

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWSOME HIGH SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEGE

Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107761

Headteacher: Mr Gerry Hull

Lead inspector: Mr Graeme Clarke

Dates of inspection: 17th to 20th January 2005

Inspection number: 268425

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: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 11 – 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 878

School address: Castle Avenue
Newsome
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
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Telephone number: 01484 226570
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr P Walker

Date of previous inspection: 1st February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Newsome High School and Sports College is a comprehensive school for 878 boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years, most of whom come from the locality of the south west of Huddersfield.

Some pupils come from further away because the school has a strong reputation for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs, of whom a third have statements of special need, make up an above average fifth of the roll. Specialised provision supports 25 pupils with hearing impairment and 21 with physical impairment. Other special educational needs supported by the school are mainly dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social and behavioural disorders, and autism and dyspraxia. About two thirds of pupils have a white British heritage and most others come from a mainly mixed white Caribbean or Pakistani background. Significant minorities include pupils from white, mixed Asian, Indian and Bangladeshi, and Caribbean backgrounds. Very small numbers come from other backgrounds. About a sixth of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. Of these, 28 who are at the early stages of learning English are supported by a specialist co-ordinator and a bilingual teaching assistant. The main languages other than English in the school are Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, which are mostly disadvantaged. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average, with a very clear minority whose literacy and social skills are well below average. By Year 11, almost a fifth of pupils have left or joined the school other than at the times of normal transfer.

The school is a Specialist Sports College of long standing and the community makes extensive use of its sports facilities. The school was re-awarded Investors in People status in 2004, the Artsmark in 2003, a School Achievement Award in 2002, and the Sportsmark in 2002. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The school was named *Npower Disability Sports School of the Year* in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
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| 18989 | Mr Bernard Mason | Team inspector | English |
| 24887 | Miss Yvonne Salmons | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages |
| | | | English as an additional language |
| 4720 | Mr Graham Carter | Team inspector | Science |
| 33115 | Mr Martin Horne | Team inspector | Geography |
| | | | History |
| 16890 | Mrs Maureen Potter | Team inspector | Religious education |
| | | | Citizenship |
| 25894 | Mr Clive Petts | Team inspector | Design and technology |
| | | | Information and communication technology |
| 15940 | Dr Norman Godfrey | Team inspector | Art and design |
| 8360 | Mr Fred Peacock | Team inspector | Music |
| 32724 | Mr Geoff Jepson | Team inspector | Physical education |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which is fully inclusive in providing good quality education. Although pupils' attainment in tests and examinations is below average, good teaching helps most pupils to achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with physical or hearing impairment are helped to achieve very well. Attendance has improved from below average in 2003 to 2004 and is now satisfactory. Good leadership, satisfactory management and excellent financial management result in the school giving very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision is excellent in physical education, and very good in mathematics, history and citizenship, but is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and is outstanding for physically and hearing impaired pupils, but is inconsistent for gifted and talented pupils.
- Pupils' misbehaviour or bad manners are not managed consistently.
- Very good opportunities to enrich pupils' experience and very good community links, lead pupils to a very good appreciation of their own and other cultures, excellent participation in sports and very good involvement in the arts and other activities.
- Provision does not fully meet the statutory requirements for work-related learning, for religious education in Years 10 and 11, nor for a daily act of collective worship.

Good improvements made since the previous inspection have addressed two very important issues. First, teaching quality is now much better because national strategies for improvement are implemented, and very good use is made of classroom assistants. In turn, achievement is raised, and very good quality provision made in some subjects, including citizenship. Secondly, an excellent and determined approach, has effectively dealt with high levels of absence. However, in relation to other issues raised, some teachers do not deal consistently with the behaviour of a relatively small number of pupils. Improvements in the facilities and curriculum for ICT have not led to improved achievement because weaknesses in teaching exist. New members recently appointed to the leadership team have clearly defined roles, but all continue to carry a very heavy workload.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance compared with: | | all schools | | | similar schools |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
| Year 11 | GCSE/GNVQ examinations | D | D | D | E |

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils have attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Achievement is good overall. Pupils' attainments when they join the school in Year 7 are below average, and a large minority of pupils have well below average literacy and social skills. Results in Year 9 tests for English, mathematics and science have improved more rapidly than the national trend in recent years, but information is not available to make comparisons with the national average for 2004. GCSE results rose a little in 2004, after a dip in 2003, but are below the national average and well below that of similar schools. The pattern of results in recent years lies below the national trend. Standards in current work seen are average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' language, mathematical and ICT skills are average. Pupils achieve well in most subjects in Years 7 to 9, and in Years 10 and 11. Their achievement is unsatisfactory overall in ICT, and in religious education in Years 10

and 11, but is very good in physical education and citizenship. Boys did better than girls in GCSE. The many pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as do those for whom English is not their first language. Gifted and talented pupils achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall. Cultural development is very good. Pupils' attitudes to school are generally good. Behaviour is satisfactory in most lessons and when pupils move about the school. However, the misbehaviour of some pupils, in Years 8 and 9 particularly, limits the progress of others in their classes. Attendance was unsatisfactory in 2003 to 2004.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good, and leads to good learning and achievement. More very good and excellent lessons take place in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Unsatisfactory teaching seen, mostly in Years 8 and 9, mainly stems from inadequate management of misbehaviour and bad manners of a few pupils who, disproportionately, hold back the progress of their classmates. Pupils have open access to the curriculum, which is satisfactory overall. Many take part in and benefit from the very wide and rich range of additional opportunities. Good guidance and support and very good partnerships with the community and other schools prepare pupils well when they join the school, and for their future when they move on to post 16 education in colleges in the town.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management overall are good. The school is managed satisfactorily. The combination of good leadership from the headteacher and good governance provides a clear strategic direction for the future. The school meets most statutory requirements, including those related to recent legislation about disability discrimination and child protection. However, the new requirements for work-related learning, which are being implemented, are not all in place. Governors have not fully met their statutory obligation for a daily act of collective worship, and for religious education in Years 10 and 11 although they have ensured that pupils' spiritual development is good. Good leadership at a senior level in the school, satisfactory management and diligent and efficient administration are all focused on continual development, with a clear capacity for further improvement. They make a major contribution to the support, progress, and achievement of pupils throughout the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are well satisfied with the school although a significant number are concerned about misbehaviour. Parents feel well informed about the school, but less well about their children's progress. Pupils also hold very positive opinions about the school, especially that they are expected to work hard. However, they too are concerned about misbehaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Address weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology (ICT).
- Work to ensure consistency in teachers' management of pupils' behaviour.
- Broaden the provision for gifted and talented pupils throughout the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements,

- explore and implement alternative arrangements for a daily act of collective worship.
- review and modify the curriculum to develop work-related learning, and ensure religious education in Years 10 and 11 meets the locally agreed syllabus.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Throughout the school pupils achieve well. Standards attained in Year 9 tests in 2003 were below the national average but there is no information about the 2004 results to make comparisons. Overall GCSE examination results in 2004 were below average, although standards in current work seen throughout Years 7 to 11 are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils with physical or hearing impairment achieve very well.
- Most pupils achieve well, and very well in mathematics, physical education and citizenship.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT throughout the school, and also in religious education in Years 10 and 11 because of insufficient time.
- Gifted and talented pupils achieve satisfactorily because provision for their needs is inconsistent throughout the school.
- Year-on-year improvement in Year 9 test results has been better than the national trend.
- Overall GCSE results in 2004 were below the national average and below the average of schools where pupils had similar prior attainment; but a relatively high proportion of pupils in the school who have special educational needs do not take some examinations but are counted in the calculations.
- Most pupils from ethnic minorities did well in GCSE, and some achieved very well.

Commentary

1 Pupils' attainment is below the national average when they begin secondary education. Relatively few pupils come to the school with higher levels of attainment in English. Many of the pupils with special educational needs who join Year 7 have language and mathematical skills which lie well below average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores for 2004 are not available

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| English | n/a (33.2) | n/a (33.4) |
| mathematics | n/a (34.0) | n/a (35.4) |
| science | n/a (32.2) | n/a (33.6) |

There were 178 pupils in the 2004 year group. Figures in brackets are for 2003

2 Results in Year 9 tests in 2003 were below average but most boys and girls did much better than those in similar schools, on the basis of their prior attainment. Year-on-year improvement has been better than the national trend in English and mathematics up to 2003, but dipped since 2002 in science. Up to 2003, improvement overall has been above the national trend. The results of the 2004 tests have not been validated nationally, hence comparisons with other schools cannot be made, nor a judgement on whether the challenging targets set for the school were met.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004

| | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades | 42 (47) | 52 (52) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades | 83 (79) | 89 (88) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades | 94 (94) | 96 (96) |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 31.3 (30) | 34.9 (34.7) |

There were 180 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3 The 2004 GCSE results were below the national average and below the average of schools where pupils had similar prior attainment. A challenging target for the proportion of pupils attaining five or more grades A* to C was not met, but the target for pupils attaining at least one pass was met. The high number of pupils with special educational needs for whom the school makes provision leads to a relatively low proportion of the roll entered for GCSE examinations. Because the total roll forms the basis for calculations, caution is needed in interpreting information about examination results. The year-on-year trend is below the line of national improvement, but did rise a little in 2004. Pupils attained above average results at grades A* to C in art and design, design and technology, drama, geography, and notably in physical education. A* to C results in other subjects were close to average, but were below average in ICT, English, French, and mathematics.

