

INSPECTION REPORT

RYBURN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Sowerby Bridge

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107565

Headteacher: Mr Ian Adam

Reporting inspector: Susan Chamberlain
7661

Dates of inspection: 16th – 20th October 2000

Inspection number: 223888

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R. Barrow
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

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			The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and students' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
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			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
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T. Chipp	21954	Team inspector	Art and design
J. Clarke	27803	Team inspector	Physical education
			Students' attitudes, values and personal development
P. Gossage	2391	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
			Provision for students with special educational needs
A. Harris	10443	Team inspector	Drama
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C. Lower	18453	Team inspector	Science
M. Morton-Thorpe	5832	Team inspector	History
			Provision for students in the sixth form
L. Moscrop	12179	Team inspector	Religious education
			Provision for students with English as an additional language
C. Rodney	18950	Team inspector	English
			Literacy
P. Swinnerton	21806	Team inspector	Design and technology
V. Williams	20497	Team inspector	Geography
			Quality and range of

			opportunities for learning
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ryburn Valley High School comes within Calderdale. It is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11-18 years; it is larger than most with 1220 students on roll. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is 14 per cent, which is average. 15.5 per cent of students have special educational needs and 2 per cent have statements both proportions being broadly average. Students at the school come from a wide social mix. Students who have English as an additional language amount to 2.4 per cent of the school's population and of these only one student is in the early stage of the language. Students enter the school with levels of attainment below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, which has improved a great deal since the last inspection. It is a school where the quality of care is high, standards of attainment are improving, leadership is very good and teaching is good overall. There is a wide curriculum but legal requirements are not met fully for religious education and information and communication technology. The school has an average expenditure per student and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching is good.
- The headteacher, senior management team and many middle managers provide very good leadership and management.
- Standards of care are good.
- The Millennium Volunteers Initiative is excellent and is administered well by a strong sixth form.
- There are very good links with the community.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good.
- Students exhibit excellent attitudes and relationships, which are promoted well by good provision for the students' personal development.

What could be improved

- Inadequate allocations of time in religious education combined with a lack of high order expertise by some teachers, result in unnecessarily low standards for many students at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and similarly for students in information and communication technology in Year 9 and for some at Key Stage 4.
- Numeracy skills are insufficiently practised across the curriculum.
- Religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and information and communication technology do not meet statutory requirements.
- The accommodation, although clean and well looked after, is poor.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching has improved mainly because of improved lesson planning, better assessment procedures and improved monitoring of lessons combined with careful recruitment of new staff. Measures have been introduced to improve literacy. The quality of computers and equipment for information and communication technology has improved and this area has been given more status. There has been limited improvement in accommodation but it is still inadequate. There has been improved provision for religious education and improved assemblies but statutory requirements are still not met fully. There has been only a small amount of improvement in the introduction of measures to improve numeracy and information and communication

technology across the curriculum. Governors are more in touch with school issues, however, there are many new governors who need time to ensure they become fully effective.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	E	D	D
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	B	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Students enter the school with standards of attainment below average, however, standards on entry are rising and levels in the current Year 7 are close to average. In 1999, in statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 3, results were close to the national average in English and mathematics and below in science. Results were close to the average for all schools and average when compared with schools with a similar intake. In 2000 results were higher in all three subjects, English, mathematics and science. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of students who gained GCSE results of 5 grades A*-C improved in 2000. In 1999 and over the three years 1997 to 1999 results were below the national average for all schools and for similar schools. The proportion of students gaining GCSE 5 A*-G grades were well below average in 1999 and below average over the three years (1997-1999) together. GCSE point scores are lower than they might otherwise be, because a number of students successfully passed Certificate of Achievement examinations instead. Standards are high in the sixth form when viewed in the light of students' results at GCSE. In 1999 the average point score was above but close to the national average. In 2000 results were lower but still substantial. The proportion of students who achieved GNVQ qualifications was low. The school makes good progress towards appropriate set targets. Standards are sufficiently high when taking into account students' prior attainment.

During the inspection week, the standards of work seen were average and progress was good. They were highest in music, English, drama and physical education at Key Stage 3, in English, music and drama at Key Stage 4 and English, where students make very good progress, drama and science in the sixth form. At all three levels, information and communication technology and religious education standards were the lowest. Literacy standards are high whereas numeracy standards are satisfactory.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes to school are excellent. They are interested and involved in lessons and are keen to take part in activities beyond school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in lessons, around the school and outside.
Personal development and relationships	Students are mature and relationships with their teachers and each other are good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching overall is good, with much excellent and very good teaching occurring in the lessons seen. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in most lessons. In two-thirds of lessons it was good or better and in approximately a fifth of lessons it was very good or excellent. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons occurred across the key stages and no single teacher performed more than one lesson at this level, all being graded higher on at least one other of the lessons seen. Teachers showed a good knowledge of their subjects and students' learning was consequently good. Class management and planning were also good; students responded well to clear instructions and high expectations of their academic performance and behaviour.

Teaching in English is predominately good and students' learning is self-assessed. In mathematics it is satisfactory with a few lessons judged to be unsatisfactory. Clear deadlines and effective questioning refine students' learning. Strategies for teaching literacy are good both within the English department and across the curriculum. Numeracy strategies have yet to be implemented beyond the mathematics department but some groundwork has begun. Students with special educational needs are taught well by good specialist staff. They learn effectively but few stay on to the sixth form.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities is good at all key stages. The Millennium Volunteers Scheme is an outstanding feature of the sixth form curriculum. Extra-curricular activities and links with the community are very good. Statutory requirements are not met for religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and for information and communication technology. The collective act of worship is not daily and therefore does not meet requirements.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Students with special educational needs are provided for well.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	There is appropriate provision for students who have English as an additional language. The one student with particular needs is making good progress.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, though the spiritual and multi-cultural aspects of school life would benefit from additional emphasis.
How well the school cares for its students	All staff care very well for students' needs. There are good systems for promoting students' behaviour and very good support and monitoring of their personal development. The school has very good procedures for assessing and recording students' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is very good leadership by the headteacher. He receives very good support from the senior management team and many key middle managers, for example the heads of English, mathematics and science and the head of Year 11. Staffing deployment is generally good.. The accommodation is poor despite good attempts to keep it well maintained and clean.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work hard to fulfil their responsibilities; they are conscientious in the way they exercise their role in shaping the direction of the school and provide good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance well. Monitoring of students' progress and the curriculum is rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school seeks best value and uses its resources very well. There are adequate resources but the number of computers is still lower than average.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children make good progress in school.• Teaching is good.• They feel comfortable approaching school with questions or problems.• The school has high expectations of their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework is insufficient.• The information they receive about their children's progress is insufficient.• Parents do not have sufficient opportunities to work with the school.

Inspectors agree with most of the views of the parents but believe levels of homework are satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Attainment

1. Students enter the school with standards of attainment below average, although there is an improving trend and students in the current Year 7 have Key Stage 2 results that are almost at the national average. Taking together the three subjects, English, mathematics, and science, results in statutory tests for the four years 1996-1999 were below the national average. In 1999 in English and mathematics, results were close to average, whereas in science, they were below. All three subjects together, in 1999, indicate a performance that was close to average when compared with all schools. Boys performed better than girls in all three subjects. High standards of behaviour in the school contribute to the success of boys and culturally low aspirations to the lower standards of girls. When compared with schools of a similar intake, the school's results are average. In 2000, results were higher than previously in all three subjects.

2. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades improved in 2000. Until then they had been variable, the trend for improvement being below the national trend. In 1999, and over the three years 1997-1999, results were below the national average. In 1999, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to G grades was well below the national average and below average when taking the last three years (1997-1999) together. When compared with similar schools, those with similar prior attainment and those with similar proportions of students eligible for free school meals, the average point score for GCSE/GNVQ was below average. However, many low attainers take Certificate of Achievement courses that do not feature in GCSE point scores.

3. Standards are high in the sixth form. In 1999 the average point score per student was 18.3, which compared favourably with local grammar schools. In 2000 results were not so high but still indicated substantial achievement. When viewed in the light of prior attainment students do well. Over the four years (1996-1999) the average point score was close to the national average. A number of students (30 per cent) achieve qualifications in GNVQ but their results are low.

4. At the end of Key Stage 3 in English, in 1999, the attainment of students in statutory tests was close to the national average. Results in 2000 were similar. The trend of improvement is above the national trend. Results are higher in English than mathematics and science. When compared with students in schools with similar intakes, results in English are above average. GCSE results improved considerably in 1999 and were close to the national average. English results compare favourably with other subjects. 'A' level results have improved with 1999 results higher than 1998 and the average point score was above the national average. In the work seen, standards in English were in line with national expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Students make very good progress at all stages. In drama, standards are very good and students achieve very well in media studies.

5. In mathematics, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and is improving at a rate above the national trend. GCSE results are below the national average but are rising steadily. 'A' level results are below the national average and variable. In 1999, they improved but dipped in 2000. In mathematics, work seen during the inspection week was in line with national expectations in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form.

6. In science, results at the end of Key Stage 3 and at GCSE were below national averages. However, the overall trend is one of improvement. In the sixth form, results at 'A' level are below national averages in physics, above in biology and well above in chemistry. In the work seen, standards were in line with national expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4 and above in the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form.

7. In lessons seen, attainment in art and in design and technology was in line with the national expectation at both key stages. Progress is above average in art. In design and technology; students make satisfactory progress.

8. In information and communication technology, attainment is in line with national expectations in Key Stage 3 but below at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Progress is satisfactory for students in Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory after that. In Year 7, students reach the standard required by the end of Key Stage 3 but in Years 8 and 9 there are insufficient opportunities across the curriculum to build on this. At Key Stage 4 students working for the GCSE course in information and communication technology achieve satisfactory levels. For those who do not take this course, statutory requirements are not met and standards are low.

9. In geography standards are below national expectations in Key Stages 3 and 4 and progress is satisfactory. In history, students' attainment is above expectations in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Progress is good at all levels.

10. In modern foreign languages, standards in lessons and work seen are at the expected level and students achieve a satisfactory level when taking into account a lack of continuity in teaching because of some staffing difficulties.

11. In music, standards are good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and progress is good; they are satisfactory in the sixth form. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations in Key Stages 3 and 4 and below average in the sixth form, but progress is good across the school for this subject.

12. In religious education, attainment is below expectations in Key Stages 3 and 4. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 but inhibited in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, where statutory requirements are not met for all students.

13. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. The development of numeracy both within mathematics and across the school is in its infancy. Some efforts have been made to address numeracy across the curriculum. A numeracy audit has been carried out and a draft policy formulated. In general when opportunities for numeracy occur, students are able to apply their skills, for example in Key Stage 4 science, students understand mass number and atomic number. In geography, students can present statistical data using a variety of graphs although they are less good at analysing data. In design and technology, students weigh and measure accurately, draw pie, bar and line graphs, cost dishes and materials and estimate quantities required. To further improve students' numeracy skills, all curriculum areas will need to ensure they realise the opportunities that exist to incorporate numeracy.

14. Standards of literacy are good. Students use good oral skills in all areas of the curriculum and they express their views clearly and confidently. The majority speak at length and are adept at answering questions in lessons and during tutorial time. In music, for example, students work effectively in groups using good discussion and negotiation skills. A range of oral skills are used and transferred across the curriculum. For example, in modern foreign languages, students' speaking and listening skills are linked to their ability to read both French and German. In mathematics, oracy skills involving forming hypothetical and deductive reasoning are used when solving problems. Students with special educational needs take part in circle time, which provides them with opportunities to express their views. In a Year 8 registration, very good standards of oracy were used with students using clear diction and intonation as they spoke fluently about books they had read and enjoyed before answering questions and making recommendations. Listening skills are very good and students are alert and able to understand the meaning of what is being said. Overall, reading is good throughout both key stages and in the sixth form. Students with special educational needs in Years 7 and 8 take part in shared reading activity with sixth form students acting as mentors. Students read independently but the rate of borrowing from the library is greatest at Key Stage 3. Most students write fluently and accurately for a range of purposes and audiences. Writing is well organised and there is an impressive volume of writing throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. In particular, the high attaining students use language effectively and have a wide vocabulary. For example, in history, they make notes, plan and redraft their work and produce imaginative and empathic writing including for example, scripts on Richard III. The average attaining students produce similar work but they are less secure in their use of spelling and grammar. Lower attaining students and students with a special educational need also produce a range of writing, and good support is provided based on the screening programme, involving testing of basic skills, administered by the school during Years 6 and 7.

15. Research and retrieval skills are used effectively in English. In Years 12 and 13, students read widely and use the internet and other secondary source materials to gather information for presentations and assignments. Wide reading is encouraged in the English department through the use of book boxes, book reviews and quiet reading in lessons, after completing set tasks.

16. A large number of students have English as an additional language but of this number only three students need additional help and only one of these three is considered to need the specific help of a support assistant. This help is provided and the student is making very good progress. The other two students are stronger in their English ability but are likewise supported within lessons and they too are making very good progress. The majority are considered to be at such an advanced stage of English language acquisition that additional support is not now necessary; generally these students are making good progress.

17. The last inspection report made very few comments about students with special educational needs. Currently, students make good progress and the records held by the department show this to have been true for a number of years. In addition, a number of new initiatives, for example mentoring and circle time, have enhanced the work of the department. Progress since the time of the last inspection is thus good. Such is the success of the department that fifty-three of the students who gained GCSEs last year had received support from the department and these students were spread across the complete range of ability including those with the highest overall results.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Students' attitudes to school life are excellent. The vast majority of parents report that their children enjoy going to school. Students show an enthusiasm for school, which is

reflected in their readiness to participate in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities offered by the school. In class, they generally listen attentively, especially when they are well taught, and are usually eager to participate. They contribute well to lessons, making sensible comments and asking pertinent questions. Most enjoy the challenge of learning, showing a high level of interest and involvement when given an activity to do. They usually work hard with good levels of concentration. They generally take a pride in their work. Rates of attendance are improving yearly and are now broadly in line with the national average.

19. Behaviour in school is very good. Movement around the school, including the narrow staircases and corridors, is orderly and the general atmosphere is quiet and conducive to learning. Students understand very clearly what is expected of them and generally obey the school rules. Very few students are excluded: last year no student was permanently excluded and the number of fixed exclusions was well below the national average for a school of this size. The school is one of four schools that are part of an LEA-led Inclusion initiative which encourages schools to retain difficult students. This has been very successful in reducing the number of exclusions. Although some students reported that they had been bullied, the vast majority claimed that bullying was not a problem. Students were confident of having someone to turn to should a problem arise.

