an unsatisfactory lesson, was time wasted. Progress is not as good as it should be on the few occasions when teachers do not insist on good listening and full attention. All pupils are well challenged, through rigorous marking, to work hard and improve. They take pride in the quality of their written work and their performances in drama. Pupils work well together, particularly in drama.

66. Writing skills are well taught, though the teaching of reading skills is less rigorous. All pupils are expected to present their work neatly. Nearly all do so. They make good use of ICT, both for word-processing and research. Assessment information is used well to match materials and tasks to the full range of pupils' needs, and teachers ensure that pupils know how well they are doing.

67. Good leadership and management define the purposeful approach and clear identification of the way ahead for the department. Provision is more effective than it was at the time of the last inspection. Improvements in the management of drama and organisation of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 have had good impact on personal development, the numbers taking GCSE in Year 10 and results in national tests. Better use is now made of the library, and strategies to improve boys' performance are stronger. Standards of writing are now more consistent. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough. Standards in English literature are not high enough.

English language and literacy skills

68. Pupils' skills enable them to meet the literacy requirements of the subjects that they study. They write well to cope with the range of tasks in the different subjects. In geography and history, for example, there are good opportunities to write at length for different purposes. In science though, more attention needs to be given to the use of technical language in all lessons. Pupils' reading skills enable them to understand a wide range of texts. In geography and history, for example, texts are selected with readability in mind. Pupils' speaking and listening skills enable them to benefit from sharing ideas with the teachers and each other.

Modern languages

69. One lesson in beginners' Spanish was sampled in Year 10. Teaching and learning were very good. Achievement was satisfactory.

French and German

Provision in French and German is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good shared leadership has created a very good climate for learning.
- Pupils work very well both in class and out of class.
- Very good use is made of ICT.
- Pupils with SEN are well supported.
- The range of the curriculum is broad and extra-curricular provision is very good.
- Resources are of good quality but not available in sufficient quantity.

Commentary

70. Achievement at Year 9 is good. More competent pupils who take a second language in Years 8 and 9 achieve very well, so that by the end of Year 9 they have reached a standard similar to that of pupils who have had a year longer, and approximating to mid-range grades at GCSE. Overall, standards are above those that pupils nationally are expected to reach. Many pupils have a wider vocabulary and a more extensive knowledge of grammar than is usually seen in other schools. At present, standards in German are slightly ahead of those in French.

71. Achievement at Year 11 is good. Standards in French are slightly ahead of German. These pupils have recovered from the consequences of staff absence in 2001/2002. Almost all pupils take a language, most of them to GCSE. A small group of less competent pupils take an 'entry-level' course in Spanish (formerly Certificate of Achievement). Overall standards seen during the inspection are above average in relation to what is seen in other schools. When allowance is made for the fact that the school enters a much higher proportion of pupils for GCSE than is usually the case nationally, standards at GCSE are above average. Girls perform better than boys, as is the case nationally, but there are also some high achieving boys.

72. Teaching and learning are good. A third of the lessons seen were very good and one was excellent. Teachers have good language skills and use them well in lessons. Two are native speakers of the languages they teach. Teachers' planning is very good and makes the best use of available time. They manage their pupils very well and classroom relationships are very good. Very good use is made of ICT to support learning. Pupils with SEN are well supported.

73. Many extra-curricular activities enrich learning. Foremost amongst these is the long established and flourishing exchange link with a school in Germany. This has a powerful impact on learning and on the life of the community.

74. Leadership is very good. The head of German and the head of French complement each other's skills very well, and the outcome of this is seen in its impact on quality and standards. However the satisfactory management is not stronger because there is too little time available to monitor standards and assure the quality of provision across the department.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Above average results in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests represent good achievement but not enough more competent pupils achieve the highest grades [A*-A] at GCSE.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge, the encouragement they give and the high standards they expect.
- Pupils work hard and have good attitudes towards learning.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well because the quality of extra help is very good.
- The good lesson planning is sometimes spoiled by inconsistent practice and weak time management.
- The good assessment data is not used with sufficient rigour and regularity to help pupils' know how well they are doing and how to improve their performance.