4 More boys than girls attained the higher grades overall. Most pupils from ethnic minorities who were expected to do well did so. Some achieved very well, gaining much better results than predicted on the basis of their prior attainment. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well.

5 Overall in the work seen, standards are below average in English, the taught ICT courses, modern languages and religious education. Standards are average in many other subjects and above average in art and design, citizenship and physical education. Throughout the curriculum, pupils' language, mathematical and ICT skills are average.

6 Inspection evidence and lesson observations indicate that current achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good in most subjects. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, physical education and citizenship. Achievement is satisfactory in modern languages. However, it is unsatisfactory in ICT where there are weaknesses in teaching caused mainly by limited experience. In Years 7 to 9, pupils work well to reach above average standards in art and design, religious education and citizenship, average standards in many other subjects, but standards which are below average in English, science, design and technology, modern languages and in the taught ICT courses.

7 In Years 10 and 11, standards improve to above average in music and physical education and average in science and design and technology. Standards of work seen are average in other subjects except, as before, in English, modern languages and ICT. Standards slip to below average in religious education because pupils are not able to do as well as they should as a result of insufficient time to cover the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils improve to achieve very well in mathematics, music, physical education and citizenship, and to achieve well in English and science. They continue to achieve well in most other subjects except in ICT, modern languages and religious education, where achievement is unsatisfactory.

8 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the curriculum, reflecting the fully inclusive ethos of the school. The additional help provided by specialist teachers and support staff enables most of these pupils in Years 10 and 11 to complete GCSE and Youth Award courses successfully. Pupils with physical disabilities and those

with hearing impairment achieve very well in most subject areas, including the special sports programme.

9 The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. The school currently has no official policy for identifying gifted and talented pupils and provision for their needs is inconsistent throughout the school. In physical education and mathematics, provision is very good and pupils have good opportunities to achieve exceptionally, for example, by receiving special coaching in sport, and undertaking challenging tests in mathematics. In religious education, English, music and art and design, gifted and talented pupils are identified and are helped to achieve well, but in other subjects achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Behaviour and attendance are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good arrangements are in place to monitor and promote attendance.
- Attitudes to learning are generally good.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct are not always high enough.
- Pupils' relationships and respect for school property are good.

Commentary

10 Overall, pupils like school and have a desire to learn. Their attitudes to learning are good, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where most pupils are confident learners who are well capable of independent study. Pupils' response in class is generally good and most pupils do their homework. Pupils' support for activities organised outside the normal run of lessons is very good. They readily accept responsibility whenever it is offered and carry out their tasks well, for example, as members of year group councils. Pupils are generally polite and relate well to each other and staff. They co-operate well, for example in group-work in class. Almost all pupils are polite to adults, for example, holding doors open for visitors and responding to questions and requests for help promptly. They are very considerate of those pupils with disabilities, both in class work, and when moving about the school.

11 Although the school has a clear policy to promote good behaviour, it is not yet implemented consistently. In a small minority of lessons in Years 8 and 9, teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct are not always high enough and pupils' conduct is sometimes unacceptable. The issue is not one caused by pupils who have a behavioural special educational need: the school's procedures are used effectively whenever an incident occurs. It is that some lessons are marred by bad-manners such as calling out, and talking when the teacher is talking, exhibited by small number of pupils who choose to behave in this way. Behaviour in assemblies is good, and in the corridors around school. Some bullying does occur and pupils say it is dealt with effectively. Pupils treat school property very well, and with respect, for example, there is little litter and no graffiti on the site.

Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – any other White background |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean |
| Mixed – White and Black African |
| Mixed – White and Asian |
| Mixed – any other mixed background |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean |
| Black or Black British - African |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background |
| Chinese |

Exclusions in the last school year 2003 - 2004

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 598 | 141 | 1 |
| 11 | 3 | 0 |
| 65 | 40 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 2 | 0 |
| 15 | 9 | 1 |
| 16 | 2 | 0 |
| 96 | 12 | 0 |
| 8 | 6 | 0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | 11 | 1 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 | 0 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----|---|---|
| Any other ethnic group | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 16 | 1 | 0 |

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

12 Three pupils were permanently excluded last year. The number of fixed term exclusions was high with around 10 per cent of the pupils being excluded during the year. In every case the circumstances are meticulously recorded, and are carefully considered by the governors who ensure that the reasons are properly justified, including those for minority ethnic pupils.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (90.9%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.0 | School data | 2.1 |
| National data | 6.9 | National data | 1.1 |

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

13 Attendance has risen gradually since the previous inspection, but was below the national average when last reported to the department for Education and Skills for 2003-2004. However, the school is now having a major push to raise attendance levels generally, and early indications show that the measures are proving successful. Attendance for the current academic year is rising fast, and is now broadly satisfactory. Registers are marked properly and monitored extremely thoroughly. Swift action is taken to contact parents if their child is not in school without good cause and pupils whose attendance is less than 85 per cent are identified and targeted for action. Class and individual rewards are offered for very high attendance and close links are maintained with the education welfare officer who is in school each morning to deal with cases referred for attention. Nearly all pupils arrive at school on time. However, although punctuality to lessons is satisfactory, some lessons are slow to start which wastes valuable teaching time.

14 Overall, pupils with special educational needs display good attitudes to learning. Those with physical disabilities and the hearing impaired show excellent attitudes to school. Pupils work well together and respond positively to the extra help given by teachers and support assistants. Pupils whose home language is not English are very well integrated into the school community.

15 Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes an important contribution to pupils' good attitudes to school and to one another. Spiritual development is good as a result of an enriched curriculum, which helps pupils to value emotion, wonder and reflection in their learning. Very good teaching promotes creativity, imagination and an interest in working with new ideas. Moral development is good. The school sets many good examples to encourage caring, reliable, courteous and responsible young people. Most pupils exhibit these qualities in relationships and respect for others and especially for those pupils in their midst who need additional special support. Common rules and values create a basis for pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Although most are keen to apply these principles, a minority are not so well adjusted and are less caring of the expectations and standards that underpin daily life in school. Social development is also good. The school is successful in fostering an interest in joining in both in their own and wider community life. High quality work in citizenship in particular is helping pupils to acquire a clear awareness of the responsibilities of being a good citizen. Cultural development is very good. Celebrations throughout the year help pupils to respect the

religious and cultural diversity among them and the rights of others to hold beliefs that might not be the same as their own. Cultural development is an especially strong dimension and makes an important contribution to the school's social and racial harmony.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is good. Pupils benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment. Curriculum breadth is satisfactory and opportunities for enrichment are very good, with high levels of participation by pupils in activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Arrangements for the care, health and welfare of pupils and for giving them advice and guidance are good. Arrangements to seek their views, and to act upon them are satisfactory. Links with parents are good overall, links with other schools and colleges are good, and with the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The proportion of excellent and very good lessons has improved markedly since the previous inspection.
- High quality lesson planning and activities that engage pupils, including those with special educational needs, and support their learning stem from most teachers having a very good command of their subject.
- Some pupils who show bad manners limit the achievement of others in their class, especially in the relatively few lessons not managed sufficiently well by the teacher.
- Good assessment procedures in most subjects help pupils know how well they are learning, and how to improve.

Commentary

16 The school's development plan emphasises making improvement to teaching and learning. Although the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is about the same as at the last inspection, the extent of the best teaching has risen. More than two fifths of the lessons seen were very good or excellent compared to less than a seventh at the last inspection. Very good quality teaching encourages pupils' learning in nearly every part of the school, though more frequently in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Overall, teaching is strongest in mathematics, history, physical education and citizenship. It is good in all other subjects but unsatisfactory in ICT where too many weaknesses limit achievement, including low expectations, presentation that does not hold pupils' attention, and insufficient encouragement to develop more independence in learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 114 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 11 (10%) | 37 (33%) | 40 (35%) | 21 (18%) | 5 (4%) | 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.

17 Where the teacher struggled to manage the bad-mannered behaviour of a small minority of pupils, in Years 8 and 9, this holds back the progress and achievement of the rest of the class. At worst, this leads to unsatisfactory learning, as in some science and ICT lessons. On a very few occasions, it is a weakness in otherwise satisfactory lessons, such as in English and modern languages. Conversely, pupils' behaviour is managed well and challenging behaviour is dealt with effectively in physical education, where basic principles of good teaching are rigorously and consistently applied; and in design and technology and art and design lessons, where teachers establish a clear code of conduct by setting clear expectations, capturing interest and forging good relationships. The unsatisfactory nature of one Year 11 French lesson centred upon poor organisation leading to time lost.

18 The greatest strengths of teaching, which promote the most effective learning, are seen mostly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan their lessons very effectively, drawing substantially upon their very good command of their subject, such as in religious education where clearly identified objectives shared with the pupils ensure a prompt start to learning. Lessons in which activities engage and hold all pupils' attention effectively include, for

example, geography where learning is consolidated by lively starter and end-of-lesson activities, and in citizenship where everyone works briskly together with good humour. In most subjects, good use made of homework extends the work done in lessons and reinforces learning, although in English, art and design and ICT homework use is satisfactory.

