

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLE HALL SCHOOL

Mirfield, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107784

Headteacher: Mr A. Pugh

Lead inspector: Ross Parker

Dates of inspection: 12th - 15th January 2004

Inspection number: 258594

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	850
School address:	Richard Thorpe Avenue Crowlees Road Mirfield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF14 9PH
Telephone number:	01924 520500
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H. Webster
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Castle Hall School is an average sized Foundation School and a specialist Language College. It is a popular school which draws pupils from a geographically wide but broadly average social background and pupil mobility is average. Pupils' attainment when they come to the school is well above average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. However, an average proportion have Statements of Special Educational needs. Around 10 per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, though none are at an early stage of learning English. In 2003 the school was awarded Investors in People, a Schools Achievement Award and a British Council International Schools' Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30046	Ross Parker	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	
24118	Robert Vincent	Team inspector	English
3516	Adrian Koskie	Team inspector	Mathematics
30596	Jack Brown	Team inspector	Science
17156	Edward Graham	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
27082	Geoff Henshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Citizenship
33280	Jack Goodfellow	Team inspector	Geography
30072	Joseph Skivington	Team inspector	Music Religious education
33081	Mike Cooper	Team inspector	Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** standard of education, with some good and very good features, and **satisfactory** value for money. Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well above the national average by the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11. The school has a positive atmosphere and all pupils mature effectively and appreciate the wide range of curricular activities.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching promotes high standards.
- Very good relationships and an effective house system support good personal development.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of how to improve the school further.
- Monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle managers are not yet effective in spreading the best practice across the school.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils to know how they can improve.
- Language college status enhances pupils' cultural opportunities, though multi cultural awareness is less effectively developed.
- Although the teaching is good overall, teaching styles lack variety because the school has not learned effectively from good practice in other schools.
- Governors are committed, experienced and far sighted in their support for school development.
- Pupils have insufficient access to information and communication technology (ICT).
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 requires a complex timetable which limits continuity in some subjects.

The school has managed satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The percentage of higher grades at GCSE increased significantly in 2002, though the 2003 results were disappointing. The school development plan is now more useful, though there is insufficient emphasis on the outcomes required from each development. Plans for professional development and monitoring by senior and middle managers are now linked to the school improvement plan. The curriculum has been improved, though pupils study more subjects at GCSE than they need to, which is holding back further improvement by diluting the attention they can give to each subject. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2003 and has already identified appropriate priorities for further improvement.

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	E*

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 **satisfactory** overall. In Years 7 to 9 standards are **well above average**. Pupils achieve as well as expected based on their primary school results and in mathematics their achievement was much better than this in 2003 national tests. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 achieve standards which are **above the national average** and match those in similar schools. However GCSE results in 2003 were badly undermined by the unexpectedly poor performance of a significant number of pupils and were very poor in comparison with similar schools.

Almost all pupils show **positive** attitudes and have **very good** relationships with each other and with their teachers. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Attendance is **above the national average** and timekeeping is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** across the school. In the best lessons where pupils were given the opportunity for independent learning, very good relationships and a range of well planned teaching methods motivate pupils to enjoy the challenge of learning. There is some very good teaching in history and English.

The school continues to develop a suitable curriculum to meet the needs of the full range of pupils in Years 10 and 11. The language college status provides a good range of exciting learning opportunities. There is a good range of extra curricular activities. However, some of the accommodation remains cramped and facilities for physical education are inadequate.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** and some good features are being developed. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and ensure compliance with statutory requirements. They have worked very effectively to support the development of the language college and to appoint an effective new headteacher. Senior managers now have a clear vision of how they want the school to improve. They are working to refine their school development plan so that it will bring about sustainable improvements more quickly.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents compete to send their children to the school and are pleased with the opportunities available to them. They appreciate the developments since the arrival of the new headteacher. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to express their views through the school council which is currently being developed.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve assessment within lessons so that teachers can adapt their planning to meet individual needs more exactly;
- ensure that the range of teaching and learning styles enables all pupils to be more independent and to achieve as well as they can;
- further develop monitoring and support for subject teachers by senior and middle managers;
- reduce the number of subjects studied in Years 10 and 11 and simplify the timetable to give pupils more regular contact with their subject teachers;
- identify and provide for the needs of higher attaining pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards are **above average** overall. Achievement is **satisfactory**. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well. In Years 10 and 11 there has been underachievement, but pupils are now achieving as well as they should.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards are well above average in science in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards in tests at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science were well above average in 2003.
- Standards declined in GCSE examinations in 2003 because an unusually large number of pupils under-achieved.

Commentary

1. In the work seen during the inspection standards were above average across all years and well above average in science in Years 7 to 9. They were above average in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), art, design and technology, geography and history in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 standards were above average in English, mathematics art, design and technology, history and in the full GCSE religious education course. Pupils are achieving well across all years in English, art, design and technology, history, physical education, religious education in Years 10 and 11 and in ICT and science across Years 7 to 9. Achievement is satisfactory in all other subjects except ICT in Years 10 and 11, where timetable arrangements prevent continuity and undermine teachers' efforts to build on learning from lesson to lesson. The school has identified the causes of underachievement by a large number of individuals in the 2003 GCSE examinations and work seen during the inspection indicates that effective strategies have been put in place to stop this problem recurring.

Key Stage 3

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.6 (35.9)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	39.1 (36.9)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	36.2 (34.0)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 167 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 4

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	54 (73)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (98)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	36.3 (34.7)	41.3 (34.7)

There were 168 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Pupils come to the school with well above average literacy skills and in tests at the end of Year 9 standards in English remained well above average during the period 2000 to 2003, rising along with schools nationally. In 2003 results matched those in other schools where pupils started with similar skills. Standards in mathematics have been similar to English over the last three years. The 2003 results were well above average compared to schools where pupils had similar results at the end of Year 6. Results in science have been slightly lower than those in mathematics and English, but in 2003 they too showed standards well above the national average and matched the results in similar schools. The work seen during the inspection confirmed that these pupils are achieving well. In most subjects they are already achieving above the standards expected for their age because they are being well taught and are working hard.
3. In 2002 standards in examinations at the end of year 11 improved considerably from the previous year and fulfilled all the predictions from earlier attainment. Both teachers and pupils had maintained very high expectations and pupils were well supported to live up to them. In 2003 standards declined sharply, back to where they had been in 2001. This was because a large number of pupils - almost one fifth - failed to realise their predicted grades. The reasons for these individuals' underachievement were mainly related to external factors which either undermined their behaviour in school or distracted them from their work as they prepared for their examinations. A smaller number were not effectively motivated because the curriculum did not really meet their needs. This was a problem which the school had not encountered previously and teachers lacked the skills, experience and the support to cope with the situation. It is clear that the number of pupils who are currently seen to be 'at risk' is closer to what the school has been used to and achievement is now satisfactory across Years 10 and 11.
4. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment is very similar to the national average, though within the more successful results in 2002, boys were much further ahead of the national average than girls.
5. The majority of pupils show good skills in English, mathematics and ICT, which helps them to make progress in all areas of the curriculum.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment, as do pupils from ethnic minority groups. In some lessons teachers rely too much on support assistants and do not adjust materials and methods to meet the needs which are identified in pupils' individual education plans. In these lessons pupils with special educational needs do not achieve well enough.
7. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory. The school has not clearly identified which pupils have particular strengths and it is not common practice to challenge these pupils to use their higher level skills in each and every lesson.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **good**. They are positive about the school, they **behave well** and the school is an orderly, harmonious community. Relationships are **very good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good cultural influences, benefiting pupils here and in the wider community.
- Behaviour is good and there is a positive, friendly and harmonious atmosphere.
- The quality of assemblies and use of thought for the day in tutor times is inconsistent; some are positive and deliver strong messages, others uninspiring.
- There are very good relationships, strongly encouraged through the good house system
- There is limited celebration or explicit awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.
- Attendance is above the national average and timekeeping is good.

