

INSPECTION REPORT

RAVENSCLIFFE HIGH SCHOOL

Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107588

Headteacher: Mr M D Hirst

Lead inspector: Mr D Smith

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2005

Inspection number: 272938

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: 11-19
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 115

School address: Skircoat Green
Halifax
West Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr D Peck
governors:

Date of previous 15th March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ravenscliffe High School is a Community Day Special School located in Halifax, West Yorkshire. The school has a significant number of awards including, the Investors in People, Sportsmark, Artsmark and also has gained three Achievement Awards. The school is involved in a range of initiatives including, the local Excellence Cluster, Young Enterprise, Schools Sports Co-ordinator Partnership, Safemark and Safe and Sound Challenge. There are one hundred and fifteen pupils on roll; sixty-nine boys and forty-six girls aged eleven to nineteen. The pupils have a particularly wide range of special educational needs including moderate learning difficulty, severe learning difficulty, profound and multiple learning difficulty, physical difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All of the pupils have statements of special educational needs. Fourteen pupils are from minority ethnic groups and nine pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Eight pupils are in public care.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17323	Mr D Smith	Lead inspector	Science
			Music
			Physical education
			English as an additional language
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
22466	Mrs D Pearson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology
17260	Mrs J Taylor	Team inspector	English
			Citizenship
			Geography
			History
16722	Mrs N Buckingham	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Modern foreign language
			Religious education
			Post-16 provision
			Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	8
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
WORK RELATED LEARNING	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	15
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3, 4 AND POST-16	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school with many excellent features and it provides very good value for money. The pupils and students achieve very well, making very good gains in their learning as a result of very good teaching. The leadership and governance of the school are very good and the management is good. The staff teamwork is a major aid to learning and very effectively helps to develop an excellent ethos.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the leadership of other key staff and the governors is very good leading to very good teaching and learning and an excellent school ethos.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- The very good contribution of the support staff and this, in particular, ensures that all pupils have equal access to the very good curriculum and activities.
- The preparation for students leaving school including the Springboard Programme is excellent.
- The care, support and involvement of pupils in the life of the school are very good.
- Links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.
- Pupils' punctuality at the start of the day is unsatisfactory.
- There are weaknesses in the use of assessment in design and technology.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. A high priority is placed on challenging all of the pupils to do their best. The focus on teaching and learning is central to continual improvement in the school and most teaching is now good or better. The curriculum has been very carefully developed and refined with a focus on fully meeting the pupils' very wide-ranging special educational needs. The leadership of the curriculum is innovative and there is a constant drive to enhance the quality and suitability of the accommodation. The staff and stakeholders share an ambition for each and every pupil to do their best. National and local initiatives are embraced and have a very positive impact on the quality of the provision

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	Very good
Year 11	Very good	Very good
Year 13	Very good	Very good

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

Pupils' and students' achievement is very good overall. They achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10, 11 and post-16. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well in English and students at post-16 achieve very well. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well in mathematics and students at post-16 achieve very well. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve very well in science. Pupils' and students' achievement is very good in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and music. Their achievement in religious education and art and design is good. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 in design and technology is satisfactory. Their achievement in personal, social and health

education is very good. Pupils who are in the early stages of English language acquisition achieve as well as their peers in the school. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or achievement in any other subjects.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The pupils and students have excellent attitudes and enjoy very good relationships. Their behaviour is very good and they are able to thrive in the school without fear of bullying or harassment. Attendance at the school is very good. However, pupils' punctuality at the start of the day, particularly those who travel on transport provided by the Local Education Authority, is unsatisfactory. The school and parents are concerned about this and see the need to build on their current work to ensure that pupils and students arrive at school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, overall, and assessment is good. Teaching and learning are good for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10, 11 and post-16. The use of assessment is inconsistent for Year 7 to 9 pupils in design and technology. Consequently pupils' tasks do not fully meet their needs and teaching and learning are satisfactory in design and technology. The curriculum provision is very good and it fully meets the wide range of pupils' special educational needs. The opportunities provided for the enrichment of the curriculum are very good. The quality and suitability of the accommodation is very good, although the design and technology facilities are only satisfactory and this contributes to pupils' satisfactory gains in their learning in this subject. The pupils are very well cared for and receive very good support and guidance. Pupils are very effectively inducted into the school and this helps to develop their excellent attitudes. The school has very good systems in place to consult pupils and take their views into account. Very good links have been established with the parents, other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and governance of the school are very good and the management is good making leadership and management very good, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and, in particular, he has exceptional aspirations for the development of the school. The leadership of other key staff is very good and their management is good. The governing body are very capable and have developed a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have developed a very good balance between their level of support and challenge for the school leaders and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Teamwork is a major strength in the school and this helps to promote the excellent ethos and an inclusive environment where the pupils' very wide range of special educational needs is fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are very positive about the school and appreciate the very detailed information provided for them. Parents express positive views about the support provided by the school and in return they are keen to help with fundraising and school events. Pupils and students express extremely positive views about the school. They indicate that they are very happy to attend the school and look forward to their involvement in the available activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that pupils do not miss time in class at the start of the day.
- Develop the effective use of assessment in design and technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' and students' achievement is very good, overall. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11. Post -16 students achieve very well. Pupils and students in public care and those in the early stages of English language acquisition achieve as well as their peers in the rest of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in science.
- Pupils make very good progress towards their individual targets.
- Pupils' and students' achievement is very good in ICT, physical education, personal, social and health education and music.
- The very good curriculum promotes the very good achievement of the students in post-16.

Commentary

1 Pupils' achievement in science is very good due to the emphasis placed on investigative work and the focus on the consistent use of scientific terms. The higher attaining pupils can carry out investigations with minimal support and understand what constitutes a fair test. They are developing the confidence to make predictions and state whether what happens was as expected. The pupils with more complex needs, respond very well to the very good opportunities provided by the staff for them to engage and participate in practical activities. They work very well in pairs and groups showing a willingness to share equipment and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Pupils and post-16 students are provided with very clear expectations in horticulture and make very good gains in their ability to carry out challenging tasks independently. They discuss their work in horticulture with enthusiasm and have very positive attitudes to the subject.

2 Pupils in the school have a very wide range of special educational needs and the school uses the available data very effectively to set individual and whole-school targets in most subjects. It is the view of the vast majority of parents that their child is making good progress in the school. In music, pupils and students are challenged very effectively and work enthusiastically towards their individual targets. Pupils have the opportunity to make choices and play a range of pitched and un-pitched instruments. Higher attaining pupils and students keep accurate time when playing a percussion instrument. Pupils are very effectively encouraged and consequently make very good gains in their ability and confidence to sing ranging from the repetition of short patterns to the ability to sing in tune. Pupils achieve very well in the development of their swimming and dancing skills. Very good teamwork challenges pupils to make very good gains in their water skills at a local swimming pool as they work towards their awards. Pupils with more complex needs have very skilled support for the development of their confidence in water. Pupils make very good and at times excellent gains in their use of ICT. Their very good achievements are also evident in the use of ICT in other subjects. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their dance lessons and very good demonstrations by the staff very effectively motivates pupils and students to be determined and make very good gains in their movement. Some pupils are encouraged

to develop the skills and confidence to perform in public. The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is reflected in their excellent attitudes and very good behaviour. Pupils' achievement in design and technology in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, overall, and this contributes pupils' good achievement in those years.

