

INSPECTION REPORT

RAVENSHALL SCHOOL

Dewsbury

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107799

Headteacher: Mr C Newby

Lead inspector: Mrs R Eaton

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th May 2005

Inspection number: 268617

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 – 17
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	80
School address:	Ravensthorpe Road Thornhill Lees Dewsbury
Postcode:	WF12 9EE
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Russell Jackson

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ravenshall is a school for boys and girls aged 11 to 17 with moderate learning difficulties. All of its 80 pupils have statements of special educational need. When they join the school, the attainment of the majority is well below average, as a result of their special educational needs. Although most pupils have moderate learning difficulties, five have severe learning difficulties, five specific learning difficulties, two have speech and communication difficulties, and one has profound and multiple learning difficulties. Another nine have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, two have autistic spectrum disorders, and one is physically disabled. Five of the pupils are in public care. Sixty five pupils are white British and 15 are of Pakistani, Indian or mixed white and Asian heritage. None of the pupils has English as an additional language. Pupils' homes are all within the Kirklees area. Their socio-economic circumstances are varied but tend to be below average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People, and Football Association Charter Standard. Within the next two years, the school is to be reorganised and will cater for pupils aged five to 16 with complex needs. The new school will encompass another of the local education authority's special schools and the headteacher of Ravenshall will be its headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1517 3	Rosemary Eaton	Lead inspector	English
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			Design and technology
1346 2	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
1469 1	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science
			Personal, social and health education and citizenship
			Physical education
			Modern foreign language
			Geography
			English as an additional language
1456 3	Graham Pirt	Team inspector	Mathematics
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ravenshall is a good school. Pupils achieve well and their personal development is good. The quality of teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very good leadership is ensuring that pupils continue to receive a high quality education as the school goes through a period of immense change.
- Year 11 pupils are successful in a range of accredited courses.
- Staff work hard to make the school a very safe and happy place for pupils.
- The level of exclusions is high and so the school has introduced new systems to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils.
- Attendance is improving but is unsatisfactory compared to similar schools.
- Teachers have high levels of knowledge and expertise and teaching assistants make strong contributions to pupils' learning.
- The school makes very good efforts to inform and involve parents.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils now achieve success in a wider range of accredited courses. Achievement is now good in all subjects. Curriculum planning and assessment have both improved well, as has the quality of care, leadership and management. All the key issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well, as do those in Years 10 and 11. Throughout the school, achievement is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE), and art and design. Year 11 pupils are successful in accredited courses, including mathematics GCSE. Nearly all boys and girls achieve equally well, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds or special educational needs. However, those whose education is interrupted by exclusions or absence find it harder to make as much progress as others.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is good. Their attitudes are good and they willingly take on responsibilities and contribute to school life and the wider community. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils behave well, but a minority find it hard to meet the school's expectations and there are too many exclusions. A few pupils contribute significantly to the high rate of unauthorised absence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good and, as a result, learning is also good. Teachers use their specialist expertise to make their subject relevant to pupils' ages and special educational needs. Lessons are well organised and interesting and teaching assistants contribute strongly to pupils' learning. However, teaching assistants are occasionally not given a clear enough role and so their skills are underused. Activities and questions are not always matched closely to individual pupil's needs. Behaviour is usually managed well, following the school's new system.

The curriculum is well planned and meets pupils' requirements as they move up through the school. There are good arrangements for pupils with the most complex needs. A wide range of activities enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal development. The accommodation is poor, but a building programme is about to begin. Pupils are cared for very well and provided with good support, advice and guidance. The school has very good partnerships with parents and those with the community are good. There are good links with colleges and other special schools, but very few with mainstream schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership is good, although the headteacher provides very good leadership. He is preparing the school very well for its future reorganisation, with effective support from the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Management is also good, but subject leaders do not take enough responsibility for evaluating performance and planning what needs to be done in order to improve subjects further. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive and have good systems for keeping themselves informed. All statutory duties are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are very positive. They are especially satisfied with the quality of teaching and the information provided for them. They feel that the school has high expectations, is approachable, and treats all pupils fairly. A few have concerns about bullying, but they consider that the school deals firmly with any incidents.

Pupils' views are also very positive. They particularly enjoy physical education, English and using computers, in addition to their relationships with friends and adults in school. They would like to see the accommodation improved, both indoors and outside.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Implement the systems to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils, in order to reduce the number of exclusions.
- Ensure that the rate of attendance continues to rise.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not achieve as well in science as in other subjects, owing to the lack of specialist facilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 11 pupils are successful in accredited courses.
- Pupils often meet or exceed their individual targets.
- Achievement is good in all the key subjects of the curriculum.
- The vast majority of pupils achieve equally well regardless of their ethnic background or special educational needs.

Commentary

1 In 2004, 11 of the 14 pupils in Year 11 had their achievements recognised by their success in accredited courses. Higher attaining pupils have opportunities to follow Entry level courses in English, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design, and religious education. Last year, 12 pupils met the requirements for accreditation in at least one of these subjects and six gained passes in GCSE mathematics, with grades ranging from E to G. The percentage of those gaining a GCSE pass at grades A* to G was higher than the average for similar schools. Other aspects of pupils' work are accredited through the ASDAN Youth Award at Bronze level and eight of them achieved the necessary number of credits.

2 Parents consider rightly that their sons and daughters make good progress. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils to achieve in English, mathematics, science and ICT. When the targets and achievements of half of last year's Year 11 pupils are analysed, the success rate is revealed to be 78 per cent, indicating that these pupils achieved well. Two of the pupils exceeded their targets in all four subjects, demonstrating very good achievement.

3 Pupils throughout the school achieve well in English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, PSHE, and art and design. This is because these subjects are taught well and the curriculum is organised so pupils' learning builds up systematically. In science, pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve satisfactorily, rather than well, because they do not have opportunities to use specialist facilities and this limits what they can learn about.