19 The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Where teaching is most effective, the range of teaching and learning styles, work provided and pace of lessons are appropriate for all pupils, including those with physical disabilities and the hearing impaired. The use of support assistants is good, especially when teachers involve them in the planning of lessons in order to ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met. A positive environment for learning is created in the special educational needs department where pupils receive good teaching on an individual basis, especially for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Provision for pupils at the early stages of English is excellent. An effective programme of individual or small group teaching, and very good in-class support is provided, ensuring that the pupils have full access to the learning of other pupils. The support programmes are constantly amended in response to the changing language learning needs of the pupils.

20 Assessment helps pupils work to improve their work. Marking in many subjects is detailed and gives pupils clear pointers to better achievement. In subjects such as religious education and citizenship pupils gain a good understanding of their own learning by a combination of the teachers' and their own assessments. In a few subjects, English, modern languages and art and design, assessment lacks rigour because marking is not always consistent and constructive comments are used infrequently. Information about pupils' test and examination performance is diligently collated and analysed to set them targets for improvement. Assessment of English as an additional language is very good; pupils' progress is carefully monitored and extremely well documented by the ethnic minority achievement department.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Pupils have very good opportunities for enrichment. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils have equal access to the curriculum without any barriers to learning.
- Pupils enjoy excellent support for learning in a very good range of opportunities outside the normal school day: very many take part, especially in the variety of sports activities enhanced by Specialist Sports College status.
- Pupils with physical disabilities and those with hearing impairment have excellent support which enables them to play a full and active part in college life.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, but provision for gifted and talented pupils is inconsistent throughout the subjects of the curriculum.
- Provision for work-related learning is unsatisfactory because pupils' opportunities to study vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11, and relate aspects of the curriculum to the world of work are limited.
- The locally agreed syllabus for religious education cannot be met in Years 10 and 11 because of insufficient time.
- The rotation arrangement for drama, music and art and design in Year 9 leads to breaks in the continuity of learning, especially in music and art and design.

Commentary

21 Overall, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and provides equally for all pupils. Specialist sports college status had a considerable beneficial impact on the

curriculum. Links with the community are good and learning outside the school day and participation in sport particularly are excellent. A strength of the college lies in the fact that pupils with physical disabilities and those with hearing impairment have excellent support which enables them to play a full and active part in college life.

22 The curriculum offers a good range of courses, which meet a wide range of pupils' needs and interests. For example, in physical education all pupils in Years 10 and 11 take GCSE and have access to water sports and dance; visiting actors and poets enhance the work in English and the drama club is particularly beneficial to disabled pupils; the most able pupils can take two modern foreign languages and support classes are available after school; and instrumental music provision is strong and popular with pupils. A number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a specially designed curriculum which includes accreditation by the award scheme development and accreditation network (ASDAN). Citizenship is very well organised.

23 However, some limitations restrict opportunities. Time is too short for religious education in Years 10 and 11 to fulfil all the locally agreed syllabus. Although pupils have good opportunities for work experience, not all the new requirements for work-related learning are met, largely because of insufficient employer links and partnerships which support the curriculum, and opportunities are limited for pupils to develop knowledge and skills of business and enterprise. Time allocated in Year 9 for drama, music and art and design is on a rotation arrangement. This leads to breaks in the continuity of pupils' learning, both within the year, and for those choosing to study the subjects in Year 10.

24 The school provides a wide choice of enrichment activities in the arts. Well known poets, a children's novelist, a children's book illustrator and actors take part in lessons and run workshops cultivating in pupils an enthusiastic interest in the imaginative use of words. Visits to the theatre add to pupils' enthusiasm for drama. The drama club, where pupils with special educational needs enjoy full participation, is well supported by all year groups. The school gave a successful production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as part of the Shakespeare Schools' Festival in 2004. The art club, the steel pan band, the school orchestra, the choir and the keyboard club all enrich pupils' experience of the arts. In recognition of this contribution to the curriculum, the school recently received the Artsmark Silver Award.

25 Overall there is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and excellent provision for those with physical disabilities and the hearing impaired. They benefit from the special educational needs department's very good relationships with external agencies and the wide range of clubs and activities provided.

26 The school currently has no official policy for identifying gifted and talented pupils and provision for their needs is inconsistent throughout the school. Several departments identify gifted and talented pupils and provide good opportunities for developing their skills. In physical education and mathematics, provision is very good and pupils have good opportunities to achieve exceptionally, for example, by receiving special coaching in sport, and undertaking challenging tests in mathematics. In religious education, English, music and art and design, gifted and talented pupils are identified and supported, but in other subjects there is no clear policy for provision.

27 Most teachers are appropriately qualified to teach their specialist subjects, notably, for example, in mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, and for special educational needs and citizenship. The skills and experience of the support staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. This enables teaching assistants and learning

mentors in particular to provide good support for pupils in a wide range of areas and subject departments. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory, with recent improvement of facilities for ICT, although these have yet to be used to best effect to enhance pupils' learning. Outstanding facilities for sport stand out from otherwise generally satisfactory accommodation.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support and guidance is good. Arrangements for involving pupils in the work of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well cared for.
- Child protection arrangements are secure.
- An effective pastoral system supports pupils well.
- Good arrangements help pupils settle into school, and inform them about the next steps in their education for when they leave the school.

Commentary

28 The school takes good care of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection are fully secure with the member of staff who have designated responsibility for this role being properly trained to carry out the duties associated with it. Health and safety procedures are in place and are followed closely. A well-maintained system for Internet security includes filters to prevent pupils viewing unsuitable websites.

29 The pastoral system operates effectively and provides good levels of support and guidance. Information about pupils' performance is used to set targets and offer advice for improvement. Assessment of English as an additional language is very good; pupils' progress is carefully monitored and extremely well documented by staff responsible for ethnic minority achievement. Overall, pupils find most staff approachable and are confident to discuss any problems or concerns with them. Learning mentors and special support staff provide well-targeted additional support for pupils requiring extra help to boost their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with physical disabilities or hearing impairment are given very good levels of care and support, and in turn are very well integrated into school life. Close links are maintained with associated outside agencies. Good arrangements for the induction of pupils into Year 7, and for pupils joining the school part way through their life in secondary education, are in place, and pupils say they are happy with them.

30 All pupils whose home language is not English receive very good personal, cultural, and language support from the caring bilingual staff, including a voluntary teaching assistant. Pupils whose home language is not English can take a GCSE examination in their home language, for example, in Russian or Urdu.

31 Arrangements for seeking pupils' views and acting on them are developing. Year group councils have been established recently and there are some plans to form a full school council. The school listens to pupils' views, and also seeks their opinions through questionnaires, for example, to help decide upon significant changes to the school uniform.

32 Careers education is not yet fully established in Years 7 and 8 but follows a well organised programme in Years 9 to 11 where it is taught as discrete units within the curriculum for personal, social and health education. Work experience is properly organised and all pupils in Year 11 have an opportunity for a two-week work placement in the autumn term. Pupils have good access to careers advisers from the Connexions service, and to relevant computerised information, to help them make fair and impartial decisions about their future when they leave school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, very good links with the community, and good links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive good quality information about pupils' progress and aspects of school life.
- The High School Association provides welcome support to the school.
- A very good association with the community enhances the curriculum, notably through the opportunities given by the school's Sports College status.
- Links with employers and business community are not yet sufficient to support work-related learning in the curriculum.

- Effective links with other schools and colleges help pupils settle into school, and keep them well informed about their choices when they leave school after Year 11.

Commentary

33 The school provides a good range of information, which keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and other aspects of school life. Meetings for parents, and annual reports give a good indication of how pupils are doing in each subject studied, and the great majority of parents are satisfied with these arrangements. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well written and informative documents, which fully meet requirements. However, the annual report is produced very late and after the year to which it relates to be of any real value to parents.

34 Parents are well informed about the progress of pupils who have special educational needs. In turn they are very satisfied with the school's provision in this area, particularly so the parents of pupils with physical disabilities or who are hearing impaired. Parents are fully involved in the procedures for reviewing statements of special educational needs annually. The department for ethnic minority achievement, forms strong links with parents, supporting the academic and personal progress of all ethnic minority pupils, including asylum seekers and those whose home language is not English.

35 A range of useful courses and curriculum evenings are held throughout the year to inform parents, but overall, parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory. Arrangements for canvassing parents' views about the way the school operates are also satisfactory. The High School Association, however, remains active and continues to give generous support to the school through organised social and fund-raising events. For example, it raised significant amounts of money to help with the successful bid for Sports College status.

36 The school has very good links with the community. Local companies and businesses contribute to work-related learning through opportunities for pupils' work experience although other partnerships to enhance this aspect of the curriculum links are underdeveloped. Very strong involvement in the school's work as a Specialist Sports College is reflected by the very high levels of participation and support for its continual development. A wide range of community activities take place in the school which both enhance its standing and make an important contribution to its work with pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11. Of particular note is the enhancement of both citizenship and the personal, social and health education programme. The school is making a growing contribution to the development of the surrounding community.