3 The post-16 students are provided with an innovative curriculum that very effectively meets their needs. They are provided with exceptional post-school preparation. This gives students the confidence and skills to approach their work with determination and, as a result, they achieve very well. Their challenging targets provide a very well-considered balance between their academic work, vocational opportunities and personal development. The students meet their targets very well and achieve very well in their external accreditation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The provision for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is very good but punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupil's attitudes are excellent and their behaviour is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil's supreme enjoyment and enthusiasm when learning and taking part in activities results from their commitment to each other and the school.
- Pupils and students are very effectively encouraged to appreciate and celebrate each other's achievements.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils and students to relate very well to each other.
- Very high expectations of behaviour and a consistent response to any behavioural issues, teaches pupils to behave very well.
- Because much of the school transport does not regularly arrive on time for the start of the school day, a significant number of pupils are late for registration, their pastoral session and the first lesson.

Commentary

4 Pupils place great trust in the school and will try their very hardest to respond to the challenges and expectations of their teachers. For example, the recent publication of a fantasy adventure by a pupil is the culmination of many hours of work by the author (the pupil) and the support and encouragement of friends, staff and family. Photographic displays around the school reflect the excellent ethos of the school and the extent of the activities that pupils are involved in and prepared to work hard at. For instance, the slick routines of the "Dance crew" belie the many practice sessions that the pupils have needed to achieve synchronicity in front of an audience, and the crisis of confidence that one or two of the pupils have had to overcome before taking part in a public performance.

5 The innovative style of school assemblies provides an inspirational time for pupils to celebrate each other's achievements and promotes all aspects of pupil's personal development. For example, a video clip shown of a pupil with severe communication difficulties, demonstrated her persevering, with her teacher's encouragement and delight, to create a barely discernible "b" sound. Pupils on Springboard work placements can share their successes in a task, such as handling a wheelbarrow correctly or netting a Christmas

tree for a customer, with the whole school, and as a result, demonstrate the possibilities open to other pupils in work place experiences.

6 Relationships are very strong and pupils want to work well for their teachers. Because of this they will, for example, be prepared to try, and try again, to achieve the perfect shortbread biscuit from a mould, when previous attempts have failed, or make an effort to score the perfect strike at a busy bowling alley when concentration is difficult and there are distractions all around. By providing very good social opportunities for pupils, such as the residential trip to Bendrigg and a forthcoming trip to Germany, pupils learn to socialise with each other and a range of other people in very different social settings. Lunchtime clubs and after school provision are all very well attended, and offer pupils the chance to participate in popular social pursuits such as gardening, or promote specialist skills such as the hand eye co-ordination required for remote control car racing. As a result, pupils consolidate their personal and social talents, form friendships outside of their immediate pastoral groups and acquire skills, which can enhance their leisure time out of school.

7 Prayer, with the school chaplain at lunchtime, allows pupils to be together socially at a time of reflection and recognise that spirituality and faith is not confined in one place such as a church, but can be addressed anywhere. The school makes very good efforts to expose pupils to a wide range of cultures and faiths through the religious education curriculum and art and music. As a result pupils are very aware of the diversity of ethnicity outside of their immediate community and enjoy, respect and celebrate many of these cultures.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.6%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.0
National data	8.7	National data	1.9

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

8 Despite pupil's actual attendance being very good, many pupils miss the start of the school day because they are not brought to the school in time for it. A regular sight is pupils hurrying to get their coats off and into the first lesson, with no hope of achieving registration or pastoral time, and the first part of the communication time having to be repeated to account for the late arrival of pupils into the classroom. Late arrivals to class are compounded by the fact that many pupils need time to have their personal requirements attended to after a long time on school transport. The school conscientiously monitors the times of transport arrivals, but has not been able to achieve a sustained impact on improving pupil's punctuality. Some parents are unhappy about the fact that their children miss out on the start of the communication lesson because of their late arrival to school. Pupils are punctual to lessons during the school day.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	101	8	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	10	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

9 There are very high expectations of how pupils should behave that are consistently emphasised and these are supported by the school council's own set of Ravenscliffe expectations. There is no tolerance of any sort of bullying and harassment in school and all staff are trained in approved techniques to de-escalate challenging behaviour without the need for physical restraint. The school is therefore a relaxed and very happy place to be in and pupils behave very well and are considerate to each other. To help pupils who may be facing difficulties with moral judgments in school, community and work experience placements, a display of problem scenarios, with possible solutions, very effectively suggests different approaches to tackling any aspects of intimidation. The school's use of exclusion is carefully considered

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The curriculum provision is very good and the opportunities provided for the enrichment of the curriculum are very good. Accommodation is very good and the quality and range of resources is very good. The provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is very good. Very good systems are in place to consult pupils and take their views into account. Very good links have been developed with the parents, other schools, colleges and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good, overall, and assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very high expectations for pupils' and students' achievement and personal development in many lessons.
- The very good contribution of the support staff.
- There are weaknesses in the use of assessment in a small number of lessons.

Commentary

10 The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and a significant percentage of the teaching is now very good or better. Where teaching and learning are very good, planning is very well informed by the teachers' very good subject knowledge and good assessment systems. Where the assessment systems are used very well, teachers plan the pupil's work with a high degree of challenge and very high expectations lead to very good achievement. This encourages the establishment of well-considered individual targets for the pupils and these are accurately matched to their special educational needs.

Pupils and students are, where appropriate, involved in establishing their own targets. This leads to some excellent teaching in ICT for the students at post-16 as they are very focussed on their external accreditation. Very consistent behaviour management is a feature of these lessons and this ensures that, for example, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, are very effectively engaged in their learning and achieve very well. The vast majority of parents believe that the members of staff expect their child to work hard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	25 (44%)	25 (44%)	6 (10%)	0	0	0

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

11 The members of the support staff are very well deployed and this assists the school to meet the very wide range of pupils’ special educational needs. They make a particularly marked impact on the provision for pupils with more complex needs and, as a result these pupils achieve very well. The support staff has a very useful range of additional expertise that, for example, boosts the quality of provision for music and physical education. The support staff also plays a significant and essential role in the organisation of the students’ independent travel and work-placement opportunities. The additional support, provided for pupils who are in the early stages of English language acquisition, ensures that these pupils are very effectively engaged in their learning and achieve very well.

12 The quality of teaching is good, overall, for pupils in Years 7 to 9. There is a small amount of satisfactory teaching due to weaknesses in the use of assessment. For example, there is insufficient use of assessment in the planning of tasks for pupils in design and technology and, as a result, their achievement is satisfactory.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good and enrichment opportunities are very good. Accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and is very relevant to the very wide range of pupils' needs.
- Pupils and students have very good opportunities to complete accredited courses and prepare for life after school.
- Opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities extend very good learning opportunities.
- The staff's very good range of expertise and the very good specialist accommodation.