4 The school is very well aware of each pupil's individual circumstances – for example, those in public care – and does its best to ensure that they all have equal opportunities to learn and achieve. Consequently, the relatively small number of girls achieve as well as the boys. When their special educational needs are taken into account, the vast majority of pupils achieve similarly well. However, pupils whose education is interrupted by exclusions or absence inevitably find it harder to learn as well as others. For this reason, a very small minority fail to achieve their potential, despite the school's best efforts.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are good. Their personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory but attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly and their families do not let the school know why they are not attending. However, this position is improving.
- The school has recently introduced a new measure – 'Behaviour for Learning' – in order to improve the behaviour of a minority of pupils and reduce the number of exclusions.
- Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and support others.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (83.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.7	School data	7.6
National data	8.2	National data	1.8

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

5 A number of pupils have unsatisfactory levels of absence and a few do not attend at all, despite the combined efforts of administrative staff, teachers, education welfare service, Connexions advisers, and the bilingual support workers. This year, considerable success has been achieved in individual cases and in bringing down the level of unauthorised absence. Since updating the school's procedures, effective systems are now in place to identify each pupil's pattern of attendance. This enables the school to quickly follow up any absences that are causing concern. A few parents continue to take their children abroad for extended holidays during school time. Many authorised absences are because of the medical problems of pupils who have very special educational needs. Overall, punctuality is satisfactory and the small number of pupils who come to school independently are nearly always on time for the start of the school day.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
65	10	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
10	5	0

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

6 So far, in the current school year, there have been 25 fixed-period exclusions involving ten pupils. However, during the course of the inspection, six of these pupils were in school, and of the others, one had left, two were absent because of illness, and one was on holiday. The behaviour of those attending, along with all other pupils, was good – often very good. Recognition that many of its pupils have social, emotional and behavioural

difficulties has recently led the school to add to its approaches to behaviour management, by adopting 'Behaviour for Learning'. This involves teachers starting each lesson by reminding pupils about the school's simple code of behaviour and the need for them to choose to behave well in order to learn. Senior staff are timetabled to be available to support teachers if necessary, by rapidly removing disruptive pupils, so that other pupils can continue to learn. These strategies appear to be making an impression on pupils' behaviour although there has not yet been time to collect sufficient data for a sound judgement to be made on their impact. Nevertheless, during the inspection, on only one occasion was a pupil required to leave a lesson. Parents say they already feel a calmer atmosphere in the school. Pupils behave well at lunchtime and when out of school – for example, when Year 11 pupils attend sessions at a local college. Bullying is not tolerated and parents commented on the swiftness with which the school deals with anti-social behaviour. Although bullying was raised as an issue by small numbers of parents and pupils, all were confident that the school would deal with it immediately and properly.

7 Pupils are taught the importance of personal responsibility – for instance, in caring for the environment by recycling, knowing one's role in the school team, or helping to take care of younger pupils at breaktime. Assemblies and the meeting at the start of the day emphasise well these aspects of social development. Pupils can apply for specific jobs, such as being a table and chair monitor in the dining room, and each class provides a member of the school council. The range of lunchtime activities has reduced lately because of the withdrawal of external funding. However, pupils organise football games and have opportunities to use computers and the library, or just to relax and 'chill out' to music. As a result, lunchtimes pass very quickly, and are lively and happy for pupils. The support more able pupils offer to those with physical disabilities develops pupils' social and moral values and, as they move up through the school and take up the role of mentor to younger pupils, these values are consolidated. Pupils often spontaneously help each other. The school's reward system offers very positive incentives to make good choices and pupils express great pleasure when they achieve personal goals and change their privilege card to a more prestigious grade. Through visits into the community to places of worship of different faiths, and getting to know visitors and staff within the school, pupils gain a tolerant, broad view of the diversity of cultures in the country. Spiritual development is encouraged very strongly through religious education lessons, where pupils explore their own beliefs and learn about the messages promoted by a number of different faiths.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are all good. Pupils are cared for very well and receive good support, advice and guidance. Partnerships with parents, other schools and colleges, and the community, are good overall.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. The assessment of pupils' work is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high levels of specialist knowledge and expertise.
- Lessons are organised well, so pupils remain interested.
- The agreed behaviour management systems are used effectively.
- Teaching assistants contribute strongly to lessons and pupils' learning.
- From time to time, teachers miss opportunities to adapt lessons to match more closely pupils' particular needs.
- A large amount of assessment data is collected, but this is not always easy to analyse or use.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	15	3	0	0	0

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

8 Parents think very highly about the quality of teaching. The school emulates mainstream secondary schools by, whenever possible, enabling teachers to specialise in certain subjects. Even though all of them teach English and mathematics, this still means that most teachers are able to focus on just a few subjects, including ones in which they are especially knowledgeable. Because teachers have this expertise at their fingertips, they can concentrate on devising ways of making their subject accessible to pupils with special educational needs. For example, in an ICT lesson for pupils in Year 9, several made errors when moving on to a more challenging activity. The teacher used the interactive whiteboard – and humour – to explain why pupils were having problems and adjusted the task so they could cope with it more easily. As a result, pupils had a deeper understanding of the topic and their learning and achievement were very good. Teachers are invariably enthusiastic about the content of lessons and this rubs off on pupils, who often respond in an equally positive manner, supporting their learning effectively.

9 Teachers have adopted a consistent system of lesson planning. Introductions set the scene and explain to pupils what they are going to do and learn, focusing them on the subject in question. The main part of the lesson usually includes several different activities, so pupils can revise existing learning and build on this, and the concluding stage is often used to check how well pupils have learned and praise their efforts. This structure helps to ensure that lessons build on what has gone before and the available time is used efficiently. For instance, at the start of a design and technology lesson, the teacher quickly reminded the Year 9 pupils what they had done previously and explained the next stages in the project – making a rubber band-powered vehicle – referring to a very clear flow-chart and reinforcing safe working practices. Pupils were then able to get on with their tasks quickly and take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers usually organise lessons so pupils move smoothly from one activity to another, making sure that they don't have a chance to get bored and restless. Very occasionally, this is misjudged and too much time is spent on a particular section of the lesson. For example, during the inspection, the introduction lasted for more than half of one lesson, allowing little time for pupils to work independently and slowing down the pace of their learning.

10 Choosing relevant, motivating activities and resources is one way in which teachers encourage pupils to behave well. Often, pupils are so involved in what they are doing and learning that they have no inclination to be unco-operative. During a science lesson, pupils in Years 7 to 10 with a range of complex special educational needs thoroughly enjoyed exploring a variety of resources, such as hearing aids, chosen to increase their knowledge of sound and the structure of the ear. Before lessons get underway, teachers throughout the school remind pupils about its 'Behaviour for Learning' programme and – in the best instances – check that they understand why this is so important and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. When pupils fail to meet these high expectations, teachers mostly deal promptly and firmly to prevent the situation from escalating. However, from time to time, they are reluctant to act swiftly and use the agreed procedures. Instead, they put up with low level disruption, which hampers the learning of all pupils. In the main, lessons run smoothly, enabling pupils to learn and achieve well.

11 Teaching assistants often play an important part in promoting good behaviour – for example, by quietly moving to sit next to a pupil who is starting to become excitable. Like the teachers, they know pupils very well and have developed very positive relationships with them. As a result, most pupils are keen to win the approval of staff, by being co-operative and working hard. Teaching assistants take on a variety of roles in lessons. During an art and design GCSE lesson for pupils in Year 11, the teacher and teaching assistant shared the task of supporting pupils as they completed coursework. For instance, the teaching assistant showed one pupil how to translate designs using batik, improving the quality of the work. In a religious education lesson, the teaching assistant noted down the comments made by the Year 9 pupils as they talked about a recent visit to a Buddhist Centre. However, such opportunities to record what pupils have learned are not regular features of lessons, with the result that teaching assistants can be left without a clear role to play during class discussions.