Commentary

75. Achievement is good. Results in national tests in Year 9 have been consistently above the national average in recent years. More competent pupils confidently apply their knowledge to solve new problems. Pupils' well-rounded and balanced knowledge and understanding of all areas of mathematics, together with their very positive attitudes towards learning are major factors in their success. GCSE results in 2003 were broadly average. Performance is not as good as in the pupils' other subjects mainly because few of the more competent pupils obtain the highest grades A*/A. A good feature is that everyone enters the examination and all obtain at least a grade G, well above the national average. Achievement in lessons and the standards seen in pupils' work confirm that pupils are making good progress, in particular those pupils with SEN, who receive considerate and caring support from very effective teams of teachers and learning assistants.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The most significant strength in pupils' effective learning is their application and productivity. This is strongly supported by teachers who have good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations. Teachers' lesson planning is usually good but there are inconsistencies in the planned use of time. Consequently, the end of the lesson is sometimes not as effective as its start. Teachers frequently let pupils know how well they are doing, both through oral comments in lessons and through very helpful marking. They are not, however, sufficiently rigorous in informing pupils of the progress they are making in reaching nationally expected levels of performance.

77. Leadership and management are good. The recent change of leadership has been very well managed, providing a good degree of continuity. New ideas and a focused vision, as shown in the department improvement plan, have already been initiated but it is too early to measure its impact. There has been improvement in the provision of homework books for Year 7 but it remains unsatisfactory in Years 8 and 9, mainly because funding is very tight. The findings of the inspection on this matter confirm the concerns expressed by some parents before the inspection. Provision is more effective than it was at the time of the last inspection.

Numeracy

78. Standards of numeracy are good. Most pupils complete mental calculations and use mathematical techniques correctly with speed and accuracy. They have a particular strength in drawing and interpreting graphs. Except in science, ICT, geography and design and technology, subjects provide too few opportunities for pupils to transfer, apply and extend their knowledge, understanding and numerical skills into new areas of learning. The management of this cross-curricular area is unsatisfactory because there is no clear brief for the co-ordinator to develop and monitor a coherent policy linked to the national strategy for numeracy.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards at Year 9 are well above those found in most schools nationally and results in national tests are well above average.
- Standards at Year 11 are above those found in most schools nationally. Results in GCSE are consistently above average.
- The achievement of pupils is very good at Year 9 and Year 11.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The quality of leadership is very good; the quality of management is good.
- Pupils are very well motivated and behaved.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning and use of assessment to target individual pupils are underdeveloped.

Commentary

79. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average, with little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Over the last three years they have been well above average, and the performance of boys slightly better than that of girls. The 2003 National Curriculum Year 9 test results were well above the national average and similar for boys and girls. Over three years they have been well above average, reflecting the good quality of teaching and good planning based on strong liaison with primary schools.

80. Standards on entry are broadly similar to those that pupils nationally are expected to reach by the age of eleven. Achievement is very good at both Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils with SEN achieve equally well because of the good additional support they receive in lessons. Standards in Year 9 are well above average and above average in Year 11. Many pupils have well-developed mathematical and evaluative skills, so that in a Year 9 investigation of shadow sizes more competent pupils offered very good explanations for the shape of their curved graph.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons, high expectations and skilful questioning, particularly at the end of lessons, promote very good learning. Teachers plan effectively for pupils to use laptop computers, as in a lesson for less competent Year 11 pupils who used a simulation programme well. Books are well marked and pupils are regularly assessed against National Curriculum criteria. Where teaching is less successful it is because teaching strategies are limited and time is not used effectively at the ends of lessons for summarising, clarifying and assessing pupils' understanding and teaching.