Commentary

13 Learning opportunities throughout school are very good and meet the diverse range of pupils' and students' special educational needs. The team of curriculum co-ordinators work closely together to continuously monitor, evaluate and plan curriculum initiatives. There is a very effective emphasis on communication throughout all subjects and in specific target groups each day. Information and communication technology is comprehensively used to support all subjects. This includes a range of switches and touch screens in order for pupils with more complex needs to interact with subject materials. Technical support for ICT has been enhanced by funding made available by the local Excellence Cluster. The sensory curriculum is extremely well-planned, resourced and provides a teaching pack of information to support the education of pupils with complex needs. The very good new separate facilities and extended post-16 curriculum provides very good opportunities for learning and, as a result, students achieve very well.

14 The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils at all levels to enter accredited courses and includes; OCR National Skills Profile, Accredited Life for Living, Preparation for Employment and Enterprise, AQA Adult Literacy and Numeracy, CLAIT and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Planned Springboard placements provide excellent opportunities for supported work and independent travel in the community. Students pursue college links and appropriate school courses which prepare them well for life after school.

15 The wide range of extra activities and use of the community make a significant contribution to pupils' development and add interest and challenge to learning. The signing choir and dance group thoroughly enjoy performing to audiences, which is an excellent opportunity to develop friendships, confidence and skills. The study of industrial Halifax provided opportunities for pupils to dress up and experience the life of the Victorians, while the Eureka museum encourages pupils to interact with science and technology. There are very good sporting opportunities in the community with, for example, the use of the local swimming pool and inter school football games. Professional artists provide workshops, for example, to help pupils produce seated pottery figures. There are also regular sessions with visiting musicians and theatre groups. Many pupils are involved in fund raising events, for example, during the week of the inspection they took part in a Bring and Buy for the Tsunami appeal.

16 There are a very good number of well-qualified teachers, many of whom teach specialised subjects and this ensures pupils gain the maximum benefit from the curriculum. The number and quality of support staff are very good and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Many take advantage of accredited courses offered by the school such as signing, computer skills and the technique of aromatherapy. Therapists are closely involved in pupils' well being and learning.

17 The very good accommodation allows specialist teaching to take place in most subjects. The new sound garden and extended horticultural facility provide an excellent resource for both learning and enjoyment. This has involved many people in the community and neighbouring schools. There are very good facilities for food technology, science, ICT, dance, art and design and music studios and light rooms to compliment the sensory curriculum. The design and technology area requires refurbishing to provide increased opportunities for the design and making of resistant materials. There are very good resources that support learning in all subjects. Many pupils require specialist equipment and this is provided to a very high standard.

Care, guidance and support

Care for pupils and students is very good. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance. Very good systems are in place to consider pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral groups build a very good foundation for staff to guide and support pupils, especially when they are moving onto the next stage of their education.
- Transition arrangements on entering and leaving school play a significant part in the way pupils confidently enter the next stage of their learning.
- Very comprehensive systems are in place to ensure the well-being, health and dignity of pupils and students.
- A recognition of the benefits of consulting pupils for their views on all aspects of school life.

Commentary

18 Pastoral staff know pupils very well and meet them at the beginning and end of the day to sort out any concerns and make sure that pupils know that there is always an adult they can go to if they have any worries. As a result, pastoral staff can offer pupil's very pertinent support and guidance for their academic and personal development. The school's ability to track pupil's personal and social development is very well supported by good assessment procedures. Access to pastoral staff is very beneficial for pupils and has a very positive impact on the school's relationship with parents and on pupil's achievement. Pupils mainly stay in their pastoral group as they move through the school. This supports the very good induction procedures and is a solid foundation to address decisions on making the next step in their education, guided by outside services such as Connexions.

19 Procedures for health and safety are very good and provision to assess risks to pupils, either when they are out on activities, Springboard placements, the independent travel programme or the school premises, is extremely well-organised. Personal care and the necessity for dignity and respect whilst a pupil may require moving and handling also receive the highest priority. All staff are trained in these procedures and new staff trained as part of their induction. Health professionals liaise closely with the school and often work in the classrooms alongside teaching staff or hold clinics in the school so that pupils do not have to miss school to attend hospital appointments. As a result, parents are very confident about the care that the school offers to their children. The school is also very conscious of healthy eating and has established a Healthy Tuck shop for pupils with fresh fruit available. Child protection issues are well addressed in the school with two designated teachers with overall responsibility for referrals. The headteacher and school nurse are also fully trained in child protection procedures, to follow up any incident that they consider will be affecting a pupil's welfare.

20 The recently formed school council follows a well-established pattern of consulting pupil's views across the school. For example, there have been surveys on school meals and "What we want from the school tuck shop". Pupils make their own decision on Springboard placements, participation in the Independent travel programme and what lunchtime and after school's clubs they want to join. They are used to being asked their opinion at the end of the school day as to what they consider they have learnt and accustomed to setting personal targets for themselves. As a result, they are very confident and sure of their opinions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good links are established with parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very hard to include parents and carers in all aspects of their children's education.
- Very generous and active support from the local and wider community offers pupils an extensive range of opportunities to integrate, socialise and contribute as citizens.
- Very close links to schools in the Excellence Cluster, and to local colleges, supports pupils' development.

Commentary

21 A very strong partnership exists with parents and carers. Regular meetings of the Parents Support Group, daily messages through the home/school diaries and frequent phone calls, all inform parents of school activities and their children's progress. Because the school works hard to foster this relationship, parent's attendance is good at open evenings and the school places a high priority on working closely with parents to support each pupil's achievement and personal development. Pastoral staff and health professionals are available and accessible to parents to talk through any matters that may concern them. Annual written reports to parents are personal and informative and the school is moving to a consistent and easily understood format for reporting progress, based on the current summary reports for the end of Year 9, to ensure that parents clearly understand what their children know and can do. Parents are enthusiastic about giving what help they can to activities organised by the school. For example, parent volunteers with specific skills accompany swimming lessons and work alongside staff to ensure a high pupil/support ratio. The school works especially closely with parents when pupils are involved in the independent travel programme. Without parental permission, pupils could not access the road safety and public transport skills that the programme provides. The school is very mindful of the trust that parents place in them when their children are undertaking this programme and makes sure that they are continually updated as to their children's progress and the increased responsibility they are taking in travel.

22 The school has forged very effective community links for pupils, especially with Mencap, which supports and provides after school clubs and a number of activities in holiday time. These are of considerable benefit to pupil's personal and social development. Many local and national companies come together on a regular basis to help with special projects or provide equipment and funding in areas that the school has identified as beneficial to pupils' education and social development. For example, by decorating the Pavilion area of the school, collecting tokens for computer equipment, giving awards for gardening resources and reclassifying the school library. Pupils on Springboard projects are especially indebted to the community support given to the school. A pupil working alongside a member of staff in Sainsburys considered his day there as, "the highlight of my week".