Commentary

8. A major factor why relationships are so very good is that the house system successfully promotes strong social values. Both pupils and staff value the house system. Pupils enjoy meeting peers from other year groups, when they enthusiastically join in house activities such as quizzes, 'Ready Steady Cook' type challenges and sports events. They especially enjoy the competitive elements and socialising with their teachers in a different setting. Staff value these events and support them whole-heartedly. In lessons, teachers have a good rapport with pupils and there is often shared humour and a good-natured approach. This too, leads to very good relationships.
9. Behaviour is good because the school has high standards and staff have improved their methods for working with and supporting pupils whose behaviour could be potentially disruptive. The use of exclusions was frequent last year in response to specific behavioural issues with a particular year group, including a high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school have learnt important lessons through their experiences last year. Senior staff listened carefully to disaffected pupils so that they could understand the outside influences that were distracting them within school. They built closer links with the police and support agencies and whilst showing no tolerance of activities that were illegal, they worked to accommodate these pupils' needs. There are now many more behaviour and pastoral support systems in place and exclusions this year are much lower.
10. The Ofsted pupil questionnaire showed a significant number of negative replies about behaviour and bullying, warranting further investigation. In conversation, pupils agreed bullying does happen, but they were unanimous in agreeing that staff sort it out and they feel well supported.
11. The way the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Cultural development is good, with very good benefits from the school's status as a Language College. Pupils say that one of the things they enjoy about the school is the chance to study two foreign languages. A European Day of Languages has become an annual event. Here pupils, joined by many other secondary schools, enjoy a range of events with a cultural theme, including performances, workshops and taster language sessions.
12. Assemblies and tutor times are focused around 'Thought For the Day' - a daily topic to stimulate pupils into thinking and reflecting deeply. During the inspection, teachers used the theme 'personal qualities', but the quality of delivery was variable. In the best, careful choice of music and a computer presentation on different types of noteworthy qualities brought the assembly to life. A special atmosphere was created where pupils were encouraged to think about issues such as their own personal qualities and those they should aspire to. Other assemblies are flat by comparison, inaudible for some and lacking in creativity, so pupils sit passively.
13. Castle Hall is a harmonious community and pupils of different backgrounds work alongside each companionably. However, opportunities are missed to celebrate the cultural diversity of modern Britain within the school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.3	School data:	0.8
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

14. Pupils' attendance is **good** and is above the national average. Unusually, attendance fell slightly in 2003 compared to the previous year, when there were a significant number of older pupils with attendance problems. Timekeeping is **good** and pupils are punctual.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	739	115	1
White – any other White background	27	2	1
Asian or Asian British – Indian	18	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	45	11	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	3	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	2	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are both **good**. The curriculum is **good** and has been developed to be more inclusive.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are both **good**. Lessons are well planned and well managed so that pupils are confident to learn.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations and maintain a brisk pace to challenge pupils, particularly in English and history.
- The variety of approaches seen in history and in some modern languages and physical education lessons enables all pupils to participate actively and to learn very effectively.
- Assessment is not effectively used to maintain sufficient challenge for all pupils.
- In most subjects teachers do not use a sufficiently wide variety of teaching styles.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 87 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	17 (20%)	45 (52%)	22 (25%)	3 (3%)	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.

15. A high proportion of teaching is good with careful planning and effective management of pupils to create positive relationships. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen. However, within this good teaching there is too little variety and too little scope for pupils to work independently as teachers strive to ensure that they manage the way pupils learn. Consequently the most competent pupils are not consistently challenged to think differently from other pupils in the groups. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Support assistants are particularly effective, helping pupils to gain confidence in their abilities and to achieve well both in lessons and when they are withdrawn from class for extra help. However, materials and tasks are not always effectively adapted for pupils with special educational needs so that they struggle to keep up without additional support.
16. In English, teachers use questioning very effectively to promote exploratory thinking and organise group work effectively so that all pupils are drawn into the activities and have the opportunity to talk about the work and deepen their understanding. In history the level of challenge is kept high because lessons are lively, varied and continually challenge all pupils to understand new concepts and the language that goes with them. The range of different activities seen here and in some lessons in modern languages and physical education, for instance, enable all pupils to exploit their own most effective learning styles.
17. The effective management and positive relationships mean that the great majority of pupils learn effectively most of the time. In Years 10 and 11 an increasing proportion of pupils struggle to balance classroom demands with pressures from their daily lives, but the school has developed an effective range of support to help them. Some older pupils find that the wide range of subjects they are studying dilutes the priority they can give to each subject and this undermines their concentration.
18. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers have become increasingly adept at gathering information to monitor how well pupils are doing over time and identifying those who may be falling behind. Day to day marking is less effective. Teachers are not good enough at assessing which pupils have learned effectively within each individual lesson and written comments on pupils' work do not give them enough guidance about how to get better.
19. Assessment for individual pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are well monitored and targets set for pupils with special educational needs in all subjects. Annual reviews provide good assessment information by which targets for progress can be established and monitored. The school has no mechanism by which it can monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs as a separate group and compare their progress with the rest of the school. However, the performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups in GCSE examinations is carefully compared with that of other pupils to identify any differences in achievement.

The curriculum

The breadth and range of curriculum opportunities are **good**, but the balance needs improvement. The overall sufficiency of staffing, accommodation and resources to support the curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is sufficiently diverse to meet pupils' needs; it offers good opportunities for most of its pupils.
- The enrichment of the curriculum beyond lessons is good.
- Specialist language college status of the school is helping to improve the curriculum provision.
- Pupils study an unusually large number of subjects for GCSE examinations, which restricts other timetable opportunities.
- The teaching and support staff are both of a good quality.

Commentary

20. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 builds on the strengthening links with the primary schools. All National Curriculum subjects are taught together with religious education and personal, social and health education. Although these subjects provide a good range of appropriate and stimulating activities, insufficient time is given to personal, social and health education and citizenship.
21. The school has created a broad curriculum that offers pupils a wide range of GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. Additional and vocational subjects, together with a specifically designed alternative programme for a small number of pupils, enhance the breadth and relevance of the curriculum for this age group.
22. This wide provision offers a sufficient range of learning opportunities to suit the needs and aptitudes of almost all pupils, with equal access and opportunities to learn. The school has made good progress in its curriculum provision since the last inspection. However, in a recent review the school has recognised that not enough opportunities exist to cater for the particular needs of all pupils and is taking steps to rectify the matter. The number of subjects studied for GCSE restricts the timetable in other areas such as ICT and subjects contributing to personal development such as citizenship and drama.
23. Pupils take part in a very broad range of worthwhile activities both at school and in the wider community. A series of visits, cultural links, subject clubs, charity fundraising events, together with a good range of social activities, are regularly provided. The house system also promotes inter-house challenges and competitions. Language status supports international links and worldwide activities on offer to pupils.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils from minority ethnic groups is satisfactory. Those with learning difficulties are provided with a good range of activities outside the classroom to support their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils who are seen to be at risk of exclusion improve their social skills and behaviour through their attendance at a local pupil referral unit. They are then successfully reintegrated back into school. Individual education plans are of good quality but are not always used effectively by teachers in the classroom.
25. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. However, there is a shortage of ICT accommodation to match the current curriculum and the inadequate provision for indoor games is affecting standards in physical education.
26. There is a satisfactory match of teachers to subjects, though the professional development of staff has been curtailed by budgetary restrictions. The school has not allowed pupils' learning to be affected by long term absences and unfilled posts. The protocol for the induction of new staff is being reviewed, though the experience of newly-qualified teachers, notably in the English department, has been one of very helpful guidance and support. The retention of staff has been satisfactory, with considerable thought given to their professional development and promotion.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is **good**. They are provided with **satisfactory** levels of support, advice and guidance. The school involves pupils **satisfactorily** through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety procedures are firmly established and high quality.
- The pastoral systems for supporting pupils who need extra help and guidance have considerably improved recently.
- Form tutors and year group managers are beginning to take much more responsibility for overseeing pupils' academic and personal progress.