12 In a minority of lessons, too much reliance is placed on meeting pupils' individual needs by giving them support to complete their work, rather than adapting tasks so that each can tackle them without needing help. A close match of activities to what pupils have already learned is a frequent feature in mathematics lessons. For example, lower attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8 identified the number of 1p coins needed, up to seven, whilst higher attaining pupils calculated the cost of items priced at 8p each. Pupils all made good progress, because they were each working on what they needed to learn next. Teachers regularly ask open-ended questions, which encourage pupils to think hard and are a useful

means of assessing what they know. However, on many occasions, questions are posed to the whole class, rather than directed at individuals, tailored to meet their particular needs. During an English lesson for pupils in Years 8 and 9, the teaching assistant led the introductory section of the lesson, using the interactive whiteboard to help pupils understand about compound words. In this instance, pupils were kept on their toes and fully involved, because they had to be ready to answer questions, carefully matched to their level of literacy. Occasionally, teachers permit pupils to call out their answers to general questions, rather than raising their hand first. This makes it harder to check what each pupil knows, allows them to not bother trying, and creates unnecessary noise.

13 The assessment of pupils' work is good overall – for example, their achievement in lessons is often recorded on teachers' planning sheets. Assessment tends to be best in Years 10 and 11, where work usually follows a syllabus for accreditation. Marking is mostly up to date, but there are few examples where it helps the pupils to know what they have to do to improve. The school uses good systems to record pupils' achievements, including the use of nationally recognised Performance or 'P' levels to demonstrate progress for those not achieving National Curriculum levels. Within subjects, a variety of tests and tasks is used to ascertain levels of achievement and a range of systems enable teachers to record pupils' progress as they move up through the school. In English, mathematics, science and ICT, very detailed booklets have recently been introduced for each pupil, containing large quantities of information. However, these records are not easily monitored to demonstrate progress. The results of assessments are not sufficiently analysed by the subject leaders as yet – for example, to compare how different groups of pupils are achieving. In physical education and PSHE, assessment systems are not yet sufficiently well developed, because they rely too much on teachers keeping information in their head.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and includes a good range and variety of enrichment activities. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject planning gives all pupils equal opportunities to make good progress.
- Provision for pupils with complex needs is good.
- A wide range of activities enrich learning, particularly in sport.
- Accommodation is currently poor, but work is due to start shortly on a new building that will provide specialist facilities for secondary pupils.
- A wide range of opportunities support pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

14 The school ensures that the statutory requirement for the curriculum, including sex and relationships, drugs, citizenship and careers education and, for pupils in Years 10 and 11, work-related learning, are all in place. Subject planning has improved since the previous inspection. It is now good, with consistent approaches to long, medium and short term planning. There is good coverage of National Curriculum subjects in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum has a suitable balance of academic subjects, examination work, and personal, social and vocational education. There is a well-established college link for vocational education for older pupils. Financial considerations in recent years have, however, resulted in a narrowing of the courses offered. Careers education is planned well in Years 9 to 11 but in Years 7 and 8 planning is still at an early stage.

15 The school now caters for increasing numbers of pupils with more complex special educational needs – for example, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The ways in which these pupils are grouped, and the well planned and individual nature of their learning programmes, enable them to achieve as well as other pupils. They are placed initially in a separate, mixed age class, and this is effective, because the curriculum is modified to meet their particular needs. Staff ensure that, whenever possible, these pupils also work in other classes, with pupils of their own age, as an important part of their personal and social development. The range of externally accredited courses in Years 10 and 11 is suitable for the average and higher attaining pupils. These courses are, however, rather too challenging for pupils with the most severe learning difficulties.

16 In spite of the unsatisfactory indoor accommodation for physical education, a very good sporting programme is arranged, and levels of participation are good. Visits to a sports centre give pupils access to judo, football, trampolining, uni-hoc, table tennis and wall climbing, for example. Girls and boys receive specialist coaching in football, rugby and cricket. There are inter-school events in swimming, rugby, football and athletics. At break and lunchtimes, sporting activities on the hard surfaces include football and cricket. (The school has a large playing field but its poor drainage limits its use). All pupils have opportunity to swim. Ambulant and non-ambulant pupils visit another school to enjoy a game of wheelchair basketball. Enrichment activities in the arts are also well represented with visits from artists, musicians and theatre groups. There are opportunities to dance and to perform in the school choir, but the school does not have the necessary staff expertise to enable pupils to take part in instrumental or theatrical performances.

17 The deficiencies in the accommodation, noted in the previous inspection report, are about to be dealt with through a building programme, due to commence shortly. At present, the accommodation restricts opportunities in most subjects. For example, there continue to be no specialist facilities for science. Whilst Year 11 pupils have had access to a laboratory in another school some distance away, most pupils have no experience of working in a laboratory to investigate and develop their practical skills. The benefits of having specialist facilities, such as the computer suite, are limited by the need to use these rooms as general classrooms, reducing opportunities to utilise their resources. In the art and design room, projects have to be tidied away at the end of each lesson as the room is prepared for another subject. There are numerous interruptions and distractions because the multi-purpose hall is also a main thoroughfare linking different parts of the school. Despite being ready for redecoration and refurbishment, the school is clean and welcoming, and displays of pupils' work brighten the classroom walls and boost pupils' self esteem.

18 The timetabled lessons of PSHE are supplemented by well-established opportunities for pupils to take on roles and responsibilities as part of the school community. Other subjects also contribute to this area of the curriculum – for example, older pupils work on conservation and re-cycling projects as part of their ASDAN Bronze award studies. Independent travel is promoted, in conjunction with the local college. There have been no residential visits in recent years. Pupils have not, therefore, had opportunities to develop and practise their independent living and social skills by staying away from home and school.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Good support, advice and guidance are provided. The ways in which the school seeks to involve pupils in its work and development are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety and child protection procedures are very well defined.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff enhance the arrangements to provide support, advice and guidance.
- Pupils' views are sought regularly, by formal and informal methods.
- Induction arrangements are good and have a significant impact on giving pupils a secure start when they first arrive in the school.

Commentary

19 The school pays very close attention to detail when organising its health and safety and welfare arrangements. Two senior members of staff are designated as named persons for child

protection. Through them, staff are kept up to date with all changes in procedures, in line with local area child protection committee requirements. There are regular health and safety audits of the premises, and rigorous risk assessments to ensure pupils' safety – for example, during visits out of school. Where appropriate, risk assessments are also carried out for individual pupils. All pupils can have a free breakfast at school and unlimited access to drinking water throughout the day, supporting their health and well being. Many of the staff have completed a one day first aid training programme and all are trained in an approved method of positive handling, enabling them to safely intervene to de-escalate a behavioural incident. Posters are displayed and 'Bully Boxes' are placed strategically, to support the school's anti-bullying policy and help to ensure that pupils are safe and happy in school.