23 Links with the local schools and colleges are very strong. They are supported through the school's membership of the local Excellence Cluster, and a wide range of specifically organised projects that bring work experience students into school, or pupils for community service modules. For example, a number of sixth formers from a local secondary school visit on a weekly basis to be "Book Buddies" and support reading with a regular pupil partner. Successful transition programmes for school leavers rely on the strong links forged between the school and local colleges, and some residential colleges, for students leaving for the next stage in their education. This time continues to be an

anxious stage for parents and the school works very hard to open up as many opportunities for pupils as they can.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and governance of the school are very good and the management is good making leadership and management very good, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the leadership of other key staff is very good. The school provides very good value for money. The school very effectively manages aids and barriers to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is extremely ambitious for the school and is very well supported by the other key staff.
- The governing body support and challenge the school leaders very well.
- The development of very effective teamwork.

Commentary

24 The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and he has been central and essential in the very good continual improvement of the provision since the last inspection. He has ensured that every opportunity has been taken to raise the profile of the school and improve the quality of the provision. He also plays a prominent role in initiatives, such as the local Excellence Cluster, and this makes a very positive contribution to boosting pupils' achievement and personal development, for example, by attracting additional funding. The quality of leadership in the school has been celebrated and the school has achieved an Investors' in People Award. Leadership responsibilities are very effectively shared and delegated and, as a result, the senior management team is very committed to fully meeting the very wide range of pupils' special educational needs. The challenge of meeting the diversity of pupils' needs is a potential barrier to their achievement but the school leaders play a major part in shaping a very inclusive ethos where every individual is challenged and valued. The parents have confidence in the leadership and management of the school and this helps to promote the very good links between parents and the school.

25 The governing body has a very good range of expertise and makes a major contribution to the very good school ethos. They have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and, as a result, make a very good contribution to the shared vision and planning for the future role of the school. The governors are very supportive of the school and have very good relationships with the headteacher and staff. They also have the confidence and expertise to challenge the school leaders as they help to move the school forward. The governors, for example, have influenced and helped to shape developments in the school's accommodation. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including the very effective promotion of racial equality in the school. The governors place a very high priority on gaining very good value for money and very effectively link expenditure to school planning and the promotion of pupils' very good achievement and personal development. The school does not stand still and examples of exciting developments include the recent improvements to the accommodation for the post-16 students and, as result, their achievement is very good. Future plans, including improvements to the accommodation for the teaching of design and technology are carefully considered and based on extensive self-evaluation. The school is extremely effective at attracting additional funding and, consequently, there is a substantial carry forward from the last financial year. However, most of this money is allocated to planned projects, for example, the school's contribution to the construction of the new all weather sports pitch.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£1,613,016	Balance from previous year	£227,878
Total expenditure	£1,663,946	Balance carried forward to the next	£176,948

Expenditure per pupil	£14,469
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26 The school is very welcoming and the school leaders are very good role model for pupils, students and the staff. Very effective teams are evident in all aspects of school life and they make a major contribution to the excellent ethos of the school. As a result, pupils work very well in pairs and groups in all areas of the curriculum and their enrichment activities. The very high quality staff teamwork transcends the ethos of the school and the school leaders appreciate the contribution of all of the staff and very effectively develop their skills as a major aid to pupils' very good achievement.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Springboard Programme, of long-term individual work placements, is excellent.
- The very good support from the external agencies and local community.
- The work-related curriculum motivates students very effectively in developing key skills and personal skills in a purposeful and coherent context.

Commentary

27 There is conventional and helpful work experience provision for pupils in Years 11 and 13, but the school also provides longer-term placements for some older students so that they are able to build relationship and skills outside school over a longer period. The Springboard project typically gives a student the opportunity to work for a day a week for a local employer. Placements are carefully set up with clear procedures and agreements between students, employers and the school. Excellent support and job coaching is provided by the school and there are very good links to the Adult Supported Employment Service. Students learn to take full responsibility for travelling to work, following appropriate routines and, for example, learning to care for and launder uniforms. Very good community knowledge and links are used to nurture prospective employers, who have proved very receptive and positive about the scheme. Problems are swiftly and realistically addressed. The scheme was set up for higher attaining older students, but is now extended to the majority of post-16 students through a range of opportunities in the school and local community.

28 The school has a thoughtful, documented approach to careers and work-related learning involving staff from a number of curriculum areas. This includes appropriate knowledge of aspects of employment and personal qualities, career guidance and life planning, mini-enterprise and fund raising. It also embraces the development of work-related skills such as ICT and work experience. The associated in-school areas of study, such as handling money, managing time, form filling, problem solving, letter writing and research are now comprehensively covered in a motivating context so that students make very good progress in these areas too. This aspect of the school's work is a major strength and not only prepares students very well for moving on to the next stage of learning or work, but also gives pupils something exciting to strive for as they move through the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3, 4 AND POST-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

29 Only one **French** lesson was seen during the inspection and it was not possible to make a firm, overall judgement on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. In the lesson seen, pupils participated with interest and enjoyment. The very good relationships between staff and pupils supported learning and maintained pupils' interest while at the same time making learning fun. Scrutiny of pupils' files showed that they have learned vocabulary associated with everyday topics such as greetings, days of the week and items linked to school life. Worksheets are very well annotated and work is clearly related to whole-group and individual targets.

English

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good planning in some lessons.
- There is a good emphasis on the development of pupils' communication throughout the school.
- The quality of modules and resources developed for use in English lessons is very good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support students in developing literacy skills.

Commentary

30 Teaching and learning in English and communication lessons are good, overall. The pupils' quality of work and their success in externally accredited schemes, demonstrates that teaching and learning is very good for students in post-16. Where teaching is most effective it is underpinned by very good planning so that all members of the teaching team know what they are expected to do. A very good range of resources is available to address the learning needs of students of all abilities, for example, real objects, costumes and audio tapes as well as copies of the text engage different pupils very effectively. Pupils are repositioned in appropriate groups for different activities throughout the lesson maintaining pace and purpose. Potential difficult behaviour is very well managed and diffused by humour, positive relationships and interesting activities. There is some good use of the Internet to encourage research and to engage reluctant learners, but supportive features of ICT, such as talking text and word processing with symbols, are not sufficiently used to help pupils work independently.

31 The planning for lessons effectively addresses the very wide range of pupils' special educational needs. This, together with good reference to individual education plans, generally leads to a good programme for each class. The teachers use effective strategies, including the use of switches, symbols, objects and signing, to develop pupils' communication skills. Pupils who are in the early stages of English language are provided with skilled support and, as a result, achieve well. English is delivered through three distinct types of lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Communication sessions are taught each morning and are an effective development by the school to address pupils' very wide range

of special educational needs. Pupils also have a weekly literacy lesson from an English specialist and also an English lesson where the focus is literature. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in post-16 have good opportunities to extend their learning through the recent introduction of emotional literacy lessons.