- Systems for consulting pupils and responding to their views are informal, although a school council is currently being set up.

Commentary

27. Health and safety systems are good and staff in the school have comprehensive understanding of health and safety requirements. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and pupils with special educational needs are well cared for.
28. The school has recently overhauled the way in which it helps pupils who need extra support and guidance. Whilst at an early stage of change, the school is now much more able to identify and help vulnerable pupils. Involvement with external agencies such as Connexions¹ has improved and monitoring of pupils' personal development is more rigorous. Pupils are happy that there are staff they can turn to for help and feel that the school listens to them much more than it used to. The role of form tutors and year group managers is now more focused on monitoring pupils' academic progress. This was spearheaded during the new 'review day' last term when tutors, parents and pupils met to review progress and set targets for improvement.
29. Systems for consulting pupils and acting on their views are currently taking place informally via form representatives. The new headteacher has already discussed with prefects areas both he and pupils would like to see improved. Certain developments, like an improvement in the quality of catering, are already evident. A new school council is currently being established.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **satisfactory**. Partnerships with most other schools, colleges and universities are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good partnerships with outlying primary schools which are really benefiting pupils who are taught foreign languages by Castle Hall staff.
- The productive two-way partnerships with local colleges and especially with Leeds University bring positive, tangible benefits to the school.
- The school is harnessing parental support much more and introducing some good systems for improving communication.
- The very good provision for teaching languages in primary schools is not directly benefiting pupils who transfer to Castle Hall.
- Pupils' annual reports are not informative enough. The school has recognised this and is changing the format.

Commentary

30. The school involves parents much more in their child's education than was formerly the case. This conscious move has so far produced encouraging results. Nearly all parents attended the new Review Day, where they discussed their child's progress with the form tutor. Most parents found this a useful exercise and felt they gained a much broader picture of how their child was doing. Teachers now involve parents at a much earlier stage if they have concerns over a pupil's behaviour or attitude to his/her work.
31. The new system involves parents having two opportunities to meet with the form tutor over the year and an impressive three opportunities for those who have children in Year 11. These systems are not yet embedded into school practice because they are so new. Records of achievement (annual reports) are currently too focused on pupils' attitude towards the subject to be of real help to parents. The school recognises this and a new more appropriate reporting system is being introduced this year.

¹ Connexions is the agency which co-ordinates advice for pupils as they approach the end of their compulsory education.

32. The school invests heavily in a strong partnership with Leeds University. Links are especially strong in design and technology (where teachers teach part of the course to university students) and in English. Benefits are two fold: teachers benefit because they gain extra professional development in their subject and the school benefits because it takes in trainee teachers.

Language college links

33. One of the major strengths in the school's partnership with others comes through their work as a Language College. Impressively high quality French teaching is taking place in outlying primary schools, sometimes to children as young as eight years old. This is in addition to the school's support for teaching languages in a nearby secondary and special school. The school regrets that the children who come to this school from local primaries are not benefiting from these high quality opportunities. Consequently, they are starting with lower levels of attainment in foreign languages than they ought to.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher and senior management team provide **satisfactory** leadership. Governance of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision and aspires to the highest possible standards for his school.
- Governors play a decisive role in supporting the headteacher in shaping the direction of the school. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a thorough knowledge of the needs of the school.
- Subject leadership is good and contributes well to pupils' achievement.

Commentary

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,769,137	Balance from previous year	37,237
Total expenditure	2,783,407	Balance carried forward to the next	22,967
Expenditure per pupil	3,205		

34. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities well and plays a very important part in the leadership of the school. There is a very good committee structure through which all governors are enabled to play a full part in strategic planning and in formulating policies. Governors have been active in identifying the school's new development priorities and their mentoring of the new headteacher prior to his appointment was excellent. They are committed, perceptive and determined to raise standards, balancing sharply perceptive challenge with high quality support.
35. The headteacher's leadership of the school is currently satisfactory. Since his appointment in September 2003, he has worked in a purposeful and determined way to secure the commitment of staff to improving the curriculum and to raising standards. He has very clear views of the school's future development, including the need for a broader curriculum and the greater involvement of both staff and pupils in the process of improvement. He provides the driving force, in partnership with the governing body, for improving the quality of provision, ably supported by two deputy heads, two assistant heads and the school bursar. They have some innovative and ambitious ideas and are in the process of setting in place clear management

systems that enable them to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has made considerable strides since the headteacher's appointment and the pace of change and improvement is accelerating. The school is now in a good position to secure further improvements in raising standards and in the consistency of some aspects of the school's work. The school is managed in a satisfactory manner and financial management is very good. The very high quality financial systems facilitate excellent monitoring. There is good teamwork between the headteacher, bursar and well informed governors to ensure that educational decisions carry most weight within their very good strategic planning.

36. Subject leadership is very good in history and English and good in almost all other subjects. Subject management is satisfactory though many subject leaders do not monitor and evaluate the work of their departments systematically enough and do not use performance data, currently available in the school, effectively enough to set targets for improvement, either for individual pupils or for the department as a whole.
37. The leadership of the special needs provision in the school is good and it is managed well. Individual education plans and annual reviews are well monitored and reviewed according to statutory requirements. The team of support assistants is well deployed and has good access to opportunities for professional development in a relevant range of special educational needs. The department has close and very effective links with outside agencies. Currently there is insufficient time allocated for the special educational needs co-ordinator to monitor the teaching and learning of individual pupils in the classroom. Consequently, teachers need more support in developing skills to modify work to suit different levels of ability and in the use of individual education plans to support learning more effectively.
38. Senior managers are now clear about the school's priorities. Longer-term planning is clearly identified in the school's development plan and the priorities are relevant. However, time scales and success criteria in the current plan are not sharp enough to enable the school to monitor and evaluate effectively its progress in meeting its priorities. The headteacher has now introduced a new five year plan which is currently undergoing staff consultation.
39. New systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the school by senior and middle managers are beginning to take effect, in particular the quality of teaching and learning and its performance in external tests and examinations. Such activities are leading to improvements in the consistency of approach in a number of areas across the school. The monitoring of the performance of departments has only recently been put in place, with targets set but as yet no lesson observations.
40. The school now makes satisfactory arrangements to ensure that it is inclusive for all pupils. The buildings do not afford access for wheelchairs and the narrow staircases and corridors give limited access to physically disabled pupils and staff. However, the unsatisfactory response to pupils who misbehaved and were disengaged from learning which contributed to the decline in GCSE results in 2003 has now been eliminated. A curriculum review is under way to match the provision more closely to pupils' needs in Years 10 and 11. More flexible arrangements are already in place with off site courses for some pupils who might otherwise have 'opted out'. A more positive response to misbehaviour includes linking referrals to an internal exclusion room to discussions with parents, so that every opportunity is taken to prevent pupils' mistakes developing into persistent or habitual negative behaviour. The school has developed close links with the 'Connexions' service so that the full range of support services can be co-ordinated if any pupil is seen to be suffering because of personal or domestic difficulties. Pastoral managers are now reviewing assessment data more effectively to identify any signs that individuals may be falling behind and the attainment of ethnic minority pupils is carefully compared with that of other pupils for any signs of disadvantage. Most crucially, those pupils who are seen to be at risk feel that their needs are being met and the school is listening seriously to their concerns.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Collaborative work is very effective.
- Teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- Pupils' high level of engagement supports good learning.
- There is insufficient use of data to track pupils.
- Higher attainers achieve very well in GCSE English literature.