20 Although most pupils are taught by a number of different teachers, they have daily contact with their class tutor – for example, at the start and end of the day. As a result, the school is able to support its formal assessment procedures with staff's knowledge of each pupil's personal and social development. Pupils say that they feel comfortable about speaking to an adult if they have any worries in school at any time. Lunchtime arrangements enable pupils to stay inside the school building, if they have earned the privilege, and offer pupils a time to talk to an adult away from lessons. Pupils receive good guidance through the PSHE programme – for example, about healthy eating and looking after themselves. Outside services, such as the Connexions advisers, provide feedback on work experience placements, and college tutors and discussions with parents at annual review, provide more information to help pupils to prepare for leaving. Because of this, parents are pleased with the arrangements that the school makes for the move to the next stage in their child's education.

21 The school regularly seeks pupils' views through school surveys, finding out what they like and what they would like to see developed. For example, when the school was awarded a sum of money through New Opportunity Funding, the school council voted on a range of lunchtime clubs that offered pupils the chance to take part in a range of experiences, such as first aid training, Chinese calligraphy, face painting and being a DJ. Most recently, the pupils took part in a mock election on the same day as the general election. Because staff have their lunch with them, pupils are offered another opportunity to speak to adults in an informal setting and make suggestions. As the hall can become a very noisy place at lunchtime, pupils suggested a 'Noise-ometer' chart, which is being trialed to help pupils and staff to make themselves heard.

22 Induction arrangements for new pupils are based on a baseline assessment – usually completed when staff visit them in their previous school – liaison with parents, and in a number of cases, home visits. Bilingual staff make a good contribution to supporting pupils from families where English is not the first language. These effective procedures ensure that all pupils start school with targets reflecting their individual learning and personal development needs and the school's expectations. As a result, they are able to settle in quickly to new routines. Parents are very happy with the school's efforts.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents. Its links with the community and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An open dialogue with parents and carers is supported by very good opportunities for them to keep in contact with the school.
- The community is willing to help the school and share its achievements.

- Taster sessions at a local college help pupils to make decisions about their future education.
- Opportunities for pupils to be involved with mainstream schools are underdeveloped.

Commentary

23 The school has very good systems in place to communicate with parents and carers. At the start and end of the school day, transport escorts deliver messages from and to home. A regular pattern of phoning pupils' homes with information for families where the first language is not English is in place. Specialist literacy and bilingual support workers maintain close links with families, to explain how to help pupils at home, prepare for joining the school, and keep in contact with other families – for example, through the regular parents' group coffee mornings held at the school. These meetings regularly target specific issues – for instance, explaining the new 'Behaviour for Learning' initiative – so that parents can be encouraged to support school strategies at home. Additionally, where, for example, a family may have difficulty fully participating in the annual review process, a bilingual support worker will ensure that parents' views contribute fully to any decisions made about their child's future. The school provides a lively newsletter for families, 'The Ranter', making sure that they have a good awareness of school life and events. The school can count on a high attendance at annual review meetings and support for school initiatives. For example, just before the parent's group meeting, several gathered around the school's Roll of Honour board discussing how their children were getting on.

24 The goodwill of the local community has resulted in generous sponsorship – for example, from the Heavy Woollen District Scouts – and volunteer help. For instance, Rotary Club members accompanied pupils on a visit to a theme park. Community facilities are used to promote road safety and life skills such as shopping, swimming lessons in Year 7 and 8, raise awareness of community resources – such as the police operations centre – and provide opportunities for work experience placements – for example, in charity shops or a garage. Members of Huddersfield Town Football Club visit to coach pupils, supporting their achievement in sport. The school choir performs in local venues, such as an old people's home, and the community is invited to share school celebrations and fund raising events, the annual Summer Fayre, for example.

25 Transition arrangements for Year 11 pupils are well organised and involve close liaison with a local college. This enables pupils to experience a range of courses which they may be interested in pursuing when they leave school. The school is working closely with its partner school, in preparation for the future reorganisation – for instance, sharing specialist teaching in a number of subjects. Again, pupils in Year 11 have opportunities to use the other school's science laboratory. Ravenshall's pupils compete with other special schools in physical education and sporting events. However, pupils do not have opportunities to work or socialise with pupils in mainstream education, limiting their experiences and personal development. In some instances, Ravenshall's efforts to establish such links have been unsuccessful. The school is sensitive to the fact that many parents consider that being included in such initiatives is unsuitable for their children, because they were unhappy in mainstream schools before coming to Ravenshall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership is good overall, although the leadership of the headteacher is very good. Management is good and so is governance. The school has no significant aids or barriers to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very effective leadership is preparing the school very well for its future reorganisation.
- Day-to-day management is good, but subject leaders do not make enough use of assessment and other information, in order to move their subjects forward.
- There are very good training opportunities for staff.
- Governors are contributing well to the school's transition.

Commentary

26 The headteacher has a strong commitment to the development and improvement of the school. His leadership is knowledgeable, and 'hands-on'. He is clearly aware of the necessary improvements that need to be made and particularly in those areas associated with the re-development of the school through the transition period. This is a major area of leadership and there are important developments taking place, such as establishing a team ethos and partnership between the two merging schools. Because he is to be headteacher of the amalgamated, all-age school, the headteacher is spearheading such initiatives, in addition to ensuring that the current pupils continue to receive a high quality education. In all this, the deputy headteacher and other senior staff provide strong support. Together, they constitute an effective leadership team, each fulfilling a number of significant responsibilities. They provide very good role models – for example, through the quality of their own teaching – and have contributed fully to establishing a common sense of purpose across the school. Staff morale is high, at a time in the life of the school where change may have been seen as threatening. For instance, staff work very hard and creatively to overcome the problems caused by the poor accommodation. Planning for the future is well supported by the operation of a strategy group involving staff and governors. Parents have justifiable confidence in the school's leaders.

27 The systems for checking how well the school is doing, through the management role of subject leaders, are not well developed. There is a very good professional development review for all teachers, during which they have opportunities to identify areas for development in their subjects. This is very positive and helps inform the school's improvement plan. However, the information shared at this meeting does not come from teachers' systematic analysis of results in the subjects, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Most subject leaders do not have time allocated to visit classrooms in order to check on the quality of teaching and learning. They are not sufficiently required to identify targets for their subjects, based on the analysis of assessment data and the evaluation of the quality of the provision. The professional development review also provides the deputy headteacher with information about training needs, in order to fulfil his role as professional development co-ordinator. The training of all staff has a high priority and is a very good feature of the school. Performance management procedures are well established, helping to bring about improvement through setting targets and identifying training needs, supported by the very good staff development opportunities.