32 Leadership and management of the subject are good and, as a result, the development of pupils' communication skills is established as one of the school's highest priorities. Members of staff, throughout, the day give pupils the opportunity to choose, discuss and express their opinions and feelings. They are sensitive to the gestures and expressions of pupils who have little or no speech, extending and shaping their efforts. This makes almost all pupils work hard to contribute and achieve well. A few pupils have their own high-tech communication aids and are using these effectively to make choices. Some pupils make very good progress in using symbols to communicate, using the Picture Exchange Scheme. This gives pupils, in particular pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, a secure and helpful framework and leads to a settled, positive approach to activities and to other people. The school has invested in very good resources to support this. Pupils show that they are familiar with school routines. This is enhanced for some by the good use of objects of reference that they learn to associate with different times of day and different activities. They enjoy contact with adults that they know. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and higher attaining pupils listen carefully to others, building on what they have said or asking sensible questions. All pupils are engaged by well-presented stories in English lessons through very well chosen sensory materials, role-play and video. Higher attaining pupils accurately recall the detail of the plot, empathise and explain a character's motivation. By the time that they leave school the highest attaining pupils communicate with humour and subtlety, independently able to plan, negotiate and find out what they need in an adult environment.

33 Through Year 7 to 11 pupils develop good reading skills. Pupils with more complex needs begin to recognise objects of reference, symbols and photographs and understand that these consistently relate to people and events. Higher attaining pupils become more confident in using picture cues and phonic skills to help understand text, developing a useful understanding of environmental words. A few pupils develop very good reading skills and read fluently with expression. Most pupils hold pencils and crayons conventionally and learn to copy and colour with reasonable accuracy. Many of the oldest pupils have useful writing skills and make very good progress in all aspects of literacy through motivating activities in the context of work-related tasks and by systematically working towards accreditation. About a third of school leavers get accreditation through Word Power for their work in English. For others, communication skills are an integral part of their accredited modules.

34 The literature modules developed by the English teachers are creative and give access to a very good range of texts for all pupils. There are very good arrangements to enable team-teaching in whole year groups. This makes very good use of staff and ensures good-sized groups for discussion and role-play. The library is a very good resource and there are high quality books and computers available to pupils. It is well used by different groups throughout the day. Very good connections with the sixth form at a local high school have enabled the development of a buddy system for readers in Year 7 and 8. This contributes to good progress in reading and the development of confidence and self-esteem on both sides of the partnership.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

35 Provision to develop pupils' communication skills in other subjects is very good because members of staff are skilled and sensitive to this aspect of development. Role-play is particularly well used. Provision to develop literacy skills is more variable. Pupils in most lessons make satisfactory progress in applying these skills to their work, finding information from pictures and text and recording their work independently where possible. Where literacy skills are well developed, pupils are reminded of their own targets and activities directly address these. For example, in a religious education lesson, the higher attaining pupils were asked to find information from different books, some wrote phrases or single word responses to questions and those with the highest support needs were helped to make patterns with their fingers in sand trays. In some lessons, opportunities were lost to encourage higher attaining pupils to extend their writing for a range of audiences.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A stimulating range of activities is provided.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils and students.
- The use of mathematics in other subjects is very well planned.

Commentary

36 The good standards in mathematics identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good, overall, and very good for the students at post-16. Lesson planning is very clear and indicates learning objectives that relate to pupils' individual targets. Good use is made of ICT and pupils enjoy this aspect of the work. In addition, good relevant teacher made resources as well as everyday materials maintain pupils interest in the tasks. For example, counting chocolate buttons in boxes and having to calculate "more than" or "less than" and "how many more" or "share equally" certainly captures their interest and they achieved well. Similarly counting tuck for the tuck shop in 10's was much more interesting than counting cubes. Well-briefed support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' and students' learning and teamwork in the classroom is very effective. A good example of this occurred when it was recognised that a particular programme was too easy for a pupil and the teacher then moved the level of difficulty up to provide greater challenge. Pupils and students with more complex learning difficulties are taught through a multi-sensory approach that enables them to participate, for example, sorting shapes by colour, exploring different shaped objects and showing preferences and demonstrating some understanding of cause and effect by activating a switch. Others feel the properties of four different shapes and are introduced to the mathematical terms for the objects. Higher attaining pupils can match shapes to prompt cards. The very good relationships and encouragement pupils are given ensure that they concentrate well and increase their awareness of shape.

37 The curriculum is well led by a co-ordinator, supported by a second teacher with a sensory mathematics specialism who work effectively together ensuring that the full range of pupils' special educational needs are met within the same topic. Although there are only two mathematics lessons each week, numeracy is tracked through other subjects and this is monitored by the co-ordinators. The curriculum is very well organised and provides a good framework for planning lessons. In addition, teacher made resources are particularly useful in meeting individual needs for specific topics. The National Numeracy Strategy and Key Stage 3 Strategy have been well adapted and used successfully to enable pupils and

students to achieve well. The establishment of needs based groupings is an effective strategy to develop numeracy skills and ensure that all pupils follow an appropriate curriculum. Analysis of pupils' and students' work shows that the subject is well covered and demonstrate that pupils achieve well as they move through the school. They learn about time, money, measures and shapes. They can order numbers and they can make the biggest and smallest numbers from a set of three number cards. The learning for post-16 students is made very relevant to every-day-life and, as a result, they achieve very well. For example, some post-16 students can extract data from tables/charts, timetables or mail order catalogues to respond to questions and this is very good achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

38 Opportunities where mathematics can be used are identified in all lesson plans and this means that numeracy skills are reinforced regularly to support pupils' learning. Examples of the use of numeracy in other subjects include; the use of a thermometer in science, counting a rhythm/beat in music and mathematical language being consolidated in English and science. In ICT, pupils enter data on a spreadsheet showing bookings and income of an angling club and in dance, students count steps forwards and backwards. In extended communication groups, for pupils with the more complex learning difficulties, some time is used for additional number work. Pupils and students also have opportunities to put their knowledge of money into practice when shopping locally and achieve well.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn through their involvement in practical and investigative work.
- The very effective use of key scientific words.
- The very good provision for horticulture.

Commentary

39 The leadership of science is very good across the school. Staff work very well as a team and, in particular, the contribution of the support staff boosts the engagement and participation of pupils with the more complex needs, in their practical activities. Consequently, pupils take part in a very good range of practical work and this effectively promotes very good gains in their learning. Year 7 pupils are enthusiastic young scientists and thoroughly enjoy their practical work. In a lesson seen, the investigation built on pupils' previous learning and they extended their understanding of the use of insulation to prevent heat loss. The pupils worked very well in pairs and each team wrapped a different number of layers of insulation around a bottle. The higher attaining pupils made accurate predictions about the relative heat loss from hot water placed in the bottles. They were able to read and record the temperature of the water using a thermometer and this was a very good achievement. Very consistent behaviour management ensured that pupils with autistic spectrum disorders were engaged in the activities and achieve very well. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are developing their understanding of a fair test and can apply this to practical situations. Pupils confidently made predictions about how far paper aeroplanes of different sizes would travel. They understood that the models would have to be thrown from the same spot for the investigation to be fair. Year 11 pupils have consolidated their practical skills during their time at the school and achieve very well. Pupils of all abilities

work very well together and achieve very well, overall. Occasionally, too few opportunities are provided to extend the recording skills of the higher attaining pupils and at these times their achievement is good rather than the very good achievement that is evident in their other work.