82. Very good leadership has produced very effective teamwork and a shared commitment to raise standards. Good management enables the department to run very smoothly and policies, such as those for assessment and marking, are applied consistently. Good curriculum provision includes visits, access to summer schools and extension classes for Year 9 pupils. Assessment

data is well used to group pupils and predict performance, but not to develop learning targets for individual pupils. The monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because there is not enough time to undertake these important tasks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good because of the high standards set by teachers.
- Standards are not as high as they could be by the end of Year 11 because less time is allocated to the teaching of ICT than is recommended nationally.
- The school has a better ratio of computers to pupils than is normally found in a school of this size.
- The inconsistent use of homework between different teachers across the department means opportunities are missed to extend or reinforce learning.
- ICT is well used to support and enrich learning in most subjects.
- Pupils do not have a clear picture of how their work compares with the standards expected nationally.

Commentary

83. Achievement is good in Year 9 and satisfactory in Year 11. Achievement is restricted by the end of Year 11 because less time is allocated to the teaching of ICT than is recommended nationally. Standards are in line with those usually reached nationally and all pupils follow an ICT course in Years 10 and 11. Pupils receive a broad range of experiences in Years 7-11. They have very good attitudes and demonstrate high degrees of competence in communication using ICT but do not have a good enough understanding of information systems to enable them to achieve the higher grades. Pupils do not know how their standards compare with national expectations during Years 7-9 or to GCSE grades during Years 10 and 11 because they are not informed by their teachers.

84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good degree of knowledge and they relate well with pupils. The teachers move around the class throughout the lesson to monitor progress and ensure that pupils know what they have to do to improve. They also use carefully phrased questions to test the learning of all pupils. However, an inconsistent use of homework between different teachers means that opportunities are missed in many lessons to reinforce and extend learning.

85. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Well-defined priorities have led to decisive action to make sure that statutory requirements are now fully met. Provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, the management of links between ICT, literacy, numeracy and citizenship is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of teaching and learning is neither regular nor rigorous enough. Technical support is now available and systems are well developed to maintain and repair resources.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. Provision is good in most subjects of the curriculum. In English, pupils make very good use of the Internet for research, and they word-process poems and essays. The mathematics department use spreadsheets well to help them investigate the area of a box and other mathematical shapes. The physical education department uses digital cameras and has its own website to support learning. Music uses composition software to obtain professional sounds as a foundation to their own compositions. The science department uses the Internet for research and data-logging equipment in experiments. In design and technology, ICT is used often in the presentation of

coursework, in designing and in manufacturing. All departments make good use of the Internet in coursework for research; pupils select appropriate information and present their work using word-processing and publishing software. The modern foreign languages department uses computers and audio equipment in the development of foreign language skills.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very effective leadership and management of a team of dedicated teachers that result in continuing developments in teaching and assessment styles.
- Well-motivated and hard-working pupils who really enjoy their geography achieve high standards.
- Consistently good planning results in fast-moving lessons and effective homework tasks that extend pupils' understanding.
- Developing systems for sharing with pupils information about how well they are working, although most pupils in Years 7 – 9 do not yet convert this into what they must do to improve their geography.

Commentary

87. Achievement is very good. Results in GCSE at the end of Year 11 are consistently well above the national average and are still improving. Pupils are particularly good at using data to identify key issues and evaluate their impact. Coursework based on studies of York make good use of computers to present data in sophisticated ways that pupils then analyse in detail.

88. Pupils arrive at the school with limited geographical skills. They make very good progress and standards achieved at Year 9 are above average. Pupils are particularly good at recognising the many links and relationships that make places dependent on each other. They confidently draw on a wide range of information to support their judgements. The most accomplished pupils make links between different processes and places and evaluate their impact on people in different economic environments. Pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress.

89. Teaching and learning are very good. Factors that encourage effective learning include:

- the use of a wide variety of teaching approaches and practical activities;
- pupils come to lessons ready to work hard and determined to do their best;
- the emphasis on 'real issues' means that pupils develop a very good understanding of the links between geographical processes and life in different parts of the world;
- investigations that develop good use of numeracy and computer skills to analyse and explain data.