37 Links with other schools and colleges are good. The relationship with local primary schools through Specialist Sports College status is improving continuity of learning, as well as improving attitudes to school. Coaching in primary schools and the promotion of the junior sports' leader award scheme make an important contribution. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced by primary schools sharing good information about pupils' learning and progress. Good links with sixth form and further education establishments in Huddersfield help pupils make appropriate decisions for the next steps in their education after they leave the school. Good relationships with teacher training institutions develop the school's expertise in evaluating its work through effective support for trainee teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is governed well. Leadership and management overall are good. The headteacher and his key staff give good leadership. Management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good partnership between the governors and headteacher results in an effective school where Specialist Sports College status benefits all pupils and enhances their achievement.
- Curriculum development to promote work-related learning and religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has not been sufficient to meet statutory requirements.
- The school's self evaluation is very honest and fair but the benefit of a detailed review of all subject areas is incomplete because the leadership team undertaking it has only recently been established.
- The priorities for attention in the school's development planning are not clearly related to an over-riding aim of raising achievement for all pupils.
- School-wide policies such as those for managing behaviour and developing pupils' ICT skills throughout the curriculum are not implemented consistently by teachers.
- Financial management is very good, and governors ensure that that best value principles are applied very well.

Commentary

38 The governing body is well led by an experienced chairman. Governors have a great deal of collective wisdom to draw upon, and work with commitment effectively to improve the school. Meetings are well attended. Governors work hard in a strong and open partnership with the headteacher to implement their vision for developing the school, particularly to enhance the value of its Sports College status. They monitor the progress of different groups of pupils, and make very good use of very detailed analytical reports about pupils' performance. Governors also gain useful information and perspectives about teaching and other provision from a programme of first hand visits established early each year. In turn their determination to improve attendance and behaviour is reflected by their support of the valuable role played by many different agencies working together with the school. Governors ensure the school meets statutory requirements for monitoring provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those from different ethnic minorities. However, their responsibilities for the curriculum are not fully met. Acts of collective worship are not arranged every day for groups of pupils, although governors have ensured that throughout the curriculum pupils' spiritual development is good. Activities which meet the new requirements for work-related learning are not yet fully developed. Insufficient time limits the extent to which religious education in Years 10 and 11 covers the locally agreed syllabus.

39 The headteacher shows good leadership and dedication to raise achievement. His approach to the curriculum, teaching and learning reflects an outstanding commitment to inclusion by encouraging pupils' extensive participation, for example, in a very good range of extra-curricular activities, and particularly in sport. The senior team has recently been strengthened by the appointment of new members, but they carry extensive workloads. Nevertheless, the heads of year and heads of subject departments reflect a commitment to the continued development of the school. Many are very good role models and are an inspiration to staff and pupils alike. Many staff teams are very effective, and staff with leadership responsibilities have clearly defined roles which they discharge very well. Of particular note is the outstanding quality of leadership in physical education and history.

Conversely, the leadership of ICT is unsatisfactory and results in gaps in provision throughout the curriculum.

40 The performance management of teachers works well and a rigorous approach has contributed to good achievement. The school nurtures teachers' professional development well. The induction process for new staff is effectively managed and is a particularly strong feature in modern foreign languages and physical education. Good links with higher education support trainee teachers and enhance senior staff's expertise in evaluating the quality of work.

41 Very good leadership and management for special educational needs provision is given by the co-ordinator who works closely with teachers responsible for physically disabled and hearing impairment support. Clear priorities for future development have been established, including providing further training for other teachers in appropriate teaching and learning styles for pupils with special educational needs. Very good supportive documentation assists teachers in their lesson planning because it gives them clear information about pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. The support assistants work well together as a team and benefit from participation in staff development activities.

42 The department for ethnic minority achievement is very well led, with excellent management of support to meet the changing needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English. However, although awareness of pupils' learning needs, subject teachers do not generally have sufficient guidance on how they can effectively support pupils in the more advanced stages of English.

43 The school, in partnership with the local education authority, undertakes a systematic and scrupulously honest evaluation of the quality of its work. Detailed reviews of the work of subject faculties have begun, and enable the leadership team to gather useful information from monitoring teaching and pupils' work to identify underachievement, to share effective practice, and for school development planning. Developments including mentoring, support for pupils to complete coursework after school, target setting, revision and booster sessions are well managed aids to improve achievement.

44 However, the new leadership team has only been recently established, and although a good start has been made on this aspect of management, there is some way to go to cover all subject areas. The inspection corroborates the school's finding that pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, but the quality of provision for gifted and talented pupils lacks focus and they only achieve satisfactorily. Furthermore, inconsistencies between teachers exist in implementing policies, for example in the differences of their approach to behaviour management. Barriers to improving achievement centre upon the low self esteem and confidence of a minority of pupils, which leads to dis-engagement and misbehaviour in a few lessons. The school has clearly-defined systems for dealing with the conduct of those pupils who have statements of special educational need relating to behaviour, and these work well. For pupils who choose to misbehave or display bad manners, the same systems are less effective, and are used inconsistently. Development planning focuses appropriately on improving teaching quality, attendance and behaviour, supporting pupils with poorly developed basic skills, and developing the curriculum in Years 10 and 11; and is associated with training development and financial planning. However, whole-school planning is not sufficiently explicit in bringing all these strands together to realise the vision of raising achievement and standards. For these reasons, management overall is satisfactory.

45 Principles of best value are very well established. The school makes very good use of its funds and spends its money very prudently. Governors, through the auspices of the local education authority, make comparisons with other schools to gauge pupils' attainment and are effectively supported in evaluating their school. Consultation is well established with pupils to ascertain views and involve them in making some decisions, most recently for example, about significant changes to the school uniform. Procedures for consultation with parents through the High School Association and questionnaires have produced potentially useful information. Governors are challenging themselves and the headteacher to address the priorities of improving attendance and behaviour, and raising achievement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 2841233 | Balance from previous year | 101913 |
| Total expenditure | 2829764 | Balance carried forward to the next | 113382 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3393 | | |

46 Very good financial management is reflected by assiduous administration of the budget with up-to-date records of income and expenditure. The headteacher and governors carefully monitor all accounts. The school has addressed all the recommendations the school's auditors made in their last report. Other than for those pupils who have physical or hearing impairment where funds are dedicated to support them, the amount the school has to spend per pupil is below average. Taking this into account, and that the school provides very many opportunities to enrich pupils' lives and helps them to achieve well, it gives very good value for money.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision for work-related learning is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A work-related learning (WRL) culture is emerging throughout the school as a result of close collaboration with West Yorkshire Enterprise.
- WRL learning opportunities are now identified throughout subjects of the curriculum, but not to assess WRL achievement in the curriculum.
- Opportunities are not yet sufficiently developed for links with employers to support WRL in the curriculum or improve pupils' knowledge and skills of business and enterprise.
- Good provision for work experience offers pupils good opportunities for learning through work.

Commentary

47 Leadership and management by the recently appointed deputy head to establish WRL in the school are satisfactory. Although the school has very few established employer or business links, good collaborative working has been established with West Yorkshire Enterprise. Following an audit of existing school provision, a school policy has been written and approved by the governing body leading to a drive to establish a WRL culture in school.

48 At present too few planned opportunities are taken to link subjects across the curriculum in all years, to the world of work. Some valuable opportunities are taken, such as in a Year 7 personal, social and health education lesson, pupils discussed the good qualities needed for the world of work. However, there is no measured approach to ensuring that pupils learn about the ways business operates and how to improve their skills of enterprise systematically. In turn, their knowledge and understanding of business, enterprise and work is under-developed.

49 Vocational courses in Years 10 and 11, including child development and leisure and tourism at GCSE level, an ASDAN Youth Award scheme and link course provision, in partnership with Huddersfield Technical College, are offered to some pupils. Pupils benefit from sound teaching in GCSE courses, and from the ASDAN scheme which is successfully used for pupils opting for the Youth Award programme. However, the quality of learning on the college-linked provision is unsatisfactory. The construction, transport, business and office practice programmes at the college do not use any nationally recognised accreditation for Year 11, although students can count them towards post 16 further education qualifications. Collectively these courses do not provide a sufficiently wide range of vocational options for all ability groups

50 The school has a satisfactory partnership arrangement with the Connexions service in which pupils are supported by a personal adviser in Years 9 to 11. Currently, careers guidance is an integral part of the PHSE programme in Years 9 to 11, but not for pupils in Years 7 or 8. All pupils in Year 11 are well prepared to undertake a two-week work experience placement. However, an assessment of their learning through work is insufficiently developed and consequently opportunities are lost to build upon those skills and experiences which are valued in the workplace.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment fell significantly in the Year 9 tests in 2004 although the results are not yet validated, and some of the staffing problems which contributed still remain.
- Pupils achieve well by Year 11, and higher attaining pupils speak, read and write confidently.
- Good teaching, as well as the very good support programme for pupils with special educational needs, is raising attainment, although assessment of some pupils' work is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The enrichment activities provided by the department are very good.
- Teachers do not help pupils to make full use of available ICT resources.
- Most subject departments make a clear contribution to pupils' literacy development, but a minority of subject teachers do not have sufficient guidance to support more advanced development of English by pupils for whom it is not their first language.