40 The consistent use of key words is a very strong feature of teaching and learning which is very good, overall. Year 7 pupils extend the accurate use of these terms and use words such as 'conductor' and 'insulator' in the right context. Higher attaining pupils recognise and name a thermometer and know that it is used to measure how hot a substance is. Year 9 pupils are confident in making predictions and use terms such as 'shadow' as they investigate the properties of light. Year 11 pupils make good gains in their understanding that movement makes sound and use the word "vibration" to explain the movement of the prongs in a tuning fork. Pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition are provided with very good support to ensure that they are taught the scientific terms and they achieve as well as their peers in the school.

41 The school has been imaginative in developing an exceptional range of facilities for the study of horticulture and this subject is an integral part of the curriculum. Planning by the deputy headteacher is exceptionally detailed and this ensures that all pupils and students are challenged and, as a result, achieve very well. Pupils' tasks are made very clear and staff work very well to support pupils and place a high priority on developing pupils' independence skills. Higher attaining pupils can carry out a range of tasks, for example; they mix compost, with minimal supervision and thoroughly enjoy the trust that is placed in them. Their newly developed skills are transferred to other settings and video recordings show pupils confidently using gardening equipment in their work placements. Pupils with more complex needs are very effectively motivated by the very stimulating strategies used by the teacher, as each stage of learning is broken down into very small steps. Pupils are very effectively taught that horticultural tasks need to take place in all weathers and this helps to enhance pupils' and students' sense of responsibility. A major strength of the provision is that the facilities are available to the community as, for example, ex-students and mainstream pupils have access to this valuable resource.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teamwork.
- ICT is used very effectively to support access to learning for those pupils with more complex needs.
- The excellent level of challenge provided for post-16 students.
- The very good technical support for the subject.

Commentary

42 The leadership of ICT is very good throughout the school. Members of staff attend courses run by the co-ordinator and these make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning which is now very good, overall. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The use of meticulous assessment informs planning of what is taught and this very effectively challenges pupils and demonstrates their achievement over-time. The lessons are very stimulating using an exciting range of resources and, as a

result, pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest and achieve very well. The use of an interactive screen promotes a well-informed debate about the relative qualities of web sites. Topics such as, "Life in Italy in the time of the Romans", captures pupils' imagination and they carry out research on the Internet successfully downloading and printing pictures of the Coliseum and different types of chariots. The very good teamwork develops a very good learning environment where pupils are encouraged to increase their ability to work as independently as possible. Higher attaining pupils are justifiably pleased with their achievement and are able to word process, access and save their work. The curriculum is very well adapted to meet pupils' special educational needs and challenges pupils to achieve very well.

43 Post-16 students take part in an excellent workshop session where activities are finely tuned to challenge each individual and students make exceptional progress towards their external accreditation. Work is skilfully planned in stages for the students to achieve accreditation for each unit such as creating a spreadsheet, using digital photographs and word-processed text. One pupil has achieved the full CLAIT accreditation with six pupils achieving grades for OCR work. Work is marked with pupils and discussed as to how they can improve, therefore they know exactly what they have to do and work independently to achieve this. Homework is regularly set to support learning such as consolidating their knowledge of formulas. Multi-media studies very effectively promote the use of digital and video cameras to record events in school and make a very good contribution to The Ravenscliffe News.

44 The vast range of interactive communication resources supports learning of pupils with more complex needs to access learning in lessons or participate fully in a sensory curriculum. This is sensitive to individual needs, using specialised light room areas and equipment. For example, one boy uses two head switches to access the Internet to study football fixtures. One boy has produced and published his own adventure book; other pupils enjoy using a scheme to produce their own picture stories.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

45 Teachers use ICT to very effectively support pupils' learning in other subjects. Mathematics programmes support pupils' gains in their coin recognition, counting, matching and ordering of numbers. Switches are used to activate French songs, while laptops and touch screens compliment learning in English. The ICT suite and excellent range of computers, in conjunction with the very high standard of technical support throughout school, support learning very well. This expertise has been very effectively used to introduce initiatives such as the development of the school radio station and the video recording of pupils' achievement.

HUMANITIES

46 Only one **geography** lesson was seen during the inspection and therefore it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on provision and standards in the subject. However, pupils' work, displays around the school and a discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicate that pupils are provided with a suitable range of work. Pupils with more complex needs explore life in different countries through sound and taste. In the lesson seen teaching and learning were good. There were very good connections made between the previous term's work on Earthquakes to the Tsunami disaster and pupils were encouraged to respond by helping to raise funds. They learned that geographical issues can have powerful destructive effects on lives and were supported in making a positive contribution to society. This also contributes effectively to their progress in citizenship. The

pupils' new topic, "A study of rainforests", was introduced. The higher attaining pupils understood that different habitats have an effect on flora and fauna and used this information to develop their knowledge of the tropics. In a religious education lesson, higher attaining pupils showed that they were familiar with a map of the world and quickly located continents, countries and some towns.

47 Only one **history** lesson was seen during the inspection and therefore it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on provision and standards in the subject. However, a discussion with the subject manager, and scrutiny of pupils' books and displays around the school show that work in history is varied and meets their special educational needs. There is a good range of resources, particularly clothes from different eras, that are used to enhance pupils' drama and role-play activities. The Internet is used to extend pupils' research of different topics. In the lesson observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory and pupils showed interest in the new topic on, "Life during World War II". Higher attaining pupils are developing a concept of the past and life in different historical periods. They recognise significant figures, such as Adolf Hitler, and associate them with particular events. Pupils with more complex needs enjoy the sensory activities that give them a sense of another period, recognising and responding with interest and laughter to the differences in to the texture and sight of different hats and clothes.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff work very well together as a team.
- Resources are used very well to enhance learning.
- The curriculum is well organised and supports pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

48 Pupils' achievement in religious education is consistently good which means that the good standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. This is because teaching is good, overall. Most of the lessons are taught by the co-ordinator, who is also the School Chaplain, so there is a consistent approach to the teaching of the subject. In all lessons, the very good relationships between staff and pupils results in a positive classroom atmosphere in which pupils are effectively encouraged to take part in the activities. Pupils in Year 7, learning about Islam, enjoyed trying on items of clothing, such as; a prayer shawl, prayer beads or a topi and they looked at the Qu'ran. By the end of the lesson many named the items independently and also remembered the name of "Allah". In Years 10 and 11 some pupils were working towards their externally accredited module "Beliefs and Values", learning about different aspects of Islam. Others were introduced to a new module "A family of many faiths" and look at a variety of symbolic items particular to different faiths, for example, a turban, a topi, a yamukah, beads and coloured clothing. Teachers and support staff use signing and the Picture Exchange Communication System effectively to ensure that all pupils are included and achieve well.