20. Relationships are good. Students generally show a high level of maturity and confidence at all stages of their school life. Sixth form students are especially articulate and self-confident. All students get on well with each other and have a friendly but respectful relationship with the staff. They are polite. In lessons, students collaborate well and are prepared to listen to each other's views. When working in pairs or groups, they wait their turn. In the dining room, which is too small for such a large school, they queue sensibly and use the facility responsibly.

21. Students' personal development is promoted through the personal and social education programme in which students are encouraged to think about their own attitudes and approach to school and life in general. Most students show a good degree of initiative and personal responsibility. Very good examples were seen in dance and gymnastic lessons of students taking responsibility for their own learning, and demonstrating a high level of capability in planning and evaluating their own work and that of their fellow students. Where form tutors and parents are both diligent in signing their homework planners, students show that they can organise their homework timetable to ensure that the homework gets done and they do not fall behind in their work. In the after-school and lunchtime study groups, students show they can work independently and without close supervision. Opportunities for sixth form students to use initiative and take responsibility, not least through the Millennium Volunteers initiative, are responded to very well by students who often show maturity beyond their years.

22. Attendance is satisfactory.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Teaching is good overall, with much excellent and very good teaching occurring in the lessons seen. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in most lessons. In two-thirds of lessons it was good or better and in approximately a fifth of lessons it was very good or excellent. A small number of unsatisfactory lessons occurred across the key stages; no single teacher performed more than one lesson at this level, all being graded higher on at least one other occasion. Teaching is marginally better in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3 with over a quarter of lessons graded very good or excellent. Teaching in the sixth form is of a high standard and ensures students make good progress.

24. Teachers have a good understanding of their subjects and are able to convey knowledge effectively to students. They draw on a wide range of experience, which they often use to colour their expositions in order to stimulate learning. In a Year 7 class, for example, students amalgamated understanding from two material areas in design and technology so that they could create a moisture detector for a blind person to use when filling a cup with hot water. They used the resistant materials plastic and metal to create an outer casing and then assembled a buzzer mechanism in electronics. This example shows how students are encouraged to solve real problems.

25. In Year 10, specialist knowledge in English is expertly used to demonstrate the use of volume, pace, facial expression and movement when reading monologues. As a result, students learn quickly through a series of role-plays on how to wear different masks when developing character and delivering lines.

26. Teachers use a wide variety of resources to promote their teaching. In a Year 8 lesson on photosynthesis, well-paced teaching was characterised by a rich variety of structured worksheets, skilled exposition and a pre-assembled experiment. The teacher's enthusiasm was infectious and students were challenged effectively. The standards attained were high and the knowledge they gained was complex. Students were able to formulate the word equation for photosynthesis and knew how to check for the presence of chlorophyll.

27. Lesson planning is good. Teachers have clear objectives, which most convey effectively to their students. On many occasions, there is a reference to previous work which is reinforced prior to starting new topics or aspects. Teachers use many methods to enable learning: class discussion in sociology in the sixth form, for example, and paired and group work in English and drama.

28. Students respond to the good teaching in the school by behaving well and showing a keen interest in their studies. Their learning is good. They show good progress in most areas; they increase their knowledge base, gain new skills and develop conceptual understanding. They also make clear progress in terms of co-operation and collaboration with one another. Nearly all lessons are productive.

29. Students respond well to questions of a scientific, moral or spiritual nature and make gains in their learning. However, they do not always have sufficient opportunities in religious education to make such responses. Specialist teaching ensures that complex religious questions are posed successfully. A significant amount of religious education is taught by non-specialists. These teachers have good teaching skills but do not have sufficient in-depth grasp of the more spiritual aspects of the subject. They are inclined to focus on moral questions and this is done effectively. However, the spiritual nature of the subject is often

missed and students' learning is consequently inhibited and they are insufficiently challenged.

30. The lack of use of information and communication technology is evident in most subjects across the curriculum. This important resource is insufficiently developed, a lack of access to computers causing the main problem. Students enjoy using computers. They learn well in Year 7 where teaching is good and enables students to acquire and consolidate their skills quickly. Generally, however, many teachers have little opportunity to use ICT rooms as they are pre-booked with formal ICT lessons, which, although generally successful, occasionally lack the finer points of knowledge. Many teachers have insufficient understanding of the software and this requires sustained and specific focus in order to ensure teaching is effective and accurate and learning is maximised.

31. Characteristics of good teaching in other subjects are many. In art there is good support for individual students, whether low attainers or gifted students. In geography and history, teachers ensure learning is effective by detailed and imaginative lesson planning, lively presentation and high expectations. Teachers make good use of audio-visual equipment in modern foreign languages; they produce attractive, informative visual aids that encourage active learning. In physical education, effective organisation and clear demonstrations enable students of all abilities to learn quickly. Day-to-day assessment is good in physical education, as it is in other subjects, with self-evaluation a regular feature of lesson activities.

32. Teaching in GNVQ lessons is good and appropriate to the courses promoted. Although groups are small, there is lively interchange of ideas, and learning is good.

33. The quality of learning is good overall and reflects the quality of teaching. The school's commitment to developing the whole person is often exemplified in the classroom. In a Year 9, personal and social education lesson, for example, students used local newspapers to research related incidents as part of a drugs awareness problem. Students fed back information to the class, which generated lively discussion. In design and technology students were heard reading aloud in class. This was clear and contributed to their literacy skills but was never prolonged.

34. Teachers' use of numeracy is in its infancy. Mathematics teachers often give students a warm-up at the beginning of lessons when they stimulate students' thinking by quick testing of number skills. Key teaching strategies for cross-curricular topics need to be shared to ensure consistency of approach across the school. In particular, all teachers need to be aware of the mental strategies and the approach to teaching these that support the development of students' numeracy skills.

35. Teachers are using good strategies to develop literacy. All teachers have received training in promoting literacy in their subject areas. The literacy policy provides good guidelines for developing literacy skills across the curriculum. The policy reflects many strands of the National Literacy Strategy and addresses attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In mathematics students learn well when they practise selecting and using information and consolidate the spelling of key mathematical words that are emphasised by the teacher or displayed around the classroom. A working group, led by a well-qualified and experienced coordinator, monitors the implementation of the policy. The policy includes a strategic plan with short, medium and long terms aims. It is, however, too early to assess the full impact of the policy on raising standards. Nevertheless, at this stage, departments are responding positively to ensuring that correct spellings and technical vocabulary are taught and reinforced. Some tutors use the early registration period to focus on speaking and listening skills, but there was very little opportunity provided for students to read aloud in lessons during the inspection week.

36. The literacy programme, a programme aiming to improve students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, identifies the needs of students and sets specific targets for them to achieve. Teachers use writing frames effectively in most subjects. A whole school approach to improving spelling was introduced by the head of English after the last inspection. Although spelling continues to be a problem, the English department is poised to pioneer accurate spelling by introducing a 'spelling ruler' with subject specific words.

37. The school is successful in addressing students' special educational needs and students learn well. Although statements vary in their capacity to provide a basis for planning, the school has appropriate systems in place to identify and support individuals. This includes visits to primary schools by the staff and members of Year 10 who operate an excellent mentoring system for those about to join the school. Support is largely aimed at those with reading, writing and spelling difficulties. In addition, there is an excellent circle time opportunity for students in Years 7 and 8 and a very good exercise program for those with physical disabilities. Shared reading is used to good effect and students who need support for their behaviour have very good individual programmes as and when they are needed. The spelling programme is available to those whose spelling age is two years behind their reading age. It works so well that the spelling age has often risen to a point where it exceeds the reading age. The only areas where support is not currently available is with basic numeracy skills and students' progress is consequently inhibited. The latter used to receive support when the school was grant-maintained but the funding has now been withdrawn. The school intends to review the support available for numeracy as the programme for numeracy is introduced to the whole school.