90. Pupils apply and develop their literacy skills through careful reading and detailed project work. In the most effective lessons, very well defined learning goals encourage pupils to work both independently and collaboratively. Teachers' support, which extends to regular and detailed, marking, provides pupils with information about their work. In spite of this, many pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not sure what exactly they need to do to improve their work.

91. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department combines enthusiasm and specialist subject knowledge with a determination to provide the best for pupils. This determination is shared by the whole department which uses self-evaluation to great effect.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are similar to the above national average test results in Year 9 and the GCSE results in Year 11. Achievement is good.
- Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and work hard in lessons.
- Detailed planning by committed and knowledgeable teachers results in fast-moving lessons that have clear objectives.
- A steadily declining number of pupils choosing to study history at GCSE, in spite of pupils stating that they enjoy the subject.

Commentary

92. Achievement is good. Results in GCSE are improving and are above the national average both for the higher A*-C grades and for A*-G pass grades. Pupils' confident evaluation of evidence from a range of sources helps them to reach standards higher than are seen in many schools nationally.

93. Some pupils have not studied as much history as others when they first enter the school. Most catch up quite quickly because they are well taught. Standards at Year 9 are higher than those that pupils nationally are expected to reach because their understanding is very good. For example, many can identify reasons for contradictions between different types of historical evidence and use this to support their judgements. Year 9 work drew upon evidence from paintings, diaries, songs, letters, film and photographs from the Great War to weigh the value of different viewpoints.

94. Teaching and learning are good. The key characteristics are:

- enthusiastic teachers whose humour and detailed subject knowledge make lessons fun;
- the good variety of activities that encourage pupils to remain attentive pupils and work hard;
- the good use of artefacts, videos, visitors and visits to help pupils relate to times past.

95. Some pupils find the intensity of reading and writing rather too challenging. In the short single lessons in Years 7 to 9, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to write at length or receive sufficient individual help. Teachers offer extra support at lunchtimes and mark work very carefully. In spite of this, some pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve less well than they could. Few pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils with statements of special educational need make better progress in lessons where there is extra support available. Pupils generally enjoy history but reducing numbers select it for GCSE. They state that this is because they find the work hard and feel that history is not 'useful for later life'.

96. At the time of the inspection the leadership of this subject had just changed. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the change on standards and the quality of provision. There are early indications that standards are starting to rise; more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is in place and more use is now made of ICT.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Much of the teaching in the department is good.
- The head of department is providing good leadership.
- Some aspects of assessment and the use of data are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

97. The majority of pupils come to the school having attained standards significantly below national expectations. During Years 7 to 9, most pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 9 they are close to expected standards. Pupils then achieve satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11 to obtain results in the GCSE short course that are a little below the national average in the subject. Achievement at examination level is seriously inhibited by both an inadequate time allocation and unhelpful timetabling arrangements.

98. Religious education makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development, in terms of both their moral development and their interpersonal and communication skills.

99. Very good relationships within class groups and between pupils and teachers contribute to productive lessons. Lessons are usually well planned and feature a variety of appropriate activities that engage the interest and commitment of pupils. In one Year 9 lesson that was less good, pupils were given tasks that failed to challenge them sufficiently.

100. Some aspects of assessment are unsatisfactory because pupils do not have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 assessment is accurate but not frequent enough.

101. The leadership of religious education is good, as is its day-to-day management. However, there is a need to adopt a more rigorous approach to development planning to incorporate clear costings, and to use performance data for purposes of target setting.

102. There has been good progress in religious education since the last inspection but the time allocation in Years 10 and 11 is still insufficient.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy lessons very much and present their work very well.
- Information and communication technology is well used to support and extend pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well taught, and design and make good quality products.
- The department is well led and managed and has brought about significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Some pupils do not address elements of designing in sufficient depth.
- Teachers' planning and, occasionally, their use of questions are not well matched to the pupils' diverse needs.
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of test results in literacy and numeracy to plan pupils' learning.