49 Pupils are effectively motivated by the good use of artefacts and visits to places of worship. They are well prepared for such visits and some can remember well what they saw and the significance of particular religious symbols. A very good range of resources is

used very well to meet the special educational needs of all of the pupils. Those with the most complex learning difficulties explore the textures of artefacts such as, prayer shawls, prayer mats or beads and show an awareness of sound when music is played.

50 Pupils are given a wide range of learning experiences through the different world faiths that they are taught, such as, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism. An analysis of pupils work shows that pupils learn about the significance of special books and symbols, often in very practical ways, relating these to the faiths that they study. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of religious diversity and living in multi-cultural Britain.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for food technology is good.
- There are weaknesses in the use of assessment in design and technology for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

51 The use of assessment to inform planning in the teaching of food technology is good and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Support assistants have a very good relationship with pupils to support them in lessons while encouraging independent learning. Year 7 pupils respond well to colours to recognise healthy foods. They are improving their skills of grating, cutting and spreading in order to make a sandwich. Interesting modules involve Year 9 pupils who confidently designed a hot soup for hikers. The very good use of switches enable pupils to activate food processors to grate and slice vegetables. The teacher moves around the group encouraging pupils to read instructions and to anticipate the next step in preparation. Pupils complete simple work sheets and can name the ingredients they have used. Pupils co-operatively wash dishes together and make cups of tea and this effectively promotes their personal development. There is a very good range of adjustable height benches where wheelchair users can wash dishes and cook their food and this ensures that all pupils are included in the activities and achieve well. Post-16 students are successfully encouraged to run a Food Enterprise, where they take orders for snacks that they prepare together. As part of the Youth Award Scheme they effectively plan lunches and shop for the ingredients to prepare an appetising meal together.

52 Due to the long-term absence of the specialist teacher the subject is taught by a supply teacher. Consequently, the supply teacher does not know the pupils well, and the use of assessment is not sufficient to inform the planning of suitable tasks to meet pupils' very wide range of special educational needs. This impacts on pupils' learning but the contribution of the support staff ensures that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The support assistants know the pupils well and learning is more appropriate when more individual work is introduced, such as when the pupils with more complex needs in Year 7, touch and explored items made of wood. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 make satisfactory progress in their understanding that packages tend to be thrown away but

containers are sustainable. The accommodation is adequate but the school has identified the need to improve the facilities to come up to the standards in the rest of the school.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The facilities for the teaching of art and design are very good.
- Teachers have high expectations.
- The study of the work of other artists is well-developed.
- The very good provision for post-16 students.

Commentary

53 The art and design co-ordinator teaches most the art and design lessons, supported by a part-time art specialist, and consequently there is a good overview and knowledge of what interests pupils. This promotes good teaching and learning and consequently pupils' achievement is good, overall. Pupils are able to explore and experience a very good range of art and design activities in the art centre. The resources are very good and include a wet area and access to a computer to carry out research such as looking at the work of famous artists. The pupils' work is valued and the displays make a very good contribution to the school's very good ethos. For example, a displays shows that a range of tactile materials was used effectively by the pupils to produce bright and attractive pictures. Visiting artists introduce pupils to life forms and initiated, for example, the creation of some interesting pottery models.

54 There is a good emphasis on experiences with light and colour to explore the work of Vassily Kandinski and Vincent Van Gogh. The teacher's comprehensive planning illustrates that the pupils are challenged to use their full potential as they experience colour, natural forms, pattern and texture. Most pupils understand the difference between light and dark colours. Higher attaining pupils understand that Van Gogh is a famous artist who painted in bright colours. As the teaching is lively, with an interesting range of resources, pupils concentrate well. Simple stories illustrate the life and work of famous artists, presented in a lively and exciting way and encourage pupils to achieve a knowledge or sense of different colours and tactile experiences. When presented with lights of different colours, pupils could state blue is an icy colour and red is a sunset or warm colour. Most pupils show a definite preference for a colour and most can say what the colour is. Symbols are used well to give pupils choices and there are good links to personal, social and health education as pupils are encouraged to work together and reflect on the sounds and sights of colours.

55 The very good practical and interactive experiences provided for post-16 students, encourages them to look at different textures and, as a result, they achieve very well. They feel smooth and rough textures of trees in the nature garden and listen to the wind chimes. Pupils explore colourful materials and are supported very well to weave materials on to large frames.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of subject expertise.
- Pupils and students are provided with very good opportunities to listen to, appreciate and perform.
- Music makes a very significant contribution to the school's very good ethos.
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Commentary

56 The school has very good facilities and resources. These are used very effectively by the staff and visiting musicians to challenge the pupils and, as a result, they achieve very well. There is strength in depth in the school and the headteacher makes a very valuable contribution to the quality and continual development of the subject. A good number of the

support staff have particular musical expertise and their contribution helps to boost pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and ensures that the special educational needs of all of the pupils are met. He introduces many other areas of the curriculum into his teaching of music; for example, the students are made aware of the location of the Caribbean in the world. Visiting musicians, including the tutor for the gifted and talented choir, make a valuable contribution to the quality of music in the school.

57 Pupils and students are now provided with a very good music curriculum and this is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum includes the essential aspects of composing, performing, listening to and the appraisal of music. The curriculum is very relevant and pupils are very effectively supported and they achieve very well. An example of this was in a very good lesson for pupils in Year 8 where pupils were very effectively introduced to the music of the Caribbean. The pupils were introduced to the rhythm of reggae music and they made very good gains in their ability to sing, chant and rap in time. Pupils had the opportunity to choose from and play a large range of pitched and un-pitched musical instruments. The higher attaining pupils maintained accurate time on a percussive instrument and this was very good achievement. Post-16 students thoroughly enjoyed their engagement, participation and involvement when playing a range of instruments to simulate a space journey. They have excellent attitudes to their work and all students are all fully included in the activities. The very good teaching and trusting relationships develop pupils' confidence to perform to others including during assemblies and public performances in the community.

58 Music is central to life in the school. Every opportunity is used to enhance the warm and caring ethos of the school by providing the pupils and students with the opportunity to listen to and appreciate music. Music is used extensively to engage pupils and students with more complex needs and, as a result, they achieve very well. Pupils are very effectively challenged to develop their singing skills. Many pupils repeat short patterns with rhythm and melody whilst the higher attaining pupils sing in tune, with expression. An extensive range of lunch-time clubs including, singing, dance and movement, drumming and the singing and signing choir make a significant contribution to the school's excellent ethos.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for swimming is very good.
- The facilities and expertise for the provision of dance are very good.
- Pupils and students are very well supported and challenged to do their best.
- There is a clear vision for the future development of the subject.

Commentary

59 Very good planning and teamwork ensures that pupils make very good progress in their water skills. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 changed quickly at the start of their very good lesson at the local swimming pool. The members of staff know the pupils very well and the very good teaching is based on a clear assessment of pupils' strengths and areas for development. Consequently, all of the pupils were fully included and made significant gains in their confidence in the water. Pupils with more complex needs thoroughly enjoy their

individual sessions in the school's hydro-pool. The changing and showering facilities at the school are now very good and this is a marked improvement since the last inspection.