28 Day-to-day administration and routines are carried out effectively, so the school runs smoothly. The budget is managed well but there is very little leeway over what can be spent once staffing costs are accounted for. Subject departments are allocated money according to the planned developments identified through the personal review system. However, this spending is not clearly linked to the analysis of results in subjects and the anticipated impact on performance, and a closer match could be made in this area. The school takes full advantage of additional sources of income, such as the New Opportunities Funding and Fast Lane, to enhance the quality of education it provides. When initiatives –

for instance, the provision of a literacy development worker – are shown to be effective, the school is prepared to draw on its own budget, in order to extend their impact.

29 The governors provide effective strategic support for the management of the school. Led by a very active chair, governors are enthusiastic and have high aspirations for pupils. They have good systems for collecting information to enable them to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including links to particular aspects and comprehensive reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. Governors have joined lessons, although the absence of a planned programme of visits means that not all are involved. The governing body is prepared to challenge the school, and the local education authority, over issues that arise. At the same time, governors are very supportive and sometimes share training events with staff. From time to time, they establish working parties to investigate specific topics – for instance, workforce reform. The school improvement and monitoring committee performs a very useful role and governors regard this as a critical part of their role in management. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	648330	Balance from previous year	2317
Total expenditure	612216	Balance carried forward to the next	38431
Expenditure per pupil	7558		

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new statutory requirement for work-related learning is in place for Years 10 and 11, but overall co-ordination, planning and management of this area of the curriculum, including enterprise projects, require further development.
- There is a well established careers education programme for pupils in Years 9 to 11, with good links to the Connexions service, but the careers programme in Years 7 and 8 is at a much earlier stage of development.
- All pupils in Year 11 take part in work experience placements.
- Pupils learn about the world of work at college and through responsibilities in school.

Commentary

30 Most of the work-related learning is provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is through work experience placements, careers lessons, work with the Connexions adviser, lessons at college, and through studies contributing to the ASDAN Bronze award. The co-ordinators for careers education and for work experience are familiar with the new statutory requirement for work-related learning. However, they have not yet updated all their planning and assessment documents in order to co-ordinate all the opportunities that the school provides for pupils to learn about work, the skills needed for work, and through work. For this reason it is difficult to check the progress that individual pupils make in this area. Pupils participate in enterprise activities to raise money for charity, for example, by designing and making Christmas cards, and by making cakes. These activities, however, fall short of giving them the full opportunity to develop a range of business skills, to apply for posts in a company, and to experience at first-hand how a business operates.

31 There is a clear and well structured programme of careers lessons for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The Connexions adviser is known to these pupils, and to those in Year 9. She takes part in the annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational need, and attends school for group work and individual counselling. The statutory requirement for careers education from Year 7 is in place. In Years 7 and 8, the school's policy is for careers education to be an integral part of the PSHE programme. Planning for careers education in these years, however, is not sufficiently distinct and is an area for continuing development.

32 Pupils learn about the world of work through a three-week block of work experience in Year 11. They are well prepared for their placements. They work in retail, the motor vehicle industry, children's nurseries, old people's homes, and in animal welfare centres, for example. Arrangements for pupils to record their experiences in their work placements are less well developed, although employers generally provide an evaluation at the end of the placement. Pupils' achievements in their work placements make a contribution to their ASDAN award course.

33 Pupils begin to experience vocational courses through their weekly visits to college in Year 11. They can choose courses in photography, art and design, drama, paper craft, wood work, cooking and bricklaying, for example. The range of courses offered is not as wide as previously – motor mechanics and painting and decorating, for example, are no longer available, owing to funding difficulties. A significant number of pupils of all ages are keen to apply for jobs around the school. The applicants are interviewed, and successful pupils are given necessary training. These roles include dining hall duties, setting out the

tables at break, and clearing away after lunch. There are also corridor duties. Pupils covet these jobs and take them very seriously. They rise very well to the challenge of the responsibilities they are given, developing attitudes that will stand them in good stead in the world of work.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Spanish is the modern foreign language taught in Years 7 to 9. A small part of a Year 10 Spanish lesson was seen and a Year 11 Youth Award lesson about the wider world observed. Judgements have not been made about this subject.

34 In a short visit to a Year 10 **Spanish** lesson, teaching was encouraging and supportive. This gave pupils the confidence to speak Spanish in front of their peers. Pupils enjoy learning a foreign language and they are developing recognisable and reasonable Spanish accents. They have learned how to count to thirty in Spanish. They know several colours, and the days of the week, using visual clues from the good display in the classroom used for Spanish teaching. Pupils can exchange simple greetings, and are beginning to use short phrases.

35 Current Year 10 pupils are studying the Entry level Spanish course. A very encouraging report from the examination board confirms that assessment procedures for Entry level Spanish are well developed. There is no examination in Spanish for the current Year 11. These pupils have the opportunity to learn about the wider world as part of the ASDAN Bronze award course.

English

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers ensure that work is matched carefully to what pupils have already learned.
- Additional time has recently been created for literacy teaching.
- Teaching assistants make strong contributions to pupils' achievement.
- Assessment systems for reading are good, but it is difficult to track pupils' learning in writing and speaking and listening.
- Teachers do not always expect pupils to make full use of their handwriting skills.

Commentary

36 The school uses its knowledge of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses in order to allocate them to teaching groups, alongside others who have broadly similar needs. This helps teachers when they are planning what pupils are to learn next. For instance, the highest attaining pupils in Year 11 work towards an Entry level certificate in English. During the inspection, these pupils were challenged to convert a chapter from a novel into a script for a play. They successfully applied what they had learned previously from a study of 'Macbeth', all thoroughly engrossed and behaving extremely well. In another lesson, pupils of the same age but whose literacy skills are at lower levels, responded equally positively to a task involving playing board games, reading and evaluating instructions they had written in an earlier lesson. Both classes involved boys and girls, pupils from minority ethnic groups, and a range of special educational needs, including autistic spectrum disorders. In each case, although the teaching methods used were dissimilar and the tasks were targeted at very different levels of ability, pupils built successfully on what they already knew, understood, and could do. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good and, consequently, pupils learn well and their achievement is good in all aspects of English.