Commentary

103. Standards on entry to the school are below average. By the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11, standards are higher than those that pupils nationally are expected to reach. Achievement is good. As is the case nationally, girls' achievement is better than that of boys. GCSE results are above average year on year. In food technology, they are well above average. Many pupils achieve their best grades in this subject. The work done by pupils in lessons is of a good standard. Pupils progressively develop their designing and making skills to produce good quality products, for

example, fast food products, kites and electronic games. Pupils use ICT independently and effectively to support their work. They are confident learners, have good graphical skills and present their work well. Pupils enjoy lessons because they can develop their own ideas and many say that this is their favourite subject. They particularly relish using the specialist equipment in resistant materials lessons and making food that they can eat.

104. Pupils' learning is good and they are well taught. They learn what it is to be a technologist. In the best lessons, there is a strong emphasis on problem solving and the relationship between the design and the function of the product being made. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables pupils to apply their learning well. In the best lessons, there is a flexible approach to the development of products, and skills are taught when pupils are ready to apply them to their own work. This makes the learning relevant. Pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. The quality of questioning is very high in the very best lessons. Pupils' understanding is challenged and they are helped to understand how to improve their work. The lessons generally have a brisk pace and pupils expect to learn.

105. There are some aspects of good teaching and learning that prevent it from being very good. These relate to the depth pupils demonstrate in their design work. Some teachers do not use questioning effectively enough to extend the learning of pupils of all abilities. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are told the level at which they are working. However, pupils, including those with SEN, are not always clear about how they might improve their work.

106. Leadership and management are good. Significant improvements since the previous inspection have led to higher standards and better provision.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are above the national average.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good and teachers have high expectations.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Behaviour is very good and pupils work hard.
- Standards at GCSE are below the national average.
- The provision for gifted and talented pupils is inadequate.
- Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' oral skills and to extend the range of their multicultural understanding and aesthetic appreciation.

Commentary

107. Achievement is good. Standards on entry are average. In Year 9, they are higher than those usually seen in schools nationally. Standards in Year 11 are close to the broadly average GCSE results in 2003. Results in the GCSE short course are below average and the pupils do less well than in their other subjects. This is because the more competent pupils take the full GCSE. However, pupils taking the full examination do not have enough time to complete the range and depth of work required to obtain the highest grades.

108. Good features of the pupils' work in Year 9 are their manipulation of a range of two- and three-dimensional media. Greater emphasis on the development of drawing skills, as a means of raising standards, could be effectively managed through the well-established homework programme. Good features in Years 10 and 11 include some high standards of observational drawing using pencil and oil pastel, and a very thorough approach to research and experimentation. Regular assessment aids improvement in all years but is more diagnostic and helpful in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with SEN achieve well in all years. Pupils who are gifted in art are not given sufficient scope to develop their talent.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, who are aware of the criteria by which their work is regularly assessed. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not well enough informed of the level at which they are working. Better use of the National Curriculum level descriptors would help. Literacy skills are well developed and provision for ICT is good. End of lesson reviews are not rigorous enough in establishing what has been learned and opportunities are missed to develop pupils' oral skills. The multicultural aspect of art is underdeveloped in all years.

110. Leadership is good. High standards are set and maintained by an experienced and enthusiastic specialist. The development plan has clearly identified the steps that are now needed to raise standards in Year 11.

111. Management and teamwork are good and a very good climate for learning has been established. Organisation and planning are both good. Progress since the last report is good. Community links are strong. The displays of artwork in the department and public areas make a significant contribution to the school ethos.

Music

The provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well, reaching standards higher than those usually seen in the majority of schools nationally.
- Teaching is good and often very good.
- The new leadership has transformed provision.
- Assessment data is not used with sufficient rigour for planning and target setting.
- The specialist accommodation is good but not large enough to meet the demands of the curriculum.
- Very good extra-curricular activities contribute much to the school's community provision.