38. The majority of support is provided in normal lessons. This was observed on a number of occasions and in a number of subjects. In all cases, the support enabled the students to take a full part in the lesson. The head of department, who is also the co-ordinator of special educational needs, gave an exemplar model of in-class support in a Year 7 science lesson. Positioning and body language gave the students some autonomy and yet maintained close support when needed. It was undertaken with sensitivity and showed a genuine mutual respect. Similar positive examples were observed across the curriculum for example, support in Year 9, physical education, enabling a disabled student to fully participate in the lesson.

39. Extension work is available for students who are either gifted or talented. This is particularly evident in mathematics where some students take GCSE a year early. Adequate and effective support is available for students with English as an additional language. Most of these students do not require specific support because their English is well developed. Where there is a particular need, support is available and students soon respond well.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?

40. Whole school curriculum co-ordination is a major responsibility of one of the deputy heads who has established good lines of curriculum management with departments. The curriculum is subject to systematic and regular review.

41. The curriculum time is short of the recommended time for Key Stage 4 of 25 hours per week. Deficiencies identified at Key Stage 3 at the previous inspection in the teaching time for art have been satisfactorily rectified. A satisfactory change in the arrangements for modern foreign languages provides more time for students' chosen language of French or German in Year 8 instead of students selecting a second language at that stage in their course. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught as a separate subject in Years 7 and 8. This programme as it continues into Year 9 next year should ensure progression, continuity and the balance of the ICT curriculum within the key stage programme of study. However, the course for current Year 9 students does not meet the statutory requirements as all students do not receive the full programme of prescribed study due to the uneven provision for ICT across the key stage programme that they followed. There is a strategy for teaching literacy across the curriculum but the numeracy strategy has yet to be developed. The Key Stage 3 curriculum now offers a generally good breadth and balance with all the National Curriculum subjects taught as well as religious education, personal and social education (PSE) and drama. Equal opportunities are also well established, except that boys have no access to dance.

42. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is good. It has recently been revised and in Year 10 follows the new curriculum model that is planned to meet the particular learning needs of students. It is innovative and provides a broad core that includes, as well as the National Curriculum subjects, a GCSE course in one or both the humanities and technologies. Students choose two additional courses from a very wide range of subjects covering the creative and expressive arts, a second modern foreign language or humanities subject, media studies, statistics, business studies, short GCSEs in aspects of technology, Certificates of Achievement in the core subjects and history. There are also GNVQs offered in health and social care and business as well as the Youth Award and Challenge Award courses. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides flexible and relevant programmes of study for students across the attainment range and in particular for the low attainers. Statutory requirements are met at Key Stage 4 except for ICT and religious education. Although the school provides opportunities for students to take a full or short course GCSE in ICT, the school does not make full provision and the subject is not formally assessed and reported upon to the parents of all students. In religious education, one lesson is taught every fortnight, which is not sufficient to adequately cover the Local Agreed Syllabus requirements, which is taught to all students.

43. A varied and good curriculum is offered in the sixth form, which provides opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of the students recruited. In Year 13, a suitable range of GCE advanced level courses are studied but the only advanced GNVQ currently taught is leisure and recreation. In Year 12, the curriculum has been drawn up to meet Curriculum 2000 requirements with students selecting three AS level subjects and AS General Studies. A core key skills course has been piloted. There are no GNVQ foundation courses taught but Intermediate and Advance GNVQ courses are taken in health and social care, leisure and recreation, travel and tourism and business in Year 12. Additional studies include GCSEs in English, mathematics, ICT, the community sports leaders award and the Royal Society for Arts keyboard skills certificate. In addition, the centre provides excellent further enrichment for almost all students in the form of work shadowing opportunities, planned paired reading support for students and voluntary, community and charity work, all having a profound impact on their development as citizens and their confidence as mature young people. PSE is taught as part of the weekly tutorial period but religious education is not given sufficient time to teach the content of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In all other respects, the sixth form curriculum meets statutory requirements.

44. There is very good extra-curricular provision overall, with that in physical education and music outstanding. A wide range of sporting activities is offered through extra-curricular

clubs and inter-form competitions that involve the majority of students within the school. The prestigious Sportsmark award recently attained recognised the range of sporting activity and the well-developed coaching and other links with local sports clubs. In music the extended curriculum is evident in its strong community links that exist through school bands and choirs, which visit local schools; there is a band exchange with Norway. There are a number of enriching lunchtime and after school clubs including a drama club and study club. There are also a number of educational visits in subjects across the curriculum including visits to theatres, poetry evenings in English, field trips and residential courses in geography and biology. The extra-curricular activity associated with the Millennium Volunteers initiative provides excellent enhancement of the sixth form curriculum. Curriculum links with the community are very good indeed with most subjects making an appropriate contribution. The school has excellent links with partner institutions particularly at primary level; these have been greatly enhanced by student involvement in contributory primary schools through the Millennium Volunteers Scheme.

45. The provision for careers education is very good. A well co-ordinated, and planned comprehensive programme exists which starts in Year 8 and is provided for all students as part of the PSE course. The school has in place a career tracking policy, which with support from the Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Services, identifies and provides guidance for high priority students in Year 9, those who have predicted grades of less than C in Year 10 and all students in Year 11. The careers programme in Key Stage 4 enables all students to undertake two weeks work experience in Year 11 with extensive support from local industry and business. Sixth formers are well supported in their decisions about higher education.

46. Overall, the provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, but with some aspects of it being stronger than others.

47. The provision for spiritual development is good. Opportunities in assemblies give the students the chance to be still and reflect on issues that might otherwise pass them by. Although these issues are largely of a moral nature, some assembly themes have a religious element to them, such as the assembly about Cat Stevens who gave up a music career for the sake of his religious beliefs and those assemblies about Christmas around the world. More of this type of theme would be of benefit to the students. Other opportunities to reflect occurred at the Remembrance Day service and when a visitor came to talk about the Holocaust. Other visits are made by church representatives. Individual departments in the school also present the students with the opportunity to be still and reflective. In drama, there are components of reflection in 'A' level work and a dance component in physical education presents similar opportunities. Religious education also has an input to this aspect, but inadequate time in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form means that the department cannot make as strong a contribution as it might. Walking on the hills in activities week enables the students to experience the power and beauty of nature, and work in science similarly enables the students to see the complexity and wonder of such things as conception and birth. Although there have been improvements since the last inspection, the provision for spiritual education could still be stronger particularly in its organisation and development across departments. The school is not meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

48. Provision for moral development is very good. Students are expected to behave well, care for others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school has a clear discipline statement, which emphasises fairness, good manners and consideration for others and parents receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour booklet. The personal and social education programme also has clear moral guidance in it and includes topics about law and order, bullying, conflict, peer pressure, sex education and issues on drugs, smoking and alcohol. Individual departments also strengthen this provision for moral development. Religious

education in particular has significant units of work on forgiveness, abortion, euthanasia, and the students study moral codes found in various religious traditions. Sociology looks at crime and deviance, English looks at racism, violence and responsibility, and geography has work on conflicts in land use. In physical education, the students are clearly taught to appreciate the importance of authority, fair-play and responsibility. The staff in the school serve as excellent role models for the students.