37 Because the school appreciates the importance of literacy in enabling pupils to learn in other subjects and function in daily life, four extra sessions have been introduced in the period following registration and before the start of the first lesson. In the course of each week, this strategy increases the time for teaching and learning by well over an hour. These sessions have a beneficial impact on achievement, because teachers use the time so efficiently. They provide a very positive start to the day, establishing high expectations for learning and behaviour. For example, in the class for those in Years 7 to 10 with the most complex needs, including severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders, pupils focused on words incorporating 'oo', improving their speaking and listening, reading, and writing skills. When necessary, pupils with complex needs benefit from staff's use of signing to help them understand and communicate, and a computer program that generates symbols also supports their writing and reading.

38 The teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is an important element in all English lessons. For instance, a teaching assistant took the lead role during a game of 'Countdown' for pupils in Year 8, encouraging them as they ordered letters to create simple words. Teaching assistants also have responsibilities or particular interests related to English, which contribute significantly to enabling pupils to achieve well. Two of them run the weekly book-changing activity in the library. In return for choosing books to take home, pupils receive tokens, which can be used to purchase books. Currently, around one-third of the pupils take advantage of this very well organised venture, furthering their love of books and reading. One of the teaching assistants involved has a special interest in specific learning difficulties and pursues this very energetically. For instance, she led the development of the extended reading test used annually to help track the progress of lower attaining pupils in particular, and has given guidance to staff on the best ways to label resources and displays. A literacy development worker, employed by the school, works intensively with individual pupils – for example, to improve the fluency of their reading – and with small groups who need extra help with speaking and listening skills. Assessments and feedback from teachers indicate that these measures enhance the work done in lessons and contribute effectively to pupils' good achievement.

39 The school has recently introduced assessment booklets in which teachers record the small steps in learning made by pupils. These records are very detailed but, because they are not computerised, it is cumbersome and time-consuming to handle the wealth of data they contain. In reading, regular tests are administered, providing a clear indicator of how individual pupils are achieving. Good use is made of this information, to group pupils and target support, for example. Leadership of English is good and management is satisfactory. It is difficult for the subject leader to maintain an overview of progress in writing and speaking and listening. He has not yet been allocated time to observe lessons taught by colleagues, in order to identify and share particularly good practice, and he has a number of other significant responsibilities. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The National Literacy Strategy is now used to structure the curriculum and discussions with staff ensure that, for example, pupils read the work of a range of authors.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40 Previously, the promotion of literacy across the curriculum was a key issue. This has been tackled well and teachers now make good use of opportunities to encourage pupils to discuss, read and write. For instance, during a PSHE lesson, Year 7 pupils spoke in turn about occasions when they had been frightened, listening well to others. A history lesson enabled Year 8 pupils to practise reading, as they looked for information in passages about the Black Death. Writing opportunities are also provided regularly, but teachers do

not always insist that pupils use their best handwriting. For example, although many pupils can write neatly, using cursive script, they often regress to printing untidily.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most of the Year 11 pupils gain accreditation at Entry level and a small number achieve success in a GCSE course.
- There is good teaching that leads to effective learning in the well organised groups.
- The curriculum is good but ICT is not used enough to help pupils to learn.
- The leadership of mathematics is good but there is insufficient checking of performance by the subject leader.

Commentary

41 Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school, particularly in number work, in which they have had a concentration of experience over the years. There is an increasing emphasis on introducing lessons with mental starter activities, which is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to handle number. In a lesson for higher attaining pupils in Year 11, the introductory activity focused on multiplication. Pupils were challenged to calculate '9 x 25', for example, and to describe how they had arrived at their answer – '8 x 25 makes 200, then just add 25'. Pupils relished the quick pace of the lesson and were clearly pleased when they were successful.

42 Overall, teaching and learning are good. Lesson planning is effective and guides all staff in maintaining the direction of the lesson and helping to ensure that pupils achieve what the teacher wants them to learn. For the most part, there is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff. During the inspection, this helped a group of pupils in Years 7 to 10, with a range of special educational needs including severe learning difficulties, to achieve well. Teaching assistants provided individual support as pupils handled three-dimensional objects, chosen to aid their understanding as they added single digit numbers. The pace of most lessons and the challenge for pupils are good and activities meet individual needs well. For instance, during one lesson, the teacher enabled a Year 8 pupil with moderate learning difficulties to recognise that 2 x 10p coins make 20p, as well as 10 x 2p coins. There is a very high expectation that pupils will behave well and this leads to very good attitudes and relationships between pupils and the adults in the classroom. Because classes are made up of pupils working at broadly similar levels, teachers are able to more easily match activities to their particular needs. This means that pupils usually have to try hard in mathematics lessons, but are not faced with work that is so difficult that they become discouraged.

43 The curriculum for pupils up to Year 9 covers all the required elements of the National Curriculum and for the oldest pupils there is a syllabus based on the accreditation being offered. These arrangements provide a well-structured and balanced programme of work. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to practise and improve their mathematical skills. There are some examples of the use of interactive whiteboards. For instance, a lesson for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Years 10 and 11 got off to a prompt start with very good use of the interactive whiteboard to engage all pupils in revising the 5x table. However, all pupils do not currently have such opportunities, and there is a general shortage of software for the subject.

44 The subject co-ordinator leads the subject effectively, with a distinctive enthusiasm that helps to motivate other staff to teach mathematics well. However, although there is some checking of lesson planning, there is insufficient monitoring of the subject, through visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, for example. The management of mathematics is therefore satisfactory, rather than good. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45 Overall, there is satisfactory use of mathematics in most subjects. For example, pupils work with co-ordinates in geography and timelines in history. Mathematics is incorporated well into science and design and technology lessons, teachers make good use of opportunities to involve measurement and calculation. In ICT, pupils quite often use spreadsheets to produce graphs or use angles to direct a screen image, contributing well to their mathematical development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most Year 11 pupils leave school with an examination certificate.
- Poor accommodation and unsatisfactory resources limit achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Visiting speakers and creative use of resources make science a lot of fun for the pupils with the most severe learning difficulties.
- The subject is well led by a specialist teacher.

Commentary

46 Pupils achieve well overall. By Year 11, most have made good progress, higher attaining pupils gaining Entry level in science, mainly at the highest level. This is because they are well taught by a specialist who makes every effort to overcome the poor accommodation and unsatisfactory resources. In Year 11, for example, lessons are taught in a laboratory in another school. The disadvantage of this arrangement is the amount of travelling time, and access to the laboratory can only be arranged for one year group.

47 Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The accommodation restricts the range of contexts in which pupils can develop practical and investigative skills. These pupils do not have access to a laboratory. In a Year 9 lesson for example, in a classroom, pupils were comparing heat conduction along rods of brass, copper and aluminium. They made their predictions and, working in groups, set up their experiments. The only safe sources of heat, however, were small tea candles. This slowed the pace of the experiment so much that time ran out, leaving no opportunity for pupils to record and analyse results and evaluate the effectiveness of the methods they had used. Pupils are very enthusiastic about practical work. All coped very well with the frustration of not completing the experiment, including a boy with more severe learning difficulties who had joined this lesson from the class for pupils with the most complex needs. It is anticipated that the accommodation will be improved during the next year or so.