Commentary

112. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above those found in schools nationally. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. GCSE results in 2003 were below average, reflecting the pupils' wide range of competence. Achievement was satisfactory. Standards in Year 11 this term are higher than those usually seen nationally and achievement is good. The impact of the new leadership and good teaching are making an important contribution to the improving standards in Year 11.

113. Teaching and learning are good and often are very good. Pupils' learning and achievement are boosted by the thoroughness of teachers' knowledge and their encouragement, and engagement of the pupils in their work. Pupils work effectively, both independently and collaboratively, even when unsupervised. The quality of pupils' learning is not as good when, on a small number of occasions, they are taught in non-specialist accommodation.

114. New leadership has transformed teaching and learning, produced a sharp rise in standards and defined a pathway for further improvement. The department's extra-curricular provision is a strength, as is the number of pupils learning an instrument.

115. Management is satisfactory. Insufficient attention is given to the profiling of progress in Years 7 to 9 and assessment is too narrow in Years 10 and 11, where it should reflect wider interests and full range of competence. Progress since the last inspection under a new head of department has been very good. Statutory requirements are in place for Years 7 to 9 and pupils are engaged in worthwhile musical activities both within and beyond the school.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Very good relationships, pupils' high levels of interest and positive attitudes contribute much to the good teaching and learning.
- Not enough use is made of National Curriculum criteria to set targets.
- Below average results by the minority of pupils who take GCSE physical education.

Commentary

116. Achievement is good. Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are better than those seen in the majority of schools nationally. One fifth of the year group entered for GCSE physical education in 2003. Boys' results were below average, those of girls were above. GCSE results have improved significantly since the course was introduced three years ago, and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Their achievement is satisfactory. In Year 9 soccer and netball, pupils have good levels of skill and understanding and use them well in games. In Years 10 and 11, in both the compulsory course and in the GCSE course, pupils have higher levels of skill in badminton, hockey and netball. In the GCSE course, pupils have a good understanding of the impact of different aspects of fitness impact on sporting performance.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject and, as a result, plan lessons well. All pupils are challenged in line with their level of competence and consequently make good progress. Pupils' very positive attitudes are major contributory factors to the progress they make. When given the opportunity, they take charge of their own warm-up at the start of lessons, showing some independence.

118. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a clear vision and very good day-to-day organisation. All teachers involved in the department are highly committed to providing good experiences for all pupils, particularly through very good extra-curricular sport, where standards in games, athletics, swimming and gymnastics are high. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Business studies was not inspected as part of the contract for this inspection. The provision in Years 10 and 11 was sampled.

Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good. Standards of work seen are average. Information and communication technology is well used for research. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' understanding of social and political issues is higher than that usually seen in schools nationally.
- Achievement is good because pupils apply their knowledge and understanding well.
- Good teaching builds upon pupils' mature attitudes and good literacy skills.
- Debating and discussion are well used to explore a wide range of different interpretations about social and political issues.
- The school's very good involvement in the wider community provides plenty of opportunity to apply the principles of good citizenship.
- Special events and activities, including European days, promote an international dimension.
- There is insufficient time available to manage and further develop the current provision.

120. Standards are above those usually seen nationally at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils achieve well because they grasp political and social concepts quickly, for example when debating local planning options or political positions. The school's long-standing emphasis on community involvement provides many opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of citizenship.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It builds on the pupils' good oral skills and good attitudes, providing very good opportunities for debate and discussion. Pupils' readiness to work well with each other is a strong feature of their learning. Year 8 pupils themselves organised a range of visiting speakers during the inspection, hosting the occasion most effectively.

122. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The provision has been well planned to cover statutory requirements. Current arrangements, in place since September, do not afford sufficient time for the teacher in charge to develop the provision further, owing to other responsibilities and consequent lack of time.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3
<i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i>	