Commentary

41. On entry to the school, pupils' standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are well above national averages. During their first three years in the school, pupils achieve well so that overall standards in English are at least as good as those of pupils in similar schools. The results in the 2003 tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average. Pupils continue to make good progress in their GCSE courses, where standards were above average in the 2003 examination and well above average in English literature. Work seen during the inspection confirms these standards. Pupils of average and below average ability achieve better than expected. Those with special educational needs are well catered for. They cover the same breadth of curriculum as other pupils and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well where tasks require sophisticated reading skills but fare less well where the emphasis is on writing skills. In general, pupils' writing skills are well above national averages but the learning of boys is significantly less than that of girls. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated into activities and generally achieve well.
42. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is often very good. Teachers are in absolute command of the material to be taught and so can respond flexibly and with confidence to the learning needs of each pupil. Maintaining this high standard has been a major achievement in view of the loss of key staff. In particular, teachers' insistence on excellent standards of behaviour, combined with their encouragement of pupils' own points of view, produces highly articulate pupils. These pupils have a remarkable ability to think, reflect and understand the views of others, although this practice is not consistent in all classes.
43. English staff have responded well to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy² with a major review of their practice. Teachers make very good use of pair and group work to which pupils respond very well and which ensures that all pupils are included in the learning. Pupils develop excellent listening skills and are impressive in their ability to take turns in making contributions. Through mutual collaboration and support, they often progress at a faster rate than when working independently. They apply themselves to their work very well and they are easily able to sustain independent concentration. Pupils appreciate material and texts that contain meaty issues and

² **KEY STAGE 3 NATIONAL STRATEGY**

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy aims to raise standards by strengthening teaching and learning in all secondary schools for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. This National Strategy now affects all subjects. It started with English and mathematics in 2001 and now includes science, information and communication technology and teaching and learning in the foundation subjects as well as ensuring that all subject departments contribute to the development of pupils' understanding and skills in literacy and numeracy. For more information please go to the Government's Department for Education and Skills web-site: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3

develop their skills more rapidly when this is the case. They are ready to be challenged from the beginning of Year 7 and the department needs to do more to meet this need. In particular, the writing tasks given to pupils do not at times provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to extend and stretch their skills. There is some good practice in marking on the part of more experienced teachers but in general it is inconsistent, with comments that are overly generalised. However, lower attaining pupils are very well supported to produce coherent, organised writing that often uses complex sentences.

44. Lessons are organised very efficiently. Tasks are time limited so that pupils are impelled to work at a fast pace with very little time wasting. Resources are always carefully planned and of a high quality. The language is suitable for the particular needs of the pupil, well presented and very closely linked to learning objectives and requirements.
45. Teaching approaches in GCSE classes are underpinned by an excellent understanding of how pupils achieve. Learning objectives and tasks are informed by GCSE requirements and pupils are taught explicitly what they need to do to improve. Teachers are very skilled in using a variety of strategies that sustain pupils' interest. Where teaching is very good, space is made for pupils to discuss issues arising from the texts being studied or from issues about which pupils feel passionately. In these classes, pupils are highly analytical. In a Year 11 class examining a government leaflet for teacher recruitment, pupils quickly identified the persuasive techniques being used, even those that were very subtle. Their comments on the manipulation involved were highly acute.
46. The leadership and the management of the department are very good. All the work of the department is imbued with a strong and corporate sense of purpose that comes from the head of department. Her understanding of the learning needs of pupils is informed by successful experience and her own excellent relationships with them. Her ability to develop their learning through dialogue and respect is outstanding, providing a role model for others both inside and outside the school. The strategic development of English as yet lacks sufficient precision and focus, including how it links to whole school priorities. Data is insufficiently used to track pupils from the start of Year 7 in order to identify where earlier interventions are required, particularly with regard to boys. However, the support and development of two newly qualified teachers by the head of department have been very good and under her leadership the department has made good progress since the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils enter the school with well-developed literacy skills that are then built on through a range of imaginative literacy approaches within individual subject departments. In science, for example, a good emphasis on the correct use of scientific vocabulary is accompanied by creative writing, including poems related to the issue at hand. In modern foreign languages, pupils are encouraged to use complex sentences, to use language that expresses opinions and to give reasons for their answers. In religious education, writing frames are used to help pupils develop the skills of language for evaluation. In history, when pupils are asked for spoken contributions they are stretched to develop their critical thinking skills. All this work is underpinned by the effectiveness of a strong English department, producing pupils who are confident, articulate and clear in their use of standard English. A particular success is the high quality of reading and writing skills evident amongst lower attaining pupils, who continue to strengthen as they progress through the school.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is varied and lively so learning is good.
- Leadership and management are good.

- The language college offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities and has established very good partnerships with schools in the Kirklees area.
- Marking is inconsistent, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Regular access to information and communication technology (ICT) promotes good learning.