Commentary

51 Although standards in the Year 9 National Tests rose in 2002 and 2003, they fell well below the department's target in 2004. However, serious staffing problems which affected continuity of pupils' learning were encountered at this time, and some are still unresolved. Standards in GCSE English language in 2004 were below average, with girls' results falling significantly below expectations. Attainment at GCSE English literature was also below average. Pupils for whom GCSE was inappropriate attain well in the less demanding Certificate of Achievement in English.

52 Although a significant proportion of Year 7 pupils enter the school with poor literacy skills, the vast majority, by Year 9, speak with increasing confidence and read with increasing accuracy. Higher attaining pupils achieve well as confident writers, but middle-attaining pupils make too many errors in their extended writing. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 with special educational needs in English are achieving well; those for whom English is their second language achieve increasing clarity of expression in their work. Although attainment by Year 11 is slightly below average, achievement is good. Higher attaining pupils achieve a growing maturity of thought in their writing; middle-attaining pupils can organise their ideas logically; lower attaining pupils, with support, are able to express ideas with increasing precision and accuracy.

53 The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is consistently good, and sometimes very good. Although learning is sometimes interrupted by the immature behaviour of a minority of Year 8 boys in a very few lessons, careful class management keeps lessons on course. Teachers are enthusiastic, conscientious and form good relations with their pupils. Pupils who are reluctant to write are inspired to use language that is original and fresh, for example by the use of drama in lessons which further enhances their understanding.

Teaching and learning are consistently good and often very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils learn to study independently and co-operatively. They learn to see in poetry the extraordinariness of ordinary things. The GCSE novel *Of Mice and Men* fuels pupils' sympathetic imagination. Pupils studying *East is East* learn to take challenging ideas on cultural conflict and family differences in their stride. Whilst some teachers make effective use of interactive ICT in lessons, they have not yet mastered sufficient confidence to instruct pupils to exploit ICT resources for learning. Teachers show pupils how to improve their learning, but assessment procedures are not always sufficiently rigorous.

54 The curriculum offers variety and challenge. Visiting poets, novelists and actors take part in lessons offering new insights. The special educational needs department works in close association in providing successful Year 7 literacy activities. Reading activities, literacy workshops and theatre visits are arranged. Successful “Literacy Catch-Up Evenings” involve parents as well as pupils. This good provision helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve well.

55 Leadership is good. Standards in 2005 are already steadily improving following the appointment of a new head of English in 2004. Teachers work as an effective team to improve boys’ classroom behaviour, but more improvement can be made. The department contributes well to the school’s caring ethos and to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Management is efficient, with schemes of work reviewed and improved; and good practice shared. Trainee teachers receive very good guidance and new teachers are well supported. The department is attacking its work with increasing confidence and assurance, leading to good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56 The “Literacy Launch” programme, reading clubs and “Catch-up” evenings organised by the special educational needs and English departments provide strong support for the significant proportion of pupils entering the school with poor literacy skills. Although a small minority of subjects, including design and technology and ICT, have not fully developed their strategy for literacy, most subjects across the curriculum train pupils to become more proficient in their speaking, more exact in their reading and more accurate in their writing and spelling. However, although subject teachers are aware of the learning needs of pupils for English is not their first language, they do not generally have sufficient guidance on how they can effectively support pupils in the more advanced stages of English.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern languages (German and French) is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising because of very good leadership and management although GCSE results in 2004 were well below average.
- Teaching is generally good in French, and in German teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well.
- The usefulness of marking for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent within the department.
- Pupils are motivated by teachers’ imaginative use of new interactive whiteboard technology.

Commentary

57 GCSE results in French and German in 2004 were well below average. Boys’ results were lower than those of the girls in both languages. In recent years results have been below average, mainly because pupils’ continuity of learning was severely disrupted by staff illness and temporary teaching arrangements.

58 In Years 7 to 9, all pupils learn French, and in Year 8, the ablest pupils start German as a second foreign language. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average overall in both languages. Nevertheless, all pupils can read texts in French and German, and they have a good understanding of language structure and develop literacy well. In German, pupils understand and speak the foreign language readily. In French, pupils' speaking and listening development is limited because some teachers do not use French consistently in lessons. Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average but this represents an improvement on those of the previous year. Pupils can express themselves well in speaking and writing in both German and in French when supported, for example, when describing work experience. In Year 7 French and in Year 10 in both French and German, standards are now rising rapidly as a result of staffing arrangements having been stabilised.

59 In Year 9, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In French, most pupils achieve satisfactorily. In German, in spite of the time constraints of one lesson a week, inspired and skilled teaching results in all pupils' very good achievement. By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve very well in German and satisfactorily in French. In all years, boys achieve less well than girls, but the department is improving their achievement by using teaching methods which stimulate their involvement. In French, the lowest attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the very good support they receive. Pupils whose home language is not English achieve well because they are confident language learners. Pupils use ICT very well, to enhance their reading and writing skills considerably.

60 Teaching and learning are good overall; they are good in French and very good in German. Two thirds of the lessons seen were good or better. One lesson was unsatisfactory and in another learning was unsatisfactory, because the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils limited the learning of other pupils. In an excellent Year 9 German lesson, the teacher's effective planning enabled all pupils, especially boys, to speak confidently in German. Teachers' skilled use of the interactive whiteboard motivates all pupils, especially boys. Assessment is good overall; however in Years 7 to 9, teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistent in giving them pointers to improvement.

61 Leadership and management are very good, providing strong direction for the exceptionally committed team. Very good use of assessment data, and effective guidance for newly qualified teachers is contributing to substantial improvement. Areas for development recognised are managing the poor behaviour of some pupils, and improving GCSE results. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall; GCSE standards have fallen, but current improvements are now reversing recent trends.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The mathematics curriculum caters well for the needs of all pupils, including those with a wide variety of special educational needs, and those who are gifted and talented.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Very good use is made of day-to-day assessment to identify pupils' individual needs and promote good learning.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT, both by pupils and in teaching.

Commentary

62 Over the last four years, standards have risen in line with the national trend and the school met its targets for performance in the national tests in Year 9 in 2004. Although levels of attainment are below average on entry to Year 7, pupils progress broadly as expected, but at the end of Year 9, the proportion attaining Level 5 or higher is still below average.

63 In lessons and from scrutiny of work, attainment is now better than is indicated by these results, which stems from very good teaching. In Years 10 and 11, lesson observations and scrutiny of work suggests that progress is at least good. This evidence is in clear conflict with published GCSE results, which indicate below average attainment in

Year 11, and the school has requested a review by the awarding body. The final outcome is still to be published, but information available at the time of inspection indicates that results will be close to the national average. Especially impressive are the levels of achievement of very low attaining pupils, (many of whom also have considerable special educational needs) and those of a large group of very able pupils in Year 10, most of whom are working at level 8 or beyond. Given the high current levels of achievement by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs or who are very able, achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.

64 Teaching and learning are very good overall. All lessons were at least satisfactory, and nearly two-thirds were very good or excellent. Every lesson seen was carefully planned, with very clear aims communicated to pupils who worked to achieve as well as possible in relation to their ability. More still could be done, however, to communicate to pupils the beauty and excitement of mathematics. Outstanding work was seen in a Year 10 lesson in which a large group of pupils showed a very high level of understanding of statistics, and their use in analysing data. Equally impressive work was seen with very low attaining pupils in several year groups, who achieved very highly because of the very good support provided to match their needs. Some teachers use ICT in their teaching, but this aspect of their work is underdeveloped throughout. Pupils themselves do not gain as much benefit as they could from using computers.

65 Leadership and management are very good. The head of department is very experienced and has used her clear vision for the progress of the department to build a very effective team, with diverse strengths. She monitors the work of her staff well, and works with them to drive the department forward. In this, she has met with considerable success and mathematics has improved well since the previous inspection, despite many changes in staff over the last few years. The department is now well placed to secure further improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66 Use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers in subjects such as science and design and technology promote the use of mathematics well, and poor mathematical skills are rarely a barrier to learning. However, the recently appointed numeracy co-ordinator has had insufficient time to co-ordinate the work of the school in this respect, and not enough is done to develop the skills that pupils need consistently in other areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11.
- The teaching and learning are good overall, but some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 9 coupled with the unsatisfactory attitude and behaviour of some pupils leads to unsatisfactory achievement in these classes.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT for learning.
- The quality of marking and assessment is good.

Commentary

67 Results in the statutory assessments for Year 9 improved to the national average in 2002, fell a little in 2003, but no national comparisons of standards are available for 2004. The 2004 GCSE results were broadly in line with the national average and there was no significant difference between the relative performance of boys and girls.

68 Inspection evidence indicates that standards of Year 9 pupils are just below the national average and standards of Year 11 pupils are broadly in line with the average. Many Year 9 pupils have a satisfactory grasp of basic concepts but their practical skills are

under-developed. Year 11 pupils revise competently for examinations and have a sound grasp of most scientific concepts and vocabulary. Year 11 pupils achieve well because of good teaching, which includes good preparation for examination questions and thorough marking. By Year 9, pupils achieve satisfactorily, but could achieve more. Underachievement arises from unsatisfactory behaviour, poor concentration and unsatisfactory teaching. No significant differences were observed between the achievement of girls and boys. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils and when supported by classroom assistants is good.