49. Provision for social development is very good. Extra-curricular activities and clubs such as sports, science, music and the study club all have a significant input in helping the students to develop positive relationships, as do several residential visits. Most departments, including religious education, English, design and technology and mathematics, encourage the students to learn from and to help each other when they participate in collaborative work in the classroom. Assembly themes such as 'taking part', playing the hero, and keeping going in adversity also highlight the importance of social skills to the students. The personal and social education includes many topics with a social emphasis. These include friends and relationships, responsibility for each other, care for animals, peoples' rights and the elderly. Students can take some responsibility in coming into the school early, participating in the Millennium Volunteers and in the School Council, though this is an area of school life, which would benefit from further development in the lower school. The students can participate effectively in the community in various ways, through the breakfast club, trips abroad, mentoring, work with primary schools and the learning centre. The teaching of the roles and responsibilities of citizenship are also important to the school and students often go into the villages around to tidy up. Environmental awareness is encouraged through the 'Safari in your Garden' project.

50. Provision for cultural development is very good. There are enriching trips to places of local interest and importance, including Shibden Hall and walking in the surrounding hillside. There are also trips further a field, particularly to London and the Dome, where the Brass Band participated in a musical event there. There are many visits to theatres and the history department has an excellent display of work about travelling back in time to the Elizabethan period. Music clubs are a significant feature of the school and these include the junior band and the chamber choir and the school production is a regular feature in school life. Many individual departments have an input to the cultural development of the students. English is an obvious example with theatre trips and the study of literature and poetry and the art department takes students to art galleries and museums. The school also has a multi-cultural awareness as there are many trips abroad such as to France, Italy and Norway and some students have work experience in Germany. The study of world religions and cultures is an important aspect of the work in religious education and Indian dancing is part of some work in physical education. The geography department introduces the students to aspects of Japan and the art department includes aboriginal and Indian music in its work. Although there have been improvements since the last inspection, the multi-cultural provision could still be more significant, particularly in acknowledging and celebrating the multi-cultural nature of Great Britain itself in a more emphatic way.

51. The curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 recognises the requirements of students with special educational needs. Certificate of Achievement courses are available in a number of subjects including English, mathematics and science. In addition, there is a life skills course and Youth Award course which are externally accredited. There are good individual education plans in which are set appropriate targets and enable the planning of appropriate tasks to suit the needs of the individual.

52. There is appropriate provision for students who have English as an additional language

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

53. The school has improved upon the good provision for the care and support of students reported at the last inspection. These features are now very good. The quality of support for students' welfare, behaviour and personal development has a very good impact on students' lives at school and on their learning. All staff in the school have good relationships with students and care for their individual needs very well. There are good systems in place for monitoring students' behaviour and very good systems for supporting individual students who may be having difficulties. The overall quality of educational and personal support and guidance for students is very good because teachers and staff know and care for the students very well.

54. Parents appreciate the pastoral care that is provided for their children. Most parents say that the school promotes good standards of behaviour and that their children are well cared for and supported in a family atmosphere. The great majority of parents feel that the school is approachable if they have any concerns. Inspection evidence supports these views.

55. The school meets the statutory requirements for providing a safe place for students to work in. There are very good procedures in place for ensuring that any possible hazards are reported and dealt with quickly. The caretakers work hard and keep the site clean and well maintained. The governing body ensures that the school carries out regular checks of the premises and continues to seek improvements to the school buildings, in particular, the replacement of the severely dilapidated mobile classrooms. All staff pay very good attention to health and safety requirements around the school and in lessons, for example, when using gymnastics equipment.

56. The procedures for dealing with students who are unwell or who hurt themselves are very good. There are a good number of trained staff, who offer caring and sympathetic support to students who require first-aid treatment. All staff have good awareness of students who may be experiencing difficulties or whose welfare is giving cause for concern. The policy for child protection is satisfactory and staff have received suitable guidance in the correct way to report concerns. However, formal staff training in child protection requires updating. The school has a very good understanding of social inclusion and makes appropriate adaptations to its curriculum and procedures to encourage its less motivated students.

57. The system used by the special educational needs department to support individuals and monitor their progress is very good. The department identifies the particular areas where a student needs support and then invites each teacher of that student to identify a strategy, within their subject, that will address the issue. The regular written reviews are passed back to the special educational needs department who are able to collate the information and monitor progress. These records show that, where a department has responded to the system, the student is able to make at least satisfactory and frequently good progress against their priority areas. The system would be even more effective if all teachers followed the good practice of, for example, the science department.

58. The school has good procedures for monitoring students' attendance. Clear guidance is given to staff about the correct way to complete registers. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the way in which staff judge and record students as being late. Good use is made of computerised record keeping, and concerns about individual students are effectively fed into the student support systems. The school has effective working relationships with the educational welfare officer. There are good procedures for the promotion of students' behaviour and for dealing with any isolated incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour. All staff have very clear expectations of students' behaviour and are consistent in their approach to any lapses. The consistency with which staff treat students has a positive impact on their behaviour. Students have a clear understanding of expected standards and rarely stray from them. Students say that behaviour is generally good and that they are clear that the headteacher and staff will deal very quickly with any worries they may have about bullying.

59. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development from the time they start at the school to when they leave. Good use is made of certificates to reward good behaviour, attitudes to work and improvement. This has a positive impact on raising students' self-esteem. Staff in the school know the students very well and give them very good guidance and support when they need to make improvements. The school's mentoring system is efficient, comprehensive and very effective in helping students to raise their standards. All teaching staff play a strong role in this respect.

60. At whole school level, there is very good use of assessment data from test and examination results to compare students' achievements across subjects and in comparison with national and local standards. Senior managers, teaching staff and governors have been trained in the most up-to-date and effective methods of interpreting and using statistical evidence. In conjunction with professional judgement and the schools' concern for the welfare of its students, these methods are proving a valuable tool for analysing trends in performance. They are proving very useful in predicting potential outcomes for individuals, as well as for departments. The impressive body of statistical evidence collated from various sources is efficiently distributed to teaching staff, students and parents. The information is effectively used to help students achieve their best. A strong emphasis on day-to-day assessment and regular testing of attainment is evident in most subjects. However, in art and design and technology, there is insufficient rigour in setting individual students targets for improvement.

61. The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning is good overall and there is some very good practice, such as rationalising the provision of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3. Accurate appraisal of the needs and potential of lower attainers and students with special educational needs has resulted in a beneficial programme of appropriate certificate courses. The school provides very good academic support for its students, involving many teaching staff and sixth form students in mentoring and advice. Individual discussion of work done to date and of targets for the future are routine in drama, history, and most other subjects. The resulting sense of common purpose and students' self-confidence are widely apparent. Parents receive sufficient information from regular reports and consultation with teachers to keep them well involved in their children's school career.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. The quality of partnership that the school has with parents is unchanged since the time of the last inspection and is satisfactory overall.

63. In the questionnaires completed before the inspection, most parents indicated good support for the school and its work. Parents feel that teachers have high expectations for their children and that behaviour is good. They say that they are able to approach the school with any questions or problems and most report that their children like coming to school.

64. A significant minority of parents criticised the school's provision for homework, although opinion is divided between those who feel there is too much and those who say that there is not enough. However, the inspection team's view is that the school's provision for homework is satisfactory. Some parents were critical of the information that they receive about their child's progress although most of them feel that they can approach the school with any questions or problems that they may have. Inspectors agree that many parents do not receive sufficient information about students' achievements and academic progress and that better use could be made of each student's planner to achieve better communication between school and home. On the same basis, inspectors feel that despite the willingness of some teachers to telephone parents out of school hours, the failure to capitalise on all available means of communication with parents lessens the degree with which the school and parents are able to work as a team.

65. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The governing body's annual report to parents and the school's prospectus are well produced and meet statutory requirements. Students' end of year reports similarly meet statutory requirements but could be more informative. The school encourages parents to keep in regular contact with teachers through annual consultation meetings, which are well attended, and by encouraging informal contact with teachers when parents have any concerns. Most teachers make themselves readily available to speak to parents if they come into school and parents are generally seen very quickly. The school and sixth form prospectuses give parents good information about the organisation and activities of the school, as do the weekly newsletters, which are distributed to all parents.

66. The school makes a good commitment to an open and positive relationship with parents through its home-school agreement. However, few parents help in school. There is an active parents, teachers and friends association that undertake fund-raising activities. Other parents support particular activities, such as the school band, and also fundraise, for example to enable the band to visit Norway. Where their children are directly involved, parents are very supportive. For example, the annual carol concert is a major event in the calendar of the local community, and is well supported by parents. They attend school concerts, sports matches and the school's fund-raising ventures. Parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the identification of their children's needs and are invited to all term and annual reviews

67. A lack of interest in attending parent information meetings by a significant minority of parents, considerable inconsistency in their reading and signing of student planners as required, and discussions with students indicate that there is little evidence of parental support and involvement in students' learning at school and at home, which is judged to be unsatisfactory. The school needs to improve communication in order to enlist further parental support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The head teacher has a very clear vision for the school; central to this is raising attainment. He ensures that this is mellowed with the acknowledgement of the individual and their humanness. He ensures the school enriches each student's life. The new curriculum is successful in reaching many students who may fall through the net in mainstream classes. It includes the Youth Award Scheme for lower attaining students and extension mathematics to stretch high attainers. A strong senior management team supports the head teacher in his mission, each well deployed and each contributing much to the smooth running of the school. The school is also strengthened by some exceptional middle managers, for example the heads of mathematics, English and science and the head of Year 11. These with many others ensure that Ryburn is a thriving, caring and successful school.

69. The governing body is changing. There is a new chair of governors and some places to be filled. Those in post, however, are keen and responsive to need and work hard to fulfil their statutory duties. They are supportive of the head teacher and are keen to help.

70. There is deep-rooted commitment to equal opportunities in the school. This commitment starts from the top and staff of both genders are deployed in key positions through senior and middle management. All staff are treated in the same way; this is exemplified well by the fact that a technician is training to be a teacher. Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are catered for well, given the constraints of the poor accommodation. The school tries hard to combat prejudice. Although boys often attain higher results than girls at this school, which is contrary to national trends, there is no evidence of boys dominating in the classroom. Girls do reasonably well and are breaking through stereotypical barriers and low aspirations they have met outside of school.

71. Financial control is good. A well-qualified financial committee, consisting of the headteacher, the deputy head (curriculum), a senior teacher responsible for finance and the site manager, is very effective in managing the financial dimensions of any educational developments. It is well supported by a financial assistant who ensures all monies are properly accounted for. This prudent approach has been successful and ensured expenditure, for example the new information and communication technology suites and the English block, were put out to tender. Characteristically, with the help of members of the governing body best value was achieved in this example, not only in monetary terms but in quality and speed of work. The governors' finance committee although active when needed are supportive rather than directive and act as a knowledgeable but critical friend by drawing on considerable industrial and banking expertise. It ensures that priority spends will not only improve the school but that they are costed carefully and the best value sought. The school uses specified grants for their designated purposes. It has spent £36,000 on the roof and is holding £220,000, which is to be spent on fire precautions very shortly.

72. Staff responsibilities have been delegated well. The head teacher, always keen to identify the strengths of his team, is effective in using these strengths to the maximum. The deputy head, for example, in charge of the sixth form, is very efficient in her role, particularly in the work she has put into the Millennium Volunteers Project. Other senior staff are well placed, each using their particular skills successfully.

73. ICT is used well in an administrative capacity. The school is fully systemised to use ICT for attendance, assessment, examination entries, finance and student information. Most teachers use computers extensively to access student information. There are issues with insufficiency of computers for use across the curriculum.

74. Targets set by the school for GCSE examinations have proved appropriate; they are generally met or exceeded. The target for 2001 is the same as the actual results for 2000 for five A* - C grades. Hopefully, this will be exceeded too. At Key Stage 3 the general targets to improve are then made subject and cohort specific by departments. Results in 2000 indicate that this is a winning formula.

75. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are in the early stages of development. They are clearly identified in the school development plan and are devolved to departments where practice is variable. In mathematics, for example, teachers' lessons are observed formally and feedback given and targets set. In art observation is informal and not recorded. There is some good practice and this needs to be built upon to ensure consistency across the school.

76. For the majority of subjects, the school has an adequate number of well-qualified staff and support staff to deliver the curriculum. In ICT and religious education, however, a significant number of the staff teach outside their specialism and this has a detrimental effect on standards. There is a very good programme of induction for newly qualified teachers. A system exists for monitoring teaching and for appraising staff performance but it has not yet been fully implemented. Training is given to address both departmental and school needs.

77. The standard of accommodation is poor overall; the school has a high proportion of temporary accommodation, which represents 40 per cent of all the classrooms in the school. There is a general lack of space that is getting worse as the number of students in the school increases. There is inadequate social space for the younger students, which causes problems of overcrowding in certain areas. The dining area is too small for the present size of the school. Similarly, the library is now inadequate in size and some students are denied access at lunchtime because of overcrowding. The reception area is unsuitable for the needs of the school and does not provide a welcoming environment.

78. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in mathematics, modern languages, design and technology, art and special educational needs. It is poor in science, physical education and music. In science, 33 per cent of Year 9 teaching takes place outside the laboratory, as does 20 per cent of A Level work; this clearly presents teachers and students with less opportunities to do complex practical experiments and can lead to discontinuity. The physical education department only has one gymnasium, which is used for examinations for ten weeks of the year; this causes considerable problems, often unsolvable, in poor weather and is an unsatisfactory situation. The music department only has one teaching room and one practice room, which are adjacent and have inadequate sound insulation. In these subjects standards are affected by the inadequacy of the accommodation.

79. Some health and safety features are still outstanding from the last inspection but these are about to be addressed with specific grant funding. The school has made some improvements since the last inspection but basically the situation has changed little since the last two inspections and has been made worse by the increase in the number of students.

80. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the quality of its resources for learning and they are now generally satisfactory. However, the resources for ICT are still unsatisfactory, the ratio of students to computers is still below the national average in spite of the recent improvements. In all departments, there are insufficient computers and only in English and science is there good access to central computer facilities. There is satisfactory provision of books in most departments and the central library. Resources such as booklets and worksheets produced by departments for their own use are good or satisfactory in all departments. Specialist equipment is satisfactory or better in most departments, the exceptions being mathematics, geography and art. The library has a good resource area, well equipped with computer stations, which are well used by the students.

81. The learning support department is very well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the newly appointed governor gives enthusiastic support. A clear philosophy guides the deployment of a team of very good assistants. Training is available to all and ensures that the support staff can develop their expertise effectively. The school systems give due regard to the Code of Practice and evidence on students' files show that students' parents are involved appropriately. The major drawback to the work of this successful department is the limited space available in which to either work or store appropriate materials.