Commentary

48. Standards in the Year 9 teachers' assessments of 2003 were above average. However, since the previous inspection attainment in the languages offered at GCSE has fluctuated widely. Standards in French in 2003 were above average, an improvement over the previous year. German standards were broadly in line with national averages and represent a decline from 2002, but in Spanish attainment is below national averages, a decline from 2002 but better than in previous years.
49. Inspection evidence shows that the standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work throughout the school are average. In the current Year 9, pupils are beginning to exploit past and future time, which enables them to achieve that level. There is a high standard of accuracy in their work, but there is scope for more extended writing and more challenge in the other skills in order to progress beyond the average. In Years 10 and 11, standards are average and pupils are attaining as expected within their capabilities. There is good extended writing by higher attainers and strong evidence of good revision support in examination classes. All pupils are encouraged to adopt strategies for improving the quality of their productive language and teachers' expectations are high, but many middle to low attainers are losing track of basic grammar and sacrificing accuracy in the pursuit of higher goals. Achievement across all years is satisfactory, including for pupils with special educational needs who are given extra help in class and in some cases are withdrawn for their own well structured lessons which are tailored to their individual needs.
50. Teaching is good overall. Some very good lessons were seen and one in a partner primary school was outstanding. Teachers emphasise basic literacy skills, especially in promoting ways of enhancing the language pupils speak and write, with joining words, opinions, reasons and descriptive detail. The lessons have a brisk pace, offer a good variety of activities and often increase pupils' involvement and enthusiasm with games and "fun" elements. They also allow plenty of opportunity to work independently in pairs or in groups. All these elements encourage good learning. ICT in particular is a very good motivator and the well-constructed interactive programs on the languages website offer interest and challenge in practising language patterns and consolidating knowledge. Although pupils receive plenty of feedback in lessons, the grading of work in Years 10 and 11 is inconsistent. The data gained from major assessments and for predicting future progress and attainment are not yet sufficiently applied to enable more rigorous target setting.
51. The department is committed to raising standards and is supporting several groups of pupils with extra classes to encourage them to achieve their potential. A new, business-orientated certificate replaces the GCSE short courses as a qualification more suited to pupils' needs. The system within the department of regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching is good, especially in the opportunity given to the team to observe each other and share good practice.
52. Owing to its status as a specialist language college the school offers a wide range of languages (Japanese being the fourth) and all pupils have the opportunity to study two languages throughout their school career. Plans are in place to offer Urdu and Panjabi to support pupils who speak the languages but need to write to a better standard. The department has a high profile, with a variety of clubs and activities within the school, opportunities in each year to travel abroad and the effective promotion of the international dimension in the subjects of the curriculum. It supports partnership initiatives with primary and secondary schools within the authority and has mutually beneficial arrangements with sixth form and further education colleges. It enjoys good accommodation and makes good use of the enhanced resources it receives, especially ICT.

53. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils respond more readily to using the foreign language in class and are generally well motivated in Year 11.

Example of outstanding practice

As an example of the language college's outreach to other schools in the authority, a former, now retired, deputy head visits several primary schools to teach French. This is, however, of limited benefit in raising standards in Year 7, as very few of the primary school pupils involved come to Castle Hall.

In the lesson seen there was a teacher observing, assisting and training with a view eventually to taking over. The class of Year 4 pupils showed a very good recall of what they had previously learned on personal details and the weather. Central to this was the use of "fun" games with repetition and gesture, an excellent aid to learning which reinforced pronunciation and intonation, especially in raising the voice in a question. This was enhanced further by the excellent use of rhymes to emphasise the rhythm of the language, to reinforce the context of the items practised and to encourage retention. The very brisk pace involved all pupils directly in the activities and tasks. The new challenge in the language was to remember the different words used in front of members of their family. The pupils showed good understanding of "mon père, ma mère" (from the previous lesson), and were able to add "mes parents" and apply it to other members. This is to prepare them later for the concept of gender and number when applied to inanimate objects, and adjective agreement. Achievement was outstanding, with excellent retention, concentration and enthusiasm throughout the lesson.

MATHEMATICS

Overall the provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations.
- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- The range of teaching approaches is too narrow.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very well.
- The mathematics curriculum manager has a clear vision, which is shared by her team.
- Marking is inconsistent.

Commentary

54. From primary school test results, attainment of pupils on entry is above average in mathematics with more higher attainers than is usual. In the tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, in comparison to similar schools, results were well above the national average. GCSE results were above the national average though pupils did less well than their results in Year 9 had predicted and the number achieving A* or A grades was very low. In work seen standards across all years are above average. This represents satisfactory achievement overall.
55. Teaching is good with some elements which are very good. A strength is the way teachers get pupils thinking mathematically as they enter the class by very good use of starter activities. Very good knowledge of the subject helps teachers plan well to ensure that all pupils develop their skills and understanding. Teachers' high expectations lead to pupils being engaged in their work and given a lot of encouragement and consequently to good learning in most lessons. There is a limited range of teaching approaches deployed. The most common is didactic teaching, with the teacher leading pupils along a carefully planned learning path. Mostly closed questions are used, which have only one answer. Pupils participate better when questioning is brisk within short timed exercises.
56. Some group work, more open questioning and challenging open-ended tasks were all seen. In a Year 10 class pupils worked co-operatively in lively, totally focused group discussion using all their previously learned statistics knowledge to compare sets of data. By this method they increased their understanding of data handling and interpretation. Greater use of these is likely to help develop pupils as more independent learners and thinkers who will be better equipped to achieve the highest GCSE grades in mathematics. Pupils who are gifted and talented are not

identified so no special provision is made for them. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to help pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups take a full part in the lessons, achieving very well in higher sets and benefiting from good support in lower sets.

57. Learning is good and all pupils are treated with respect and encouraged to do their best. Their contributions are well received, even when not correct. In a minority of lessons pupils do not settle to being fully on task or they drift off task as pace and challenge are not maintained. However, most pupils make good progress. Their knowledge, skills and understanding develop at a good pace. Pupils respond particularly well to stimulating teaching. The vast majority of pupils are conscientious and engage willingly in their work. They generally take a pride in their work, including its appearance and presentation.
58. Teachers keep a careful track on progress in learning and this is communicated to pupils. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and rarely gives pupils information about how they can improve.
59. The department is well led and well managed. The curriculum manager for mathematics continues to have high aspirations for the department, with a focus on pupil achievement. She is the lead professional in the department very ably supported by her team and she is a good role model. All staff are clear about their responsibilities in the department and as a team their contribution to pupils' achievements is very good. Staff development is crucially needed to bring about the long term improvements in the range of teaching approaches required to challenge and extend the most able pupils. The good practice already in the department and in the school has not been systematically identified and spread to all the department team, nor have they learned from the best practice in other schools. Current setting arrangements in Years 10 and 11 are a barrier to pupils achieving the highest grades because teachers are not planning flexibly to meet the needs of all pupils in the different sets.
60. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Results have risen by more than the national trend in Year 9 and Year 11. Improvement has taken place in the range of teaching approaches used but further developments are needed to inspire pupils from their entry into school in order to secure many more top GCSE grades.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. All but the least able pupils, from entering the school in Year 7, have a good level of numeracy which they use well as required in other subjects. For instance, in learning science pupils successfully use graphs, indices, manipulate formulae and in geography field work graphs, charts, correlation, evaluation and interpretation skills are used. In Year 11 English lessons pupils' good understanding of number make them very alert to the use of big numbers for persuasive purposes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership ensures that the department is focused on good-quality teaching and learning and because of this standards are rising.
- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 9
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to plan their own work in Years 10 and 11 and consequently are not developing fully as independent learners.
- Marking of class books and tests does not give pupils enough help in identifying what needs to improve nor guidance on how to improve.
- Very good use is made of practical work to underpin the learning of scientific principles.