69 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but a higher proportion of good lessons were observed in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. In the best lessons teachers use subject knowledge effectively to plan interesting activities. They engage pupils well in discussions about science concepts, for example, in a good Year 10 lesson, where a lively class discussion following a video film helped to stimulate pupils' interest in the way adrenalin affects bodily functions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive good guidance about examination criteria to practise examination questions, which builds their confidence. Two unsatisfactory Year 9 lessons were marred by the failure of the teacher to adequately manage the disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils. The quality of marking and assessment is good. Teachers make good use of end of unit tests to develop a useful profile of each pupil's progress over time, which in turn is used well to give pointers for improvement. Although the quality and quantity of most resources are adequate, provision for developing pupils ICT skills is unsatisfactory. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards, but there are insufficient portable computers and too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their learning.

70 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed head of faculty provides competent leadership. She has identified clear areas for development, which include the development of pupils' ICT and study skills and review of the curriculum. The management of the department is satisfactory, overall, and relevant performance management targets have been usefully linked to the department's action plan for improvement. Since the time of the last inspection improvement has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11, and current achievement in all years is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, but although some good teaching in Years 10 and 11 has raised achievement, not enough is done to extend the learning of gifted and talented pupils.
- The accommodation and resources available are good, with good access to them.
- Expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are too low in Years 8 and 9.
- Excessive work load prevents the head of faculty from giving his full attention to raising standards and achievement. In turn leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

71 Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average, with under two thirds of pupils reaching level 5 or above compared with the national average. Despite discrete

lessons in Years 7 to 9 and implementation of the national strategy for ICT, standards remain too low. In 2004 GCSE results for the full course were well below national averages. Short course GCSE results have improved recently, but are still well below average. A lack of commitment to learning and immature behaviour in lessons of a small number of pupils, which is not dealt with well enough, hinders the drive to raise standards in Years 8 and 9. Overall, pupils display confidence using computers with a satisfactory level of competence, but for some word processing skills are unrefined; knowledge and understanding of systems are limited and their use of information sources basic.

72 Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. While a team of specialist teachers work hard to prepare and organise lessons, expectations of pupils are too low, particularly in Years 8 and 9. Despite effective consultancy support to implement the national strategy, teaching is often dull and fails to capture pupils' interest. In Years 8 and 9, too much time is taken up in lessons dealing with behaviour rather than promoting learning. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is competently planned and accurately explained or demonstrated. Attempts are made to make the work interesting and varied, but pupils' independent working skills are weak, and hinder the pace of learning. Not enough lesson planning is focussed on extending the learning of the more able and talented pupils in lessons.

73 Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Although a clear vision for the subject recognises the need for improvement, other school management demands and commitments on the head of faculty's time do not allow an uninterrupted focus on raising standards and achievement. The national strategy for ICT has been implemented in Years 7 to 9, insufficient monitoring has limited its evaluation. In turn, development plans for Years 10 and 11 do not have a sharp enough focus on improving teaching to capitalise on the benefits of the national strategy.

74 Significant investment has produced improvements in both accommodation and resources since the last inspection. Statutory curriculum requirements are now met. However, despite pro active approaches to recruit and retain specialist staff, too much teaching is unsatisfactory and improvement has not been sufficient to raise ICT standards throughout the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75 Curriculum planning in all subjects is expected to integrate ICT into pupils' learning, but despite significant investment in interactive whiteboards and good access to computers, ICT is inconsistently used to enhance learning. Pockets of effective practice are found, for example in history, modern foreign languages and citizenship where very effective use is made of interactive whiteboards in teaching to present learning challenges to pupils; and in graphic products where pupils learn to use computer aided design software linked to computer aided manufacturing equipment. Training quality has fallen short of that required to ensure teachers use ICT with confidence, which hinders the school's drive to raise achievement. Although pupils' competencies in using some aspects of ICT are satisfactory, they have too few opportunities to develop their ICT skills in other subjects. Few curriculum areas assess ICT skills using National Curriculum levels of attainment and consequently tracking the development of pupils' ICT skills throughout the curriculum is inadequate.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is well led and managed.
- Results at the end of Year 9 and 11 continue to improve from previous years.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and behave well.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and use a wide range of teaching and learning strategies to motivate and interest them.

Commentary

76 Pupils enter the school with limited geographical skills and knowledge. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well so that by Year 9 standards are average. High standards are consistently encouraged, motivating pupils to work hard. Year 7 pupils studying river landscapes are able to use appropriate vocabulary to describe and explain key features. All pupils, especially lower attaining pupils, make progress because they are given clear structures to follow and their understanding of key geographical skills such as use of grid references and atlas work is constantly reinforced in a variety of ways. The most

able pupils in Year 9 are able to demonstrate a good grasp of higher order comparison skills.

77 The most recent GCSE results, continuing an upward trend, were above average and among some of the best in the school. Last year's GCSE results indicated satisfactory achievement but work seen in present Years 10 and 11 indicates good achievement. In Years 10 and 11 standards are average. Year 11 pupils demonstrate their interpersonal skills as well as their ability to select, organise and use relevant information, for example in their comparative study of two suburban shopping centres.

78 Overall the quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lively lessons well with the needs of all pupils in mind, ensuring progress is made. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants working closely with the teachers. Teachers have a caring, committed approach to their pupils and use a variety of teaching strategies to interest and motivate them. Lively starter and plenary activities which reinforce and consolidate learning are particularly well used. Teaching is very good when it involves all the pupils in well paced, positive, active learning. Improved access to ICT gives more opportunities for enhanced learning and development of independent research skills. Emphasis put on practising examination technique in Years 10 and 11 develops pupils' skills effectively. For example, Year 11 pupils, having discussed the strengths and weaknesses of an examination answer found the activity very useful. Most pupils settle quickly, work hard, co-operate sensibly and obviously enjoy the lessons. Pupils' class and homework is marked regularly in a way that helps them to improve. Tests are used to assess pupils' knowledge and skills in Years 7 to 9 and most pupils know their current and target levels. The curriculum includes fieldwork, with extended opportunities planned. The Humanities club gives pupils the opportunity to pursue their interest in the subject more informally.

79 Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of subject, with his enthusiasm and commitment to raise achievement is already having an impact. He provides good support for his team. Working relationships are good and staff have the opportunity to continue their professional development. The strengths identified in the last inspection have been built on well, and the areas for improvement addressed.

History

Provision in history is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of subject is an innovative, excellent leader and manager who communicates his passion for the subject to the pupils.
- Stimulating teaching and very good relationships in the classroom increase pupils' enjoyment, encourage a positive attitude to learning and motivate them to succeed.
- The quality of marking and assessment is very good: it encourages pupils and shows them how they can improve.
- Boys under-perform compared with girls at GCSE level.

Commentary

80 Standards in Year 9 are average. Pupils enter the school with limited historical knowledge and skills but make good progress. A lively Year 9 lesson on the link between death and disease, in which the teacher was amusing but thought provoking, developed pupils' historical, literacy and interpersonal skills, as well as raising awareness of their target levels. Pupils make good progress from Year 7 because their historical skills are developed, practised and tested in interesting and challenging lessons as they move through the school. The use of GCSE questions in Year 9 is increasing pupils' confidence about how they tackle examination questions, and having a positive effect on their learning. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' oral and written responses show depth of understanding and reflect their increasing ability to select, organise and use relevant information. The most recent GCSE results, continuing an upward trend, were average overall but included among them some of the best in the school. The boys' underperformance at GCSE level is being

addressed and action is being taken to improve revision technique and to ensure they meet course work requirements.

81 Achievement at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is good. Teachers use different ways to interest and motivate their pupils thus ensuring they are engaged, challenged and make progress. Teaching and practising examination techniques in Years 10 and 11 helps to raise achievement. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by specialist teaching assistants working closely with the teachers. For example, a hearing impaired pupil was able to take a full part in an action-packed lesson in which pupils took on the roles of key figures in medicine and later, characters from the time of the plague.

82 The quality of teaching is a great strength. Very high quality, enthusiastic teaching, together with very good relationships ensure all pupils gain confidence, learn and achieve in a supportive, purposeful and enjoyable atmosphere. Teachers use starter and plenary activities and interactive whiteboards to great effect, and ICT is used to develop independent research skills. Pupils look forward to the lessons, take pride in their work, cooperate sensibly and ask and answer questions willingly. Teachers assess and mark pupils' work thoroughly in a way that encourages and helps them to improve and pupils know their current and target levels.

83 Leadership and management are excellent. The head of subject, who is the overall head of the humanities faculty, has a passion for his subject, is innovative, exudes enthusiasm and is an excellent role model for both staff and pupils. He has successfully fostered a dedicated staff who work well together and take advantage of opportunities to continue their professional development.

The strengths identified in the last inspection have been built on very well. Weaknesses have been addressed, and there is every indication that under his committed leadership and skilful management this successful faculty, of which history is a part, will go from strength to strength.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient time is provided to enable the local agreed syllabus to be taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11, leading to unsatisfactory achievement overall.
- Overall provision in Years 7 to 9 is good; the revised curriculum offers good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they learn from religion.
- Assessment is being used well to raise standards and to involve pupils in their learning.
- The subject leaders' enthusiasm and clear vision ensures effective planning for development, and efficient management and support.
- Challenging writing opportunities extend learning for the most able pupils, except in Year 8.