82. This year is the first year that the school has received specific funding for English as an additional language (EAL). However, because the services of a specialist are not obviously justifiable, the special educational needs department has appropriately decided to use these funds in the training of their own staff to teach EAL and for further resources, as well as for financing the support assistant. Overall provision for students who have English as an additional language is appropriate for the situation in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

83. In order to improve the school, the governors, senior staff and staff of the school need to take the following action:

- (1) Improve attainment in information and communication technology by:
 - ensuring all students in Years 8 and 9 and at Key Stage 4 receive their entitlement; (Paragraphs: 47, 159, 161)
 - increasing all students' access to computers; (Paragraph: 166)
 - expanding teachers' skills, and consequently those of students, by further training. (Paragraph: 164)

- (2) Build on present good practice to improve the status of religious education by:
 - allocating sufficient time to religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form in order to cover the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; (Paragraph: 192)
 - ensuring sufficient attention is paid to the spiritual content of the syllabus by all religious education teachers; (Paragraphs: 187, 192)
 - giving more opportunities for students to make personal responses to spiritual and religious questions. (Paragraph: 190)

- (3) Build on already laid foundations to improve standards of numeracy across the school by:
 - encouraging all teachers to use the good strategies already incorporated within the mathematics department; (Paragraphs: 34, 37, 109)
 - ensuring all staff realise and use the opportunities that exist in their subjects to give students practice in numeric processes; (Paragraphs: 13, 34, 109)
 - ensuring strategies for teaching numeracy are embedded within subject schemes of work; (Paragraphs: 34, 115)
 - liaising with primary schools to agree consistency of methodology. (Paragraph: 115)

- (4) Pursue diligently all possible strategies to improve the quality of the accommodation, particularly in the light of a rising roll. (Paragraph: 78)

Subsidiary Issue

The daily act of collective worship does not meet statutory requirements. (Paragraph: 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	223
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	69

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	18	44	30	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1075	144
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	158	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	24	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	215	0

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	30

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	99	101	200

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	47	60	52
	Girls	78	72	56
	Total	125	132	108
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	61(67)	65 (63)	53 (49)
	National	64 (63)	66 (62)	60 (55)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (23)	37 (33)	18 (15)
	National	24 (28)	38 (38)	26 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	55	58	50
	Girls	75	70	59
	Total	130	128	109
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (51)	63 (56)	53 (32)
	National	N/A (64)	N/A (64)	N/A (60)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (24)	38 (33)	24 (11)
	National	N/A (31)	N/A (37)	N/A (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	119	92	211

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	36	98	104
	Girls	39	82	87
	Total	75	180	191
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	36 (29)	85 (90)	91 (97)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (95.2)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	32 (29.7)
	National	38 (37)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	42	65	107

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	14.9	20.6	18.3 (16.1)	1.8	1.4	1.6 (2.7)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	47
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	1158
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	15	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	73.2
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	504

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	26.1
Key Stage 4	19.7

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3 101 137
Total expenditure	3 104 506
Expenditure per pupil	2 577
Balance brought forward from previous year	52 729
Balance carried forward to next year	49 360

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1220
Number of questionnaires returned	152

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	59	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	53	3	1	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	57	11	2	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	53	15	3	7
The teaching is good.	24	59	5	1	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	41	20	3	11
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	6	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	44	3	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	22	47	14	6	11
The school is well led and managed.	27	54	4	4	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	53	6	2	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	43	9	5	19

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

84. At the end of Key Stage 3, in 1999, the attainment of students in the National Curriculum tests was close to the national average. A similar standard was reached in 2000. The upward trend from 1996-1999 is above the national trend. The gap between boys and girls is narrowing, but overall, boys achieve better results than girls. In comparison with schools with students from a similar background, the results are above average. Students achieve higher results in English than they do in mathematics and science.

85. The GCSE results showed a marked improvement in 1999 compared with previous years. Results in English were close to the national average in the percentage of students achieving grades A*-C. The literature results were lower. There was a significant increase in the results this year and in the number of students achieving the top most grades, A* to A in both subjects. In English, there was a rise of 7.5 per cent and in English literature a 12 per cent rise over the 1999 results. Boys achieve better results in English than in other subjects. Boys do better than girls but the difference between the attainment of the sexes is decreasing. Overall, the results are well above average for schools with a similar intake. When compared to other subjects at the end of Key Stage 4, English results are above average.

86. The A level results have improved over the last two years. In 1999, there were higher grades than in 1998 and the average points score was above the national average. However, over 1999-2000, the number of students entered for both subjects has been small. In both years, all students obtained a pass in English and English literature. Standards have risen in both key stages and in the sixth form since the last inspection and inspection evidence confirms that the high quality of teaching and learning are contributory factors in the department maintaining and continuing to improve the examination and test results.

87. Standards seen in books and lessons were satisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form and students made very good progress.

88. Students are articulate and respond positively to all forms of oral work. At the start of Year 7, students readily take part in question and answer sessions and by the end of the key stage, they use very good oral skills effectively to approach their learning. During discussions, they identify and share the main point in an argument, extending points made and giving spontaneous, but well thought out responses. At times, answers gush from them as seen in two Year 9 lessons where students discussed imaginative writing and truancy. At both key stages and in the sixth form, students listen attentively to each other before responding and ground rules are observed during oral sessions.

89. Year 10 and 11 students use very good oral and listening skills when talking about their work. They use role play to analyse and dissect characters, movements and motives as seen in a Year 11 lesson where they worked on interpreting and acting out stage directions for Hamlet, Act 3 Scene 2. They are reflective when critically evaluating their performances and in delivering lines, they judge the type of delivery needed in order to engage listeners, using clear diction to portray characters accurately. The sixth form students use group work as well as role-play constructively to discuss their work.

90. On entry to the school, literacy levels are low. In recent years, almost two thirds of the new intake entered the school with low reading and spelling ages. However, they make good gains by the end of Key Stage 3 to cope with the more demanding curriculum at Key Stage 4.

The younger students respond positively to literary texts and show a good understanding of different genre, plot and setting. They give personal responses in their book reviews on for example, "Journey to Jo'burg" and "Tunes for Bear to Dance", and use quotes to support their views. By the end of the key stage, Year 9 students make good use of research skills to retrieve, collate and present information as seen in their work on a personal language history. Reading skills including skimming and scanning are used to quickly identify the gist of an article, and students when commenting on the specific features of a text explain their views on exposition, complication, resolution and climax. Overall, by the end of the key stage, they read competently and with understanding.

91. Reading is good at Key Stage 4 and the higher and average attaining students appreciate the language and style as illustrated in their work on Clarke's poem 'i wanna be yours'. Their textual grasp and appreciation are good and they explore ideas confidently, clearly seen in their work on An Inspector Calls as well as the poems under "Hearts and Partners" in the anthology. The high attaining students read critically and give detailed answers to comprehension exercise. They also make very good use of research notes to develop their understanding of a particular genre. For example, research work on Elizabethan theatre and the Revenge Tragedies were used to analyse Hamlet as a revenge play. The average attaining students also understanding implicit meaning but their critical response is not always maintained. Likewise, the lower attaining students respond accurately to texts but at a surface level. The sixth form students read widely and draw on a range of background information for set assignments.