60 The well-planned modules include all the elements of dance and performance. The outstanding studio provides an atmosphere that is conducive to dance. Pupils have the space to move freely and use the large mirror to evaluate and help improve their movement. A very good range of prompts for the pupils, such as flash cards and staff demonstration, are used to indicate the required type of movement. In a lesson for the post-16 students they responded very well in their movement to the rhythm of Spanish music. The staff very effectively developed a creative ethos and the students were challenged to do their best and, as a result, they remembered and performed the correct dance moves. The students thoroughly enjoyed performing their increasingly difficult moves and they concentrated very carefully as they were determined to improve their movement. Very high expectations provide pupils and students with the skills and confidence to perform for others. The pupils showed excellent attitudes as they danced in an assembly and all of the school appreciated and celebrated the pupils' very good performance.

61 Pupils' levels of concentration and determination are a credit to them and they take great pleasure in the achievement of others. Pupils with more complex needs are provided with good opportunities to carry out physical activity that is challenging for each individual. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 achieve well and, for example, they understand the need to warm up prior to vigorous exercise and know that sweating cools the body down. In a lesson for pupils in Year 11, the teacher used his good subject knowledge and provided pupils with a challenging exercise circuit. Most of the pupils responded well and made a determined effort to exercise to their limits. Some low level disruptive behaviour was effectively managed. Post-16 students enjoy a wide range of sports-related leisure activity. These activities have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and, in particular, provide an increased understanding of the importance of exercise in promoting healthy living.

62 The subject is very well led and this helps to promote continual improvement. The school has exciting plans, at an advanced stage, to build an all weather pitch for shared community use and this will extend the opportunities for after school sports clubs. The very good quality of the provision has been deservedly recognised as the school has gained a Sportsmark Award. The School Sports Co-ordinator makes a very positive contribution to the quality of the provision and provides an effective link with other schools. She provides valuable opportunities for pupils to join their mainstream peers for physical education lessons and these pupils achieve very well. Pupils and students have the opportunity to go on residential visits. These trips provide them with a wealth of experiences that support their very good personal development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

63 No **citizenship** lessons were seen during the inspection and, therefore, it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. Pupils' work and the subject leader's plans show that the school is covering the full citizenship curriculum. This includes rights and responsibilities, the significance of media and debate about current issues. Careful thought has gone into provision for the pupils with the more complex needs. This planning is linked to the pupils' targets, such as developing preferences, making choices and being supported to make a valued contribution to school activities. During the inspection, pupils were working to raise money for the Tsunami victims, participating effectively in the global response to the disaster.

Personal, social and health education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned programme of work is very good.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and manage increased levels of responsibilities as they move through the school.
- The setting of very good individual targets for the pupils and students.

Commentary

64 The planned programme of work, in line with recent national requirements, has helped teachers focus on priority areas for pupils in the school. The co-ordinator is skilled and knowledgeable and has worked very well to develop the programme of work. It has been modified from the national published scheme to reflect the needs of the pupils and provides a systematic and incremental approach to emotional and physical development and knowledge of the community. This includes a very good programme of individual independence training that has been developed with external funding. Work-related learning, including the excellent Springboard Programme, and lunchtime clubs make a major contribution to pupils' very good achievement. Pupils make good friends within the school and all the adults around the school model positive and trusting relationships in genuine and helpful ways. This is helped by the support staff remaining with specific classes for a full key stage. When problems do occur, they are managed consistently and fairly so that pupils understand what is and what is not acceptable. Behaviour is managed very well, so that pupils' self-esteem is enhanced through learning to control themselves and to make positive choices.

65 All staff have a very good understanding of topics, such as drugs awareness and sex and relationships education. There is a very clear emphasis on the important elements of the lesson and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. They model the decision making process very effectively by talking through their thought processes, helping pupils to understand how they might make appropriate choices. Targets are shared and explicit and, for example, those applicable to lunchtime are available on each table so that they are easily accessible to the pupils. The recently introduced emotional literacy sessions are having a positive impact on pupils' understanding and management of their feelings and behaviour.

POST-16

Provision in post-16 is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The preparation for the next stage of students' lives is excellent.
- The curriculum is very good, giving students a very wide range of very relevant experiences.
- Management of the post-16 unit is very good and, as a result, students' needs are very well met.

Commentary

66 Whenever possible students are given every support to travel independently to and from school and within activities during the school day, for example, going to the swimming baths or shopping. The school places a significant amount of time and effort into this aspect of students' education, developing their independence skills extremely well. The school has been very successful in acquiring funding for this so that it can employ sufficient staff to support students when they are learning these skills. Some students travel to their work experience placements independently, which is an excellent achievement. The school sees independent travel as an essential part of a students' development in learning new skills and behaviour in everyday situations.

67 Links with Connexions and the careers service means that students receive very good guidance about opportunities for further education. Springboard and Step up 1, 2 and 3 are the schools' systems for work placements and all students have opportunities for a variety of experiences both in and outside of school. For example, local supermarkets, garden centres, school kitchen or office, working with the caretaker or within the school grounds. These placements can vary in length depending on individual needs and students show great pride when talking about their work, obviously enjoying it.

68 There is clear rationale for the very well organised post-16 curriculum and this provides students with a very wide range of different options. Whilst students choose which options they prefer their choices are monitored to ensure that their knowledge and experience is extended and builds on prior learning. The curriculum includes further development of literacy and numeracy skills, ICT skills and daily living skills. There are also opportunities to participate in a very good range of activities including, rambling, catering and hospitality, looking at Heritage sites, dance, aromatherapy and horticulture. In addition the school makes very good use of community facilities for bowling and swimming. Some students organise the "Ravenscliffe News", a newspaper full of information for pupils and staff. There is a strong enterprise ethos within the unit and the school belongs to the Young

Enterprise Scheme, which has included a ceramics enterprise, horticulture and food enterprises and this gives students a very good insight into the skills needed to run a business albeit with support. A range of external accreditation, ASDAN and OCR, is offered and students have opportunities to access taster courses at Halifax and Huddersfield Further Education colleges giving them some idea of what they might like to follow when they leave school. The curriculum provides a good balance between personal development, academic and vocational needs. It has been very well thought out, providing students with a stimulating programme of experiences and opportunities. Students who have the more complex learning difficulties are very responsive to the sensory curriculum that effectively meets their individual needs. They are given many opportunities to react to sensory stimuli through vocalising, signing, facial expression and gesture and staff work very hard to maintain their awareness and interest.

69 The co-ordinator of the post-16 provision knows the students very well and works very hard to ensure that they are given the best possible experiences to develop their independence and maturity in readiness for leaving school. She leads the students, staff and the curriculum very well and this results in a very well run department of the school. Relationships between staff and students are very positive which means that there is a happy working atmosphere in which students thrive and develop into mature young people. The new accommodation is very well equipped and students take a pride in their surroundings, treating it with respect. The co-ordinator has regular meetings with parents, careers personnel and social services so that every student has a placement on leaving school that has been very well considered by everyone concerned.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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