Commentary

84 Standards in Year 9 are broadly in line with expectations of the local agreed syllabus for pupils of this age. Pupils have a sound knowledge of religious practices in at least three world religions and a clear understanding of key features of belief. Most pupils can use religious vocabulary appropriately and they are aware of the importance of symbols to religious believers. Pupils begin Year 7 with below average attainment and make good progress as a result of teachers' appropriate demands and thought provoking activities in most lessons. Most pupils are becoming adept at reflecting on information to form an opinion and are showing a good awareness of the importance of religious beliefs in influencing behaviour. Higher attaining pupils produce some astute evaluations of the roots of prejudice and discrimination in their work on Judaism. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not the first language, are provided with well planned support and make good progress. There is no noticeable difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Achievement overall is good.

85 Standards and achievement in Year 11 are limited as a result of inadequate teaching time. Most pupils have little opportunity to build systematically on their learning and progress made in previous years and overall achievement by Year 11 is unsatisfactory. There are exceptions, however. A small group in Year 10 who chose to follow a GCSE short course are making appropriate progress. For example, in one lesson they entered into an informed discussion of the complexities of pluralism and living in a multi-faith society. Pupils worked well and achievement was good. Similarly in a non-examination lesson in Year 10 the pupils worked productively and achieved well when they considered questions on environmental responsibility.

86 Teaching is good overall. Effective preparation and clearly identified objectives shared with the pupils ensure a prompt start to learning. Explanations are clear and in most lessons good humoured relationships create a good basis for the pupils to participate confidently. Learning is good overall. In the best lessons interesting activities encourage pupils to reason for themselves. In a lesson in Year 9, for example, pupils considered the importance of remembrance, focusing on the Holocaust, and produced some perceptive responses especially with regard to keeping faith in the face of evil. A minority of lessons observed were satisfactory but less successful; for example in Year 7 there was insufficient challenge for the more able, as a result of a non-specialist teacher's inadequate command of the subject; and in Year 8 where the behaviour of a set of higher ability pupils was poor, and progress was well below their capability. Pupils grading their own work, learning from each other, and constructive marking are strong features in the use of assessment to raise standards. Pupils are gaining a good knowledge of their own learning and for many this is stimulating an interest in the subject.

87 Good opportunities in the curriculum for reflection and for exploring cultural diversity and social harmony contribute effectively to pupils' personal, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

88 The recently appointed subject leader has embraced the role with enthusiasm. She has a clear sense of direction and knows how to bring about change and improvement. Revisions to the curriculum and support for the non-specialist teacher are managed efficiently. Professional development is having a considerable impact on teaching, assessment and use of ICT in learning, all of which have improved since the time of the last inspection. In contrast, no increase in the amount of time to meet statutory requirements is now a barrier to further improvement.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average GCSE results in resistant materials and well above average results in textiles stem from good and very good teaching. In turn, achievement is good at this level.
- The clear vision and drive of the acting faculty head provides a constant focus on improving standards.
- Opportunities are not taken to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, nor to extend gifted and talented pupils' learning.

- Pupils' freehand sketching skills are weak and hinder all aspects of their design work.
- The use of ICT as a learning tool is underdeveloped in all subject areas.
- The absence of technical support time in food technology hinders teaching and learning.

Commentary

89 Pupils display a variable, but mainly below average, range of technological experience and skill on entry to the school. Standards rise by the end of Year 9 and, although they are marginally below average, this represents good achievement by all ability groups. Pupils with special and language needs apply themselves well and achieve in line with other pupils. Pupils understand the relationship between designing and manufacture, and they are able to solve problems successfully using different materials. Whilst they display confidence using a range of hand tools, machines and appliances, they lack confidence with freehand sketching. This hinders their generation of ideas and the adding of technical detail to sketches and drawings with appropriate depth. Standards of manufacturing are sound but opportunities are missed to use computer aided manufacturing (CAM) to enhance both the accuracy and quality of finish on the final product.

90 Overall, 2004 GCSE standards are in line with national averages. However, standards in textiles are well above average, and those in resistant materials are above average. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of design and manufacture. In Years 10 and 11, standards of work seen in all subject areas demonstrate constant improvement; achievement is good across all ability groups, including pupils with special educational needs. The achievement of boys is better than that of girls and their performance in design and technology exceeds performance in other school subjects. The use of ICT is, however, limited in some aspects of design and technology. For example, although CAM is used to good effect in graphic products, its use is underdeveloped in work with textiles and food. In addition to this pupils' graphic skills lack refinement and sophistication, and impede the quality of work in design folios and approaches to the use of computer aided design (CAD). Their knowledge and understanding of materials, ingredients and components is also often superficial.

91 Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in the resistant materials strand of the subject. The quality of teaching in both textiles and food technology is hindered by insufficient resources and support time. Lesson planning is sound; good use is made of time, but providing suitable tasks for gifted and talented is insufficiently developed. In Years 8 and 9, a small number of pupils often arrive to lessons lacking a strong enough desire to learn and presenting immature behaviour. However, this is well managed by teachers establishing high expectations, capturing their interest and fostering good relationships. Teachers' knowledge of learning targets for pupils with special educational needs is well used to ensure achievement reached is at least in line with all other groups. However, good practice to promote literacy and numeracy is not well enough established in teaching during questioning and the use of annotation in design in order to raise standards further. All work is regularly marked and very good guidance for improvement is given to pupils on GCSE courses.

92 Leadership and management from the acting head of faculty are good. A clear vision for realistic development is established with sufficient drive to provide a relentless focus on achievement. Pupils' self evaluation is effective and teachers make increasing use of data to evaluate all aspects of performance. Health and safety risk assessments are

complete but do not always take account of the match of group size to space. Progress on raising standards and the provision of an ICT resource base since the last inspection have led to improvements.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

93 **Drama** was not a focus subject of the inspection but two lessons in Years 9 and 11, together with activities of the drama club were observed. Standards in GCSE in drama in 2004 were significantly above the national average.

94 Standards of teaching and learning in the Year 11 lesson were very good, and excellent in the Year 9 lesson. Both lessons were very well planned and very well managed. Instruction moved at a brisk pace and expectations were high which matched pupils' levels of enjoyment. Pupils achieved very well, gaining confidence and fluency in speech, thought and movement. They exercised self-discipline, and discovered the necessity and value of teamwork.

95 The popular weekly drama club draws pupils from all year groups and pupils with special educational needs make effective contributions. Amongst their activities club members compose and perform entertaining mini plays, with examples featuring a marriage ceremony, a funeral service, and the adoption of an elephant as a pet! A strong tradition for drama is established within the school.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because good teaching provides all pupils with opportunities to succeed.
- Standards in GCSE examination results are above the national average and continue to improve.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good, and often very good.
- Leadership and management are good, promoting high expectations, providing a positive influence on achievement.
- Opportunities are limited for pupils to use ICT in art and design.
- The time allocated to art and design in Year 9 is unsatisfactory because the rotation of time shared with music restricts pupils' achievement.

Commentary

96 Standards on entry at Year 7 are average with a significant minority attaining at below average levels. By the end of Year 9 standards are average with a significant minority above average. Achievement through Years 7 to 9 is therefore good for all, including pupils for whom English is their second language, those with special learning needs, and the gifted and talented. The majority of pupils profess to enjoy the subject and work hard. GCSE results in 2003 and 2004 were above the national average and in 2004 GCSE A* grades were above the national average. Pupils taking GCSE examinations achieved higher points scores than in all their other subjects and the number gaining GCSE A* grades also exceeded the national average. A significant proportion of pupils exceeded

their target grades. Achievement is good because teaching is effective and pupils work hard. Many pupils demonstrate pride in their achievements.

97 Teaching in all groups is good and often very good. Lesson planning is very good and takes account of the individual needs and abilities of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations, and pupils enjoy the lessons because of the sense of achievement generated. In turn, significant numbers of pupils use the art rooms outside of the school day which enhances their learning. Key words are introduced into all lessons as part of the school literacy policy. A majority of pupils are articulate when discussing their work and many are capable of understanding and using technical language. Teachers promote a clear code of conduct in lessons and are effective in dealing with challenging behaviour. The professional relationships between teachers and pupils are very good leading to rising achievement because of the positive working atmosphere created in lessons. References are made in lessons to the work of significant artists and cultures. Local visiting artists have been employed, which enhances the curriculum by teaching pupils their particular skills. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are aware of their GCSE targets but less so in Years 7 to 9 where teachers' reference to National Curriculum levels is less well defined. Teachers' assessments in Year 9 are accurate. Marking is regular but constructive comments to enable pupils to improve their work are used infrequently. Homework is set and used effectively.

98 The curriculum is under constant review. The overall time allocated to art and design in Year 9 is unsatisfactory because it is taught in nine-week blocks in rotation system with three other subjects which affects achievement in Year 9 and the continuity in learning from Year 9 into Year 10. The use of computers in art and design is limited by restricted access to equipment.

99 The leadership and management of the department are good. A clear vision and high expectations are promoted and teachers work as an effective team. Departmental documentation to support its work is well organised. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards have improved in Years 7 to 9. The use of assessment to support learning has improved. The GCSE overall pass rate has improved.