48 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers modify the curriculum well to suit pupils' particular learning difficulties. Pupils with the most complex needs, for example, learned very well about the ear, sound and communication. A visiting teacher, who is a hearing impaired specialist, brought a very good range of sensory and other resources to school for pupils to see, touch and hear. Ravenshall staff and the visitor worked very well as a team. A girl with hearing impairment from another class visited, to show everybody her fashionable hearing aids.

49 Science is well led by a recently appointed teacher. She has improved the subject plans to ensure that pupils' learning builds up systematically from year to year. She has also extended the stock of resources and introduced a new assessment procedure. Management is satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching and the use of assessment information to inform planning are areas where further improvement is still necessary. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are taught very well in their specialist lessons.
- There is a good curriculum that gives pupils a breadth of knowledge and skills but opportunities for the use of ICT in other subjects are restricted.
- ICT is led very well.

Commentary

50 Teaching and learning are good overall and particularly so when pupils are taught by the subject leader in the timetabled lessons. Very effective strategies are in place to ensure that, regardless of their ability, all pupils maintain a very good learning pace throughout the lessons. For example, in a Year 7 lesson in which pupils were learning to use a spreadsheet, the interactive whiteboard demonstration and the well prepared cue cards for pupils meant that time was used well and pupils could move from one part of the task to the next with ease. Pupils respond very well to the lessons, helped by the good humour of the staff. They enjoy features such as remembering, 'Eyup – there's a sum coming', to recall that a formula needs to start with an equals sign. There is very good support for the teacher by a teaching assistant who has good subject knowledge and they work as a team during lessons. For instance, she enthusiastically encouraged Year 9 pupils to describe how they had edited the procedures to create different effects in a lesson about control technology. This resulted in pupils being equally keen and helped them to recall what they had been taught. Staff have very high expectations for pupils to behave well, reviewing the 'Behaviour for Learning' targets at the start of each lesson. As a result of the very well organised and interesting lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning.

51 The programme of work ensures that pupils develop systematically their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move up through the school. For instance, pupils in Year 7 enter data into a spreadsheet and follow instructions to produce a series of graphs. By Year 9, they use a range of functions within a control technology package, entering commands and enabling the screen 'turtle' to undertake a sequence of movements. In Year 11, the highest attaining pupils are quite competent and use the program menus with confidence. Many of these pupils are successful in an Entry-level course, gaining accreditation for achievements. However, achievement is good, rather than very good, because there are only limited opportunities for pupils' learning to be reinforced during lessons in other subjects.

52 The subject leader has undertaken the role for a number of years and recognises the resource needs in the subject, having a clear view of how it needs to develop. Although assessment information is gathered, there is insufficient analysis of data and the subject leader has too little time available to monitor the subject elsewhere in the school. The computer suite is a very good facility. However, it is not as effective as it might be, because it has to be used as a classroom and this restricts its timetabled use for other subjects. There is a lack of interactive technology in other classrooms and a shortage of equipment for other strands of ICT. However, a new interactive whiteboard has very recently been installed in the library, to provide opportunities for teachers to use this technology in other subjects. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53 Overall, teachers are making satisfactory use of computers to support learning in other subjects. A small amount of ICT use takes place in science, for data logging. There is use of digital imaging in art and design and a small amount of Internet research on

occasions in different subjects. Most subjects utilise some word processing at various times. However, this is not planned for in a sustained way, as the shortage of resources and access to the computer suite limits opportunities.

HUMANITIES

No geography lessons were observed. A Year 11 Youth Award Scheme lesson was seen about care of the environment. One history lesson was seen. Judgements have not been made about geography and history.

54 In Years 10 and 11, aspects of **geography** contribute to the ASDAN Bronze award. For instance, pupils conduct traffic surveys, applying their mathematical skills to record their result using bar charts. They investigate how much rubbish they personally create in one day. They then use this information as the starting point for work on conservation and re-cycling, which includes a visit to a re-cycling centre. In the lesson seen, pupils' work on re-cycling was enhanced by a visit from an environmental education officer and they learned how to make new paper by re-cycling newspapers.

55 Pupils in Years 7 to 10 with the most complex special educational needs learn simple map drawing and reading skills, and how to follow directions. They can recognise the geographical features of places like the seaside, mountains, deserts and rain forests. They also know that plants change with the seasons. This is because they are photographed in front of the same plants, in the same part of the school grounds, at intervals throughout the year.

56 In **history**, teachers support pupils' learning by organising, whenever possible, practical activities to help them gain an understanding of life in the past. For instance, during the lesson seen, Year 8 pupils were excited as they dressed up as characters from the time of the Black Death. They showed their understanding of how the disease spread by explaining their point of view to the rest of the class.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well organised and pupils have good opportunities to gain accreditation for their work.
- Lessons involve lots of interesting activities.
- Pupils' learning is assessed very carefully.

Commentary

57 The school's programme of work follows the guidance of the Kirklees Agreed Syllabus and, in Years 10 and 11, the syllabus for the ASDAN Bronze award and units leading to Entry level accreditation. The curriculum is structured so pupils learn about the beliefs and practices of six major religions. For instance, during the inspection, Year 9 pupils recalled their visit to a Buddhist Centre, what they had learned and how they felt. As a result of sensitive questioning by the teacher, a higher attaining pupil recollected meditating, commenting 'I felt relaxed. It cleared my mind.' As they move up through the school, pupils are challenged to discover how religion has influenced the lives of famous people, such as Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King. The subject consequently makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The work of the higher attaining pupils in Year 11 shows that they can form opinions about

topics with moral and social dimensions – for instance, care of the elderly – explaining their reasons and empathising with people in difficult situations. However, lower attaining pupils find this aspect of the subject hard and make much better progress in acquiring factual knowledge.

58 The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn and achieve well. They all benefit from the specialist teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm and her high expectations for them to achieve. In return, pupils show a keen interest in the subject and demonstrate respect for the beliefs of other people. They are motivated by the tasks set, such as making a Christingle, a Hindu shrine, or a model of the Buddha, and particularly enjoy opportunities to learn at first-hand – visiting a church, temple or mosque, for example. The teacher adapts lessons well to cater for the needs of pupils with complex needs, often using stories to help them understand. As a result, these pupils also achieve well, learning in very small steps.