- Good working relationships give pupils the confidence to enter into discussions.
- ICT is not used widely enough to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

62. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have risen sharply over recent years. They were well above average in 2003 and have improved from the previous inspection. Work seen during the inspection confirmed these standards and pupils are achieving well. This has been mainly due to the head of department, who has sharply focused the department on good-quality teaching and learning. Additionally, a new curriculum and greater variety of teaching methods is producing more pupils working at higher levels and enjoying science.
63. Standards at the end of Year 11 have been rising more slowly, with a slight fall in the 2003 GCSE results which were below average. Work seen during the inspection indicates that current standards are just above average. Consequently, achievement through the school is only satisfactory. All pupils are treated equally and make similar progress. Lower achievement in Years 10 and 11 is mainly due to the lack of variety of teaching methods and too much direction by teachers. Pupils do not fully develop their independence or interest because they have little control over their own learning. However, this is already changing as the department learns from its success in Years 7 to 9 and builds on the positive attitudes that are coming through.
64. Practical investigations are used very effectively to help pupils understand scientific principles. All pupils have a very good understanding of scientific method and high attainers produce predictions based on research and evaluate their work with maturity and understanding. Teachers' assessments have become more accurate because of the increased frequency of tests and the analysis of the results. Pupils with special educational needs work in smaller classes, get more individual help and, consequently, make good progress. More able pupils are not always given work to fully extend their thinking and consequently some do not achieve the highest levels in Year 11. Pupils develop good literacy skills through discussions and writing their own descriptions and conclusions.
65. Teaching and learning are good, which shows good improvement from the previous inspection. Lessons are carefully planned with a common structure to promote good learning. In the very good examples of teaching there is a lively introduction, a variety of activities that fully engage the pupils in their learning and a final in-depth check of understanding. In these classes, pupils respond well when given the opportunity to work independently. They enthusiastically contribute to discussions and learning games and clearly enjoy the excitement of learning in science. In the occasional lesson where planning is not so precise the final check of understanding tends to be too brief. In consequence, teachers cannot be certain that all pupils have achieved the learning targets. Some teachers have improved their use of ICT to make learning easier but it is not used widely enough for presentation or to enhance teaching and learning. Books are regularly marked with ticks but because only a small number of teachers include individual guidance and helpful advice, pupils are not supported to make progress. The working relationships between teachers and pupils are good and give pupils the confidence to join in the frequent discussions and to both ask and answer questions.
66. Leadership and management are good. This has improved from the previous inspection. Assessment and analysis of results are used effectively to influence curriculum planning. Although assessment and target-setting systems are good, they do not go far enough in identifying specific scientific areas for individual pupils to improve. An innovative course in science that allows less able pupils to undertake work related to their ability and interest has been introduced in Year 10. There is a very good team spirit and the head of department is providing the leadership necessary to take the department forward and improve standards. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching supports above average standards and good achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- The timetable for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is undermining achievement.
- Day to day assessment is ineffective.

Commentary

67. Pupils come to the school with varied experience of using information and communication technology (ICT), but the overall standard is just below average. Fewer pupils than expected have enough familiarity with different software programs to move quickly onto the recommended activities for Year 7.
68. By the time they are in Year 9 pupils are working on coursework for their GCSE examinations and standards are above average. This represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to focus on the main concepts and so achieve well.
69. In Years 10 and 11 standards are currently average. All pupils are working towards a GCSE qualification – a much higher proportion than is usual. Results in GCSE in 2003 were average and the trend over recent years has been steady improvement. However, these pupils are not achieving as well as they could. The complex school timetable only affords them one lesson every two weeks. Routine interruptions to the calendar mean that some pupils missed half of their lessons last term. This situation interrupts the continuity of the course and reduces the priority of the course for pupils who are taking many more GCSE examinations than is usual. Though teachers plan effectively for much of the work to be done at home, they cannot maintain the necessary level of supervision. Many pupils spend too much time on simple tasks and, although they produce extensive coursework, they remain at the same level. For example, they are required to evaluate the way they have solved problems using ICT, but most evaluations tend to describe how they did the work rather than assessing how effectively they did it. This habit of low level working lulls them into a similar approach in class, but teachers see them too infrequently to break this habit.
70. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and supports good learning. Teachers know their subject well. They plan and prepare resources effectively and manage pupils well to create a very positive working atmosphere. All pupils are motivated, challenged and keen to develop their skills. They have all learned to focus on the higher level tasks.
71. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are both satisfactory. Teachers still plan effectively, but find it harder to establish a relationship where the work can be challenging and stimulate pupils to work even harder. However, assessment is not used effectively to assess whether individual pupils are achieving as well as they should.
72. The timetable problems reflect unsatisfactory whole school management of the subject, though the subject manager has worked well to minimise the problems by starting the GCSE course in Year 9. This capitalises on pupils' motivation and the lack of competing priorities in that year and the arrangement works well. Day to day management is efficient and improvement in the subject has been good since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Pupils across all years are competent enough to use ICT to enhance their learning in other subjects. This was seen during the inspection in modern languages and in mathematics, where the use of computers not only motivated pupils but made the work more inclusive by appealing to pupils with different learning styles. However, it is not possible for most subject teachers to

book computer facilities at times when they could make the best use of them. As a result, few subjects are exploiting this way of enlivening or adding variety to the teaching.

HUMANITIES

Geography

The quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Teaching is well planned so that standards are rising steadily across all years.
- High attaining pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Assessment is used well to set specific targets for pupils.
- Pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT provision.

Commentary

74. Standards have risen since the last inspection and work seen during the inspection shows that attainment is above average by the end of Year 9 and achievement is good. The GCSE results in 2003 were average. Boys did less well than girls and this has been recognised and is being addressed by a change of syllabus and new coursework arrangements are now in place. Results show a steady improvement over the last six years, with a good recent improvement in the number of boys and girls attaining higher grades. The work seen during the inspection confirms that that attainment is average by the end of Year 11 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, those with special educational needs and the highest attaining pupils achieve as well as they can because they are challenged by the work expected of them and are given different individual support according to their needs.
75. Teaching and learning are good. Good subject knowledge enables teachers to introduce and explain topics well. Careful planning requires pupils to think and investigate rather than simply learning basic geographical facts so that learning is good. Assessment procedures are good and peer and self assessment are well embedded within the subject. However, pupils' work is likely to improve further if teachers give more detail about how this could be achieved. Pupils show good attitudes and behaviour and work well together. Teachers manage pupils well, praise and encourage them when appropriate and ensure good relationships in lessons. As a result, learning is good in relation to the aims that are clearly set out at the beginning of lessons.
76. Pupils develop good research and investigative skills, and 'inquiry' methods including fieldwork, coursework and visits are a feature of the department's work. In Year 11, for example, they have produced good GCSE coursework on a study of 'Holmfirth' as a popular tourist area.
77. The leadership and management of the department are both good and improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The head of geography leads a small team of teachers who focus on raising standards and the pupils have benefited through the implementation of 'inquiry' methods in lessons. Teaching, therefore, has improved. Accommodation is good, as are the resources in the department. However, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is hindered by the lack of access to ICT facilities in school.

History

The overall quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above average and pupils make good progress by the end of Year 11.
- Teaching and learning are very good, effectively supporting individual learning needs.
- Assessment for learning is a key feature in achievement.

- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning.
- Very effective leadership has ensured considerable improvement in standards.