Music

Provision in music is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average.
- Good teaching encourages pupils in Years 7 to 9 to achieve well, and in Years 10 and 11 to achieve very well.
- Many pupils display good attitudes to their work, which supports their learning.
- Time distribution in Year 9 makes continuity difficult.
- Opportunities to use ICT are restricted in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

100 The 2003 and 2004 teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 9 were broadly average. In 2003 the GCSE results were average but improved significantly in 2004 with all pupils gaining A*, A or B grades. There was no significant difference in achievement of boys and girls.

101 Standards seen are broadly average in Year 9. Since many pupils enter Year 7 with few musical skills this represents good achievement. Standards are improving because of the thorough grounding pupils get in musical knowledge and skills. In Years 10 and 11 standards are above average. Achievement is very good because of the regular homework, composing projects and attention to detail that reinforces pupils' learning. Pupils in all years collaborate well and this contributes to their personal development. Those pupils with special educational needs and others who have hearing impairment enjoy music and are well catered for. This helps to promote their self-esteem and learning. Pupils, including hearing impaired, take part in concerts and carol services and the choir, band and steel pans group. This substantially complements the work done in lessons.

102 Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good overall, where the pace, challenge and management of lessons ensures that pupils are well motivated and work hard. Effective question and answer sessions start Year 7 lessons to establish what has been remembered from the previous week. New topics such as graphic scores are explained and demonstrated well as a stimulus for pupils' group work. The standard of work in a Year 8 lesson on mood and atmosphere however was not as high because a few pupils' with limited keyboard technique were unwilling to co-operate fully. Pupils in Year 9 have a shorter time allocation than in Years 7 and 8, as a result of a rotation system with art and design. To compensate for this, homework projects are given and booster sessions arranged. In a lesson where talented pupils had been withdrawn from other classes the majority reached Level 6 in their compositions on theme and variations because of the intensive work taking place. Since there are only a small number of computers available, opportunities for using ICT to support learning are limited.

103 Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to a positive commitment from the pupils. They use music software well for sequencing, editing and composing in three or four instrumental parts. Thorough planning and reinforcement ensure pupils' compositions for flute and piano, string trios, and woodwind duets help to develop high standards of musicality. Good emphasis is placed on examination technique, and in an observed Year 11 revision lesson pupils practised how to scan questions, pick out important points and listen to musical extracts intelligently.

104 Good leadership is raising the profile of music and there is keen co-operation with art and design and drama in the new faculty structure. The music department is well-managed and examination results are high. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **excellent**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding leadership and management reflect the school's Specialist Sports College status, and promote a high level of commitment from teachers and assistants.
- The high quality of teaching enables all pupils to achieve very well.
- High expectations by all teachers promote very good attitudes and behaviour from pupils.
- The extensive curriculum provides good opportunities for all pupils to achieve.

Commentary

105 Physical education standards when pupils enter Year 7 are below average for both boys and girls. By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national expectations, which represents good achievement at all levels of ability, including, pupils with special educational needs. Pupils continue to make progress in Years 10 and 11, so that by the end of Year 11, standards are above average. The trend over the past three years in GCSE examinations is for an increasing success rate in the numbers of pupils gaining A* to C grades. Achievement overall is therefore very good. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well as they have full access to the wide choice of curriculum on offer. The particularly talented pupils are also challenged to achieve their full potential by involvement in the extensive and competitive extra curricular sports on offer within school and the wider community.

106 Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high expectations of performance and behaviour from all pupils including those with special educational needs. Teachers have very good assessment and coaching skills which allow them to break down a technique into achievable parts enabling pupils to achieve success. Fundamental principles of good teaching are rigorously and consistently applied by all teachers. As a result pupils' attitudes and behaviour are always good allowing teachers to exploit their very good coaching skills to maximum effect and are a significant factor in the very good achievement of pupils. The specialist skills of teaching assistants are used effectively to provide full access to the curriculum for the pupils with special educational needs and consequently these pupils make very good progress. Assessment of pupils work in GCSE studies is rigorous in both practical and theoretical aspects. Pupils' work is consistently marked and comments for development made. As a result pupils know their levels of achievement and what they need to do to improve. Assessment procedures are rigorous and ensure that pupils are well aware of their levels and that teachers can target effectively any weaknesses.

107 Excellent accommodation and resources available are managed very effectively and are a significant aid to the opportunities on offer to the pupils, and consequently to their very good achievement.

108 Leadership and management are outstanding with a very clear vision and a strong commitment to improvement. A very effective team has been established which has a wide range of expertise and is a powerful body of support for improvement. The wisdom of leadership leads to a thorough knowledge of the department and of the pupils and is a significant aid to the success of pupils in physical education. Strategic planning, schemes of work and lesson plans, which are all very well structured, provide the framework for the very good teaching that promotes very good achievement. Performance management is thorough, and professional development is well related to both school and departmental needs. Improvement since the last inspection is very good as the quality of teaching is now always good or very good, and the quality of assessment procedure is now very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) was sampled. Citizenship was inspected in full.

Personal, social and health education

109 A well organised programme for PSHE is taught throughout the school by a group of dedicated teachers. The team approach ensures consistency in planning and delivery and is one of the strengths of the PSHE provision. The programme covers a broad range of topics relevant to the pupils' growing maturity and to life beyond school, such as the sex education element which is an example of good practice. Modules are taught by two specialist teachers with the involvement of the school nurse and others from the local health authority. In a sample lesson observed in Year 8, excellent teaching on sex and relationships resulted in very good achievement. In another lesson in Year 7, pupils listened carefully and entered into discussion with a representative of the 'step up' project on good qualities needed for the world of work. Pupils' written work sampled shows some of good quality. In Year 8, for example, interesting observations on smoking and health were well recorded and there is clear development of self assessment especially in the sex education and citizenship strands. Assessment and reporting to parents are well established and merit certificates encourage and motivate pupils. The involvement of representatives from many agencies is effectively managed and is a further strength of this work. The programme is well led and monitored. PSHE makes a major contribution to building pupil's self knowledge, confidence, study skills and overall personal development.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are inspiring, informative and challenging.
- Learning is very good or excellent and behaviour and attitudes are exemplary.
- A well structured programme is efficiently managed and enthusiastically led, with the exception of Years 7 and 8 where the citizenship element is less well defined.
- Very good use is made of expertise in the community and multi-agency support for the three subject strands.
- Self assessment and marking are used well to promote progress.

Commentary

110 Standards in Year 9 are above expectations for this age. Pupils' written work shows a firm knowledge and understanding of topical and wider issues including international trade, criminal justice laws and democratic processes. Pupils' understanding on entry to the school is below average. Teachers set challenging writing tasks closely matched to pupils' abilities, and as a result all pupils make good progress. Pupils are becoming adept at using knowledge and ideas imaginatively. More able pupils especially are producing perceptive reflections on their future role and aspirations as citizens. Achievement is good.

111 In 2004 results for the first group of pupils entered for GCSE Citizen short course were well above the national average at the higher grades A* to C. Standards in lessons and in work seen are above average. Pupils have a clear awareness of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen and a thorough knowledge and understanding of human rights, law and order and the workings of local government. Teachers challenge the pupils to think for themselves, both in lesson activities and writing assignments. This underpins the very good progress that pupils make throughout Years 10 and 11 in both non-examination and GCSE work. Pupils make mature and reasoned arguments, for example, on consumer rights. In coursework assignments pupils use their work experience and first hand interactions with employers to write fluently on health and safety in the workplace. Achievement here is very good.

112 Teaching in Years 10 and 11, is at least very good and most is excellent. Teaching is informative and interesting and reflects the teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm. Pupils are inspired with a desire to learn and as a result they work productively and grasp new ideas quickly. Teachers and pupils work briskly together with good humour and lesson activities are well adjusted to engage all pupils. In a lesson in Year 11 pupils worked in pairs using the Internet to research and then present findings of the contributions of European Union member countries to lifestyle in Britain. This created animated and mature discussion. In Year 10, energetic group work resulted in some outstanding presentations and role play of news broadcasting. The use of the community police officer as a facilitator in a further lesson in Year 10 prompted pupils to generate excellent ideas to be used in a subsequent role play in the Huddersfield criminal court of justice. As a result of the tasks presented, pupils make very good progress and gain an interest and respect for the citizenship aspect of their learning.

113 Assessment and target setting, in addition to constructive marking, are used well to support progress. Pupils' citizenship record books are used effectively to help them gain knowledge of their own learning. In turn, most pupils are aware of their attainment and how to improve.

114 The pupils' involvement in the local community and in enrichment opportunities provides a firm basis for pupils to develop skills of participation and responsible action. Intensive activity with the Kirklees council, the planning department and youth leaders to gain a skateboard park in the locality is an impressive example. Pupils speak fluently and informatively about this initiative and show a clear determination to succeed. Citizenship makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. It raises their awareness of the importance of values when considering moral, social and cultural issues.

115 The school has very effectively implemented national curriculum requirements for citizenship. The direction which the recently appointed leader provides shows a good capacity for further improvement, and for maintaining the distinctive place citizenship has gained in the school curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 1 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 2 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| 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).