59 The teacher has devised very effective systems to measure and record pupils' learning. For instance, their written work is marked very thoroughly, with stickers and helpful comments used successfully to encourage pupils to try hard. End of unit tests or specially designed tasks contribute to tracking how well each pupil is performing, and enable subsequent topics to be modified in the light of this information. All this ongoing assessment enables the teacher to ascribe an annual P-level or National Curriculum level to each pupil. By recording these on a simple chart, an extremely clear overview of pupils' progress is built up, demonstrating graphically how well each is achieving. These very good procedures would be further improved if teaching assistants noted down the comments made by pupils during discussions – currently, this happens only occasionally. Leadership and management are good and the subject has improved well since the previous inspection. The subject leader has identified priorities for the future, including the intention to develop further links with the community. She is already teaching for one morning each week at the school which is to join Ravenshall, establishing very useful links.

TECHNOLOGY

One lesson of design and technology was seen. Judgements have not been made about this subject.

60 Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in **design and technology**. For example, in the lesson seen, pupils in Year 9 used hand and powered tools with confidence and accuracy to construct the chassis of a model vehicle. In both resistant materials and food technology, the curriculum emphasises suitably the practical, making aspects, but in food technology particularly, pupils have regular opportunities to develop designing skills. The two teachers have recently devised a clear and comprehensive system for recording and tracking pupils' progress.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

One lesson of music was seen. Judgements were not made about this subject.

61 Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught **music** by a teacher from the school which is to join with Ravenshall in the future. During the lesson seen, Year 9 pupils responded very well to challenging activities – for instance, remembering a tune and matching it to cards which indicated different rhythms. Resources are very good quality and provide opportunities for pupils to make music using, for example, drums, xylophones, and keyboards, performing individually and as part of a group.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are taught by the subject specialist.
- The curriculum introduces pupils to an interesting range of experiences.
- Leadership is good.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

62 The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well as a result. The principal teacher is very well informed about the subject and displays an enthusiasm that is transmitted to the pupils. She gives individual attention to all pupils' needs and helps them to become involved in what they are doing. This leads to them maintaining interesting and well constructed sketch books and taking great pride in their work. For example when working with a Year 11 GCSE group, she challenged them to develop their work further, encouraging them to think of alternative methods they could use for their final pieces – for instance, painting, collage, and batik. In this, the teacher receives very good support from the teaching assistant, who brings her own skills and expertise to lessons. Most Year 11 pupils use a range of media and produce simple observational drawing. Higher attaining pupils make accurate sketches using oil pastels, work in mixed media, and they often use their knowledge of artists such as Picasso, Matisse and Van Gogh, when developing their ideas. The school has a history of GCSE success in art and design, but no pupils were entered last year because there was no specialist teacher. However, 12 pupils gained accreditation at Entry level, as have all the current Years 10 and 11 pupils.

63 The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities, through drawing and painting, a range of printing techniques, and three-dimensional work involving sculptural forms. There is a small, though consistently used, amount of digital imaging involved in pupils' work. For instance, they manipulate digital photographs. Pupils visit art galleries and outside agencies provide visiting artists. For instance, during the inspection, Year 8 pupils' experiences were significantly enhanced by one of a series of sessions led by an artist. They have worked through a range of processes, culminating in the creation of masks in cast glass. Images of African and Asian masks provided stimulus and contributed to pupils' cultural development. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are working towards the Entry level certificate.

64 The specialist teacher has a good vision of how the subject might develop and she is moving the subject on well. However, she is not yet undertaking monitoring – for example, of lessons taught by a colleague. She manages the resources and the curriculum satisfactorily. The accommodation for art and design is unsatisfactory as it is in a general purpose classroom, which means everything has to be tidied away at the end of lessons. This inhibits what can be covered during lessons. The school offers a short course at GCSE level, as there is insufficient time on the timetable for a full course. ICT resources need to be improved. For example, the computer in the classroom is not powerful enough.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

One lesson of physical education was observed. Judgements have not been made about this subject.

65 The school successfully provides a wide range of **physical education** activities for all pupils. Pupils learn both individual and team skills. In a very good outdoor cricket lesson, a large class of pupils in Years 7 to 11 who have a wide range of learning needs including moderate and severe learning difficulties, autism and hearing impairment, were managed very effectively by the specialist teacher. There were clear instructions, good demonstrations, and expectations of pupils were high and realistic. All pupils achieved equally well, improving their striking and fielding skills as the lesson progressed. This is because there was careful attention to the grouping of pupils, based on the teacher's secure knowledge of individual learning needs. The school field is easily waterlogged and rendered unusable for significant periods of time.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons in citizenship were observed. Judgements have not been made about this subject.

66 Statutory requirements for **citizenship** are in place. The subject is taught as part of the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme, and through the ASDAN Bronze award in Years 10 and 11. The school has drafted a policy on the teaching of citizenship, defining how different subjects could make a contribution. There has been no check, however, on the actual contribution that subjects make. This is a task for the very recently appointed subject leader, in order to ensure that citizenship is fully embedded in the curriculum.

67 All pupils learned about the recent general election, by taking part in a mock election. Candidates were fielded in four 'parties' – Health, Education, Law and Order, and the Environment party, which went on to win the school election after all the votes were counted. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn about conservation, care of the environment and re-cycling. In all years pupils take responsibility for raising money for charity. The school council members are democratically elected and they properly involve other pupils in debate before taking issues to council meetings.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The subject is supported by a good range of other opportunities for personal and social development.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently thorough and helpful for recording and checking progress from year to year.

Commentary

68 Teaching and learning are good and the topics chosen are relevant. In Years 7 to 9, pupils learn well about, for example, road safety, first aid, peer pressure, keeping safe,

healthy lifestyles, and about emotions. During a good Year 7 lesson, pupils were taught well how to appreciate that people experience different feelings in the same situations. In Year 9, they extend their understanding of emotions. They begin to recognise a range of feelings, trying to explain their causes. They discuss family and friendship and how to make their friends feel good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are challenged well to prioritise the actions they would take in an emergency. Good teaching methods encourage pupils to extend their understanding of dilemmas and consequences. They consider different situations – for example, when asked to help at home, when they do not get their own way, when they see someone bullied – then write about how they would respond. In a good lesson on alcohol, pupils improve their knowledge, for example, of the law relating to drinking, and of social occasions where drink is usually served. Drugs education, sex and relationships education, parenting, and family life all feature in the programme for older pupils.

69 The subject is well led and so the school provides learning opportunities not only in timetabled lessons but also at other times in the day. Pupils take on responsibilities in the dining hall and in the corridors at break and lunchtime, for example. Visits into the community, work experience placements, and attendance on college courses, all help pupils to make choices, accept responsibility, and prepare for leaving school.

70 Aspects of PSHE are externally assessed as part of the ASDAN Bronze award in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have social and behaviour targets that are regularly reviewed. Most of the work in the taught programme, however, is not formally assessed, making it difficult for teachers to judge if pupils are making fast enough progress. Management is satisfactory. The subject was not reported separately at the time of the previous inspection, therefore there is no judgement on improvement.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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