Commentary

78. Results at GCSE in 2003 were above average. Work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are above average by the end of Year 11 and achievement is good. Effective teaching and learning strategies play a significant role in achieving this standard. Information is presented logically and clearly. Critical thinking skills are well developed. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of the factors that affect the development of the modern world and can identify links. They are able to highlight the significance of history to today's society.
79. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs usually achieve well because they have access to specially adapted resources and teaching assistants who have been able to develop their own good understanding of the subject over time and can focus pupils' attention on the key concepts and ideas. However, in one lesson this was not the case and two pupils struggled to participate because the text they were using was too difficult. In extended writing assignments pupils demonstrate sound research and compilation skills. Lower ability pupils identify relevant information. Higher ability pupils use this to make judgements that they then support with reasons.
80. The very good teaching, supported by very positive pupil attitudes, strengthens rising standards. Teachers have high expectations and as a result pupils are encouraged to learn very well. Lessons are well planned to involve pupils of different abilities and from different backgrounds in a variety of learning activities. Well presented, interesting and varied resources including pictorial historical resources, mind maps and time lines are effective in encouraging pupils to use the information they gain rather than simply note it. Teachers use innovative activities to energise pupils and reinforce their prior learning. Key issues are identified at the start enabling them to focus on significant points. Teachers set challenging and exciting tasks such as role plays that respond to different types of learning styles. This ensures that the wide range of pupil needs is well catered for. Assessment, including regular pupil evaluation, is an integral part of learning. Marking is consistent and informative and supports good target setting and planning.
81. The learning experience is enriched by the inclusion of additional curricular activities, for example a battlefields tour and museum visits, but ICT within the subject is underused at present owing to restrictions on accessing computers.
82. The department is well led with a clear sense of direction. The subject manager is committed to raising standards and to effective teamwork within the department through sharing best practice and continuous professional development. Planning is detailed and the department is constantly reviewing and developing its learning materials. The change of syllabus to the Modern World has led to an increase in the number of boys taking the subject. Good improvement has continued since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment and monitoring of progress contribute significantly to good achievement.
- Good teaching is challenging and encourages independent learning.
- Independent learning is not sufficiently supported by the use of ICT.
- Extra-curricular enrichment does not yet contribute effectively to pupils' religious development.

Commentary

83. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average in both the short and full courses. Present standards in Years 10 and 11 indicate pupils' level of attainment is in line with the national average on the short course and above average on the full course. All pupils, including those with special education needs, achieve well. Their knowledge and understanding of the topics covered are secure but the evaluation elements of the syllabus are not systematic enough, particularly in the short course. This need is being addressed effectively, for instance, by the use of writing frames to provide step by step support through the evaluation.
84. Pupils' attainment on entry is average in Year 7 and by the end of Year 9 in relation to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils have a good grasp of symbolism and the meaning of ritual and are able to distinguish the main religions. Their spiritual and moral development is supported because they have the opportunity to explore ethical and moral questions and as a result they appreciate the connection between belief and behaviour. Although the school is working to develop links with a wider range of faith communities, pupils are less well prepared to appreciate the cultural diversity within this country because lessons tend to focus on the differences rather than the similarities between religions and traditions.
85. Both teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned and effective strategies are used to help all pupils learn. The level of challenge is good and teachers' expectations are met by the generally purposeful response of the pupils who make good intellectual efforts and work well together. Learning is hampered, on occasion, by poor classroom management and a lack of challenge especially for the higher attaining pupils. Effective assessment procedures are in place and these contribute significantly to pupils' achievement because they know what level they are at and what they are aiming for. Marking of written work is less helpful particularly in Years 7 to 9 because it does not always tell the pupils how they can improve. There are few opportunities to take advantage of ICT to encourage independent learning, particularly further research into the topics they are studying, mainly because of difficulty of access to computers in lesson time.
86. Leadership of the department is good because there is clear vision and commitment to improvement. Pupils experience limited enrichment opportunities but already improvements are planned.
87. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The time given to religious education is now satisfactory, assessment and monitoring meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus and standards at the end of Year 11 are now above average.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching supports above average GCSE results.
- The department is effectively led and managed.
- The links with feeder schools are not established to inform course planning at the start of Year 7.

Commentary

88. At the end of Year 9 in 2003 standards were above the national assessment averages. Work seen during the inspection shows that attainment is above average by the end of Year 9 and all pupils are achieving well. They gain a good experience of design alongside the development of a wide range of practical skills.
89. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national averages for food, graphics, electronics and textiles. Although the results for resistant materials were below national averages, they were better than expected for the pupils concerned. In lessons, overall attainment by the end of Year 11 is above average and achievement is good because of the pace and challenge set by teachers. Overall, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of materials, research and design development. Folios are good and graphical presentation is generally of a high standard. In resistant materials there is a lack of breadth in the knowledge of materials and assembly techniques. Pupils are starting to make use of computer aided design and manufacture but this has yet to become embedded in order to improve standards.
90. The quality of teaching and of learning are good and some very good lessons were seen. Planning is effective, expectations are high and objectives are shared with pupils. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils so that they behave well. Teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils and draw them into activities. The best lessons were characterised by a higher level of challenge and a faster pace of learning. Assessment practice is well established across all years and there is good feedback to pupils. The work of pupils with special educational needs is regularly monitored and teachers ensure that they progress well. Homework is used well to reinforce and support learning.
91. The leadership of the department is good with a clear ethos and high expectations for work and behaviour. The management of the department is good and there are well-planned schemes of work and policies in place. Teaching is effectively monitored by the head of department and teamwork is good. The department has identified key development issues within the limitations of their financial provision. There are no links with primary schools to inform course planning and there are very few industrial and community links, though there are good extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to complete their projects.
92. There has been very good progress since the previous inspection. Standards have improved. The quality of teaching has improved. The leadership and management of the department are now good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching supports above average standards
- There is a very good range of resources for teaching and learning.
- Assessment is well established across the department.
- There is a good use of sketchbooks in Years 7 to 9 to support activities.
- The temporary arrangements for leading and managing the subject are effective.
- There is little use of ICT as an artistic medium.

Commentary

93. In 2003 the standards assessed by teachers at the end of Year 9 were well above the national averages for art. Work seen during the inspection shows that achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 9. All pupils gain good experience in using a variety of media and exploring three-dimensional outcomes. The work is challenging and pupils

make good use of resource material including the work of other artists. Pupils make good use of sketchbooks as a resource to record ideas and techniques.

94. GCSE results in 2003 were similar to national averages but in the two previous years they were well above. The work seen during the inspection shows that by Year 11 standards attained are above average, all pupils achieve well and many pupils demonstrate creativity and originality in their work. Pupils undertake good research to develop ideas and different graphical techniques. This is leading to good examples of coursework. The majority of pupils are well motivated and have an enthusiasm for the subject.
95. The overall quality of teaching is good and this leads to good learning. Lesson planning is good and objectives are shared with the pupils. Teachers have clear expectations. Good use is made of the very wide range of resource material to support teaching and provide stimulus for pupils. Teachers have a very good rapport with pupils and this supports their good behaviour and their concentration in lessons. They provide good support for pupils with a range of special educational needs so that they are able to achieve well. Assessment practice is well established across the department and providing good feedback to pupils. Homework is used well to extend learning or as preparation for activities.
96. Art provision is currently the responsibility of the head of department for technology. The art department is managed well and schemes of work and policies are in place. Over the past year the turnover in the staffing for art has had an impact on the continuity of teaching and learning. The art specialist in the department is contributing to the effective leadership of the subject and curriculum development. However, the reduction of teaching time for art in Years 7 to 9 in this academic year is reducing opportunities for learning.
97. Display is effectively used and there are good extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to complete their projects and extension activities for gifted and talented pupils. Apart from research little use is made of ICT as an artistic medium.
98. Since the previous inspection there has been good progress. Standards at the end of Year 9 have improved. The breadth of study in Years 7 to 9 has been increased. Assessment practice is well established across the department. There are now issues with the long-term leadership and management of the department.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management provide vision and commitment to improvement.
- Challenging teaching with high expectations supports good performance.
- Good assessment contributes to higher achievement across the ability range.
- The use of ICT to teach composition and musical notation is underdeveloped.
- Numbers taking instrumental tuition are low because of restricted access.

Commentary

99. The results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average with only 50 per cent gaining grades A*-C. Present standards in Year 11 are in line with the national average, with over 60 per cent of pupils working towards the higher grades. Pupils compose effectively in a variety of styles, showing originality and a sound grasp of structure. Instrumental performances, especially of the higher attaining pupils, are of a good standard. Standards are improving because of more attention to practice, insistence on revision in examination preparation and high expectations in performance. Achievement is now satisfactory.

100. The attainment level of pupils on entry to Year 7 is around the national average. By the end of Year 9, pupils are generally working in line with the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils learn well because basic skills such as counting and listening are carefully rehearsed, musical terminology is explained well and structure is exemplified in some good examples of the twelve bar blues. Many pupils are unable to read music, relying on letters under the notes. The advantage of computer programs to enhance the teaching of musical notation and composition is not yet sufficiently exploited. All pupils achieve satisfactorily because the material given is suitable to their level of ability and linked to their learning needs. Higher attaining pupils are challenged to embellish their music further; lower attaining pupils are given more manageable steps to work through.
101. Both teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well organised in their approach. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' learning is effective. Where teaching is good, pupils are given challenging tasks and the teacher expects high standards, for example, in performance. Pupils learn through listening and analysis, skill development, trial and error, experiment in composition and through ensemble work. They work purposefully in lessons and meet the challenges they are given. Where teaching is less successful, the lesson is not planned well, the material is not challenging and the pupils are not pushed to make intellectual and creative effort.
102. Leadership is good and the clear view of necessary development is already having a major impact. There is a strong determination to succeed. Management is efficient and effective. Extra curricular musical enrichment opportunities are provided which develop cultural awareness and acknowledge ethnic diversity. Participation is good, for example, in the choirs and the band, but the uptake of instrumental tuition is slow due partly to the costs involved, which restrict access for some pupils.
103. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Teaching strategies are more varied and lower attaining pupils are now achieving satisfactorily. Singing is a regular activity in lessons and the opportunities to exercise musical skills are increasing.

Physical education

The department provides a core programme for all pupils and a GCSE course in physical education; both were inspected.

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is very good.
- Both teaching and learning are of high quality.
- Staff insist on high standards and as a result pupils bring good attitudes.
- Accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

104. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average overall and because of the strong teamwork amongst teachers most pupils are encouraged to take a full part in physical education. At GCSE, results in 2003 were well above the national average for both boys and girls. Standards in the core physical education for Years 10 and 11 are average although the range of activities offered in Year 11 is constrained owing to a lack of enough timetabled time which leads to less opportunities to learn more sports. Standards for pupils following the GCSE course in Year 11 are above average.
105. Achievement is good overall. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are keen to take part and work hard to improve their skills. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, integrate well into lessons and achieve well. In Years 10 and 11 achievement is good and is very good in the

GCSE examination course where pupils understand the link between body movement and skills acquisition.

106. Teaching and learning are good overall, always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teachers place great emphasis on challenging their pupils to reach higher levels of achievement. In a Year 7 lesson the teacher used brisk questioning to emphasise the importance of three points of contact with the floor when balancing. Subsequently pupils showed good control of their body movements to create a sequence of balances. Year 9 pupils worked hard to combine their prior knowledge with guidance from the teacher as they developed a dance routine.
107. Leadership of physical education is very good and the resultant teamwork with a commitment to self-evaluation ensures that all pupils are encouraged to give their best. Teachers are very good role models for their pupils. Management procedures are clear with monitoring systems leading to clear records of work. All pupils are assessed regularly but the use of assessment data to inform the next stages of lesson planning is not fully developed.
108. The school is a partner with 36 other primary and secondary schools in the Sports Co-ordinator Programme which aims to use secondary school experience to raise standards in primary schools. The co-ordinator is already making an impact and although the project is less than one year old it has enabled more positive contacts with local primary schools.
109. The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory. The lack of dedicated indoor space affects the continuity of learning as pupils and teachers are denied on-site gymnasium facilities for many weeks of each year. This obstructs the delivery of the full range of the national curriculum.
110. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection with all the concerns being addressed. Risk assessments are now comprehensive. There is a very good scheme of work, department development plan and handbook which helps both new and existing members of staff.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

The overall quality of provision in business education is **unsatisfactory** but there are clear signs of improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results fell well below the national average in 2003.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is helping to raise standards.
- Poor leadership and management have affected the quality and development of provision.
- Resources and business links require development in order to enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

111. GCSE results were well below the national average in 2003 owing to staffing issues throughout the teaching of the course. Assessment was unsatisfactory so it was difficult to bring about the improvements that were needed. However, in work seen during the inspection well informed teaching is supporting satisfactory achievement and standards are in line with expectations. Specific target setting and consistent assessment are insufficient to support further progression and achievement.
112. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of the subject to support learning and contribute to positive attitudes and relationships between staff and pupils. This means that pupils respond well to the demands that teachers make of them. Pupils

are confident in the discussion of business issues and enjoy the subject. They help each other and persevere to produce the necessary assignments. However there is still too little variety of teaching and learning styles which would support more effective learning by catering for individual needs.

113. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. There is no permanent head of department so there is still insufficient guidance about the best teaching approaches and little development of teamwork to develop good practice. Monitoring of the subject within the school's line management process has been inadequate. These factors contributed to the fall in results in 2003 and impact upon equality of opportunity and achievement for pupils. The lack of leadership also means that there is currently no enrichment provision within the subject, for example visits, trips, visiting speakers or enterprise scheme, and links with business are underdeveloped.
114. The learning environment has limited resources and pupils' progress is hampered by a lack of creative and extensive teaching materials. Schemes of work have recently been rewritten, and computers have been recently installed in the main business area. This will make a significant contribution to teaching and learning when further ICT resources are developed. An unfortunate consequence is that accommodation is now cramped and this prevents the effective use of a range of teaching and learning resources.
115. The trend in improvements has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Lack of staffing continuity has placed pupils at risk of underachievement. So that while standards rose until 2002 they fell drastically in 2003 to well below expectations. The school is reviewing provision in light of this.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is good.
- Despite the restricted time allocation teaching and monitoring are satisfactory.
- Pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Commentary

116. The requirements of the citizenship programme are delivered through personal, social and health education lessons, once per fortnightly cycle, as well as in form tutorial time and within the schemes of work of specific subjects. This gives satisfactory coverage of the requirements of the course. The theme for tutorial time and assembly, that of personal qualities, invited pupils to think about personal relationships and the qualities of people who help others. In history lessons pupils compared social conditions and expectations in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, and the nature and purpose of political cartoons. In science environmental and drug issues are covered and in religious education the care of the planet is highlighted in a study of Buddhism.
117. The positive attitude of pupils towards the course suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory. The major impact on pupils has been the challenge of being made to think clearly, to express, argue and justify opinions and especially to talk about personal feelings. Year 10 pupils, for instance, each had to give a short oral presentation of their work experience and Year 9 found particular difficulty in talking about personal experience of bullying and how they get on with people. The assessment scheme also requires pupils to comment on their learning. All agreed that the course helps their personal development, confidence and self-esteem.

118. The co-ordinator has ensured that the programme is fully covered. It is well led and organised through close liaison with a committed team of colleagues. Ensuring coverage involves several different contributors and makes monitoring and evaluation complex, but the management of the programme is satisfactory. Also its flexibility allows staff teaching citizenship elements to deliver them via their strengths.
119. Citizenship was not inspected at the time of the previous report.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