92. Attainment in writing is good in both key stages for the high attaining students. They write accurately. From Year 7, high attaining students produce work that is above the standard expected nationally. They command a wide vocabulary; use a range of sentences and punctuation marks. Overall, work is carefully crafted and planning precedes all written work. This was well illustrated in Year 8 extended writing on 'Beloved of all' where students appraised an imaginative or real object of love. This standard is maintained throughout the key stage and in Year 9, the high attaining students write confidently. The average attaining students make good use of draft books and work is carefully structured and most punctuation marks are used correctly. However, a number of weaknesses persist into Key Stage 4 and occasionally into the sixth form. These include poor spelling and lack of consistency in using basic grammatical features accurately. Although students' planning is usually thorough, and they re-draft their work, editing and proof reading skills are not widely practised and it is the high attaining students who use the dictionaries often to check their errors. These weaknesses feature in the work of lower attaining students and students with a special educational need throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. At Key Stage 4, the high attaining students write succinctly and work is very well structured with good links between paragraphs. They handle media assignments very well and some make very good use of ICT to present their work. The sixth form students structure their essays well. The final pieces of work for presentation are very neat.

93. Teaching is predominantly good with many very good and occasionally excellent features. The quality of teaching has improved tremendously since the last inspection and is now a strength of the department. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and expertise to engage students in their work, and pass on valuable techniques in relation to examinations and in appreciating the use of language in literature and language work. Lessons have a clear structure with an introduction, development, further development and a plenary that is used effectively by teachers and students to assess the learning outcomes. Progression is built into lessons and students know the next stage of their learning. Time is used effectively in all lessons and the constraints lead to students working quickly and productively. High standards, requiring students to think critically about their work permeate lessons and students respond to and accept the set challenges. Good use is made of

homework to illustrate the standard expected, consolidate learning and to introduce and extend learning.

94. Talk is used as a central aspect of teaching to extend vocabulary as well as speaking and listening skills. Very good opportunities are given to students to develop their oral skills and in the very good and excellent lessons, students excelled, primarily as teachers used clear exposition to provide them with insight into their learning and constantly challenged them to respond, reflect on and widen their learning. For example, in two lessons in Year 11 and Year 12, drama, discussion, exposition, and the use of open-ended questions helped students to confidently explore and interpret the ideas and use of language before acting out scenes from Hamlet and Othello. Students, in attempting to get an overview of the scenes, began introducing their own original interpretations as they worked collaboratively with each other and their teachers. This also led to them 'seeing into the characters' and portraying their moods accurately. Good classroom management and organisation contribute to the high level of cooperation present in lessons. There is a high level of mutual respect and students appreciate their teachers' efforts and work. Instructions are clear and the effective use of resources and imaginative approaches including games in Year 7, performing monologues in Year 10 and group work and whole class planning, lead to students being a captivated audience and teaching taking place in a purposeful atmosphere. Throughout the school, students' attitudes are very good. Students cooperate with their teachers in all lessons; interest is maintained in a purposeful working environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. The sixth form students show a quiet confidence and maturity in their understanding and future success in the subject.

95. Teachers monitor and intervene appropriately and misconceptions are dealt with effectively. Marking is constructive and identifies areas for improvement. Learning support assistants are appropriately deployed and give quality support to students with a special educational need.

96. The subject fully meets statutory requirements in all respects. Outstanding leadership and strong team work ensures that English is a strength of the school. Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' performance and progress are very good. The department makes a good contribution to students overall development and incorporates the teaching of other literary heritages in the curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4. The needs of students with special educational needs are fully met. However, at this stage ICT is not fully included in the curriculum, and targets and strategies in the development plan are not fully measurable.

Expressive arts

97. The expressive arts department contributes very well to the life of the school. Students receive an experience of enlivening and creative movement and sound that adds a profound and exciting dimension to their everyday studies.

98. Subjects within this umbrella are taught by experienced drama, dance and music teachers who have very good knowledge of their subjects and are able to develop exacting learning attitudes amongst students throughout Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

99. Standards are high in drama. Students have made good progress by the end of Key Stage 3 and this provides a sound base for the high levels of achievement in GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 and at A Level. GCSE results have been consistently above the national average and this is reflected in high attainment at A Level. There is no difference between the achievement of girls and boys and the subject proves to be attractive to both at GCSE and A Level.

100. The teaching is a strength of the department, creating excellent working relationships with students. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good. Lessons are lively, brisk and usually incorporate a wide variety of activities illustrating that they have been well planned and structured. Teachers have high expectations of students and the work is usually challenging. Classroom management is a strength and ensures all students can make very good progress. Students at all levels of both age and ability display confidence in performing, and fully understand and can apply the conventions of drama. There is clear progression in these skills from Year 7 to 13. Students enjoy drama and the way in which they are extremely supportive of each other in their work is most impressive. They are invariably a perceptive audience that praises and appreciates good work, and constructively and sensitively criticises when needed. Contributions to discussion work are consistently thoughtful and students enjoy the challenge of the subject.

101. The drama department is strong and is well led and staffed by enthusiastic, committed specialists who are supported by a comprehensive departmental handbook and good schemes of work. There are effective systems in place to monitor both teaching and the progress of students is assessed formally four times a year and informally in every lesson.

102. The department has maintained its good standard since the last inspection and also its high quality of teaching. It offers a wide range of extra-curricular activity including whole school performances, theatre visits and projects within the community.

103. Accommodation is adequate but its widespread nature presents problems. The rooms provide good working spaces with very good wall displays of key technical terms.

Media Studies

104. Media studies, including film studies are taught as a separate option at GCSE and A level as part of the expressive arts curriculum. The GCSE is a recently introduced subject and in 1999, most students obtained a grade with over half of the entrants achieving grades A*-C. In 1999, there were no passes within the A to B grades; however, over half of the candidates obtained a grade C. Standards improved in 2000 with 12 per cent of candidates obtaining grades A and B and 87 per cent obtaining a pass grade. Attainment at GCSE and A level, as observed in lessons, is above average for the higher attaining students and in line with expectations for the average attainers. The number of candidates taking media studies at A and AS level is increasing and the department is presently enabling high attaining Year 11 students to take an extra GCSE subject by teaching them after school.

105. At Key Stage 4, students use appropriate terminology with confidence and accuracy when analysing the use of images in advertising. In developing advertising briefs, they plan and carry out research and use the data from their findings to plan and develop their ideas targeted at a specific market. In the sixth form students apply a theoretical framework when critiquing the use of dialogue as a marketing tool using well known stars. For example, Year 13 students, in the combined media and film studies lesson understood the development of images in movies and the notions behind the male-centred presentations. They offered detailed comments and gave examples on the use of presentational devices and styles in the different kinds of comedies. Overall, they have a good understanding of

comedy and sit-coms and make very good progress.

106. At A level, attitudes are always very good with occasional excellent features. The students are keen to learn, make valuable contributions to lessons and show a high level of respect for their teachers and each other. This level of mutual respect is also evident at Key Stage 4 where students openly acknowledge their appreciation of their teachers. Students enjoy their lessons and take an active role in all activities.

107. Teaching is always good in the sixth form and at Key Stage 4. Teaching involves good and rigorous planning with well-selected resources to illustrate and reinforce specific teaching points. Teachers display good subject knowledge, which they communicate with confidence and enthusiasm as they bombard students with talk and questions to enliven the lessons and involve them. The most distinctive feature at 'A' level is that teachers provide many opportunities for students to exchange information and enter into detailed dialogue with them to explore the work. Plenary sessions are used effectively to reinforce learning. Time is always used constructively and students understand the work as guidelines and instructions are clear.

MATHEMATICS

108. Student attainment on entry is below the national average. Attainment, in 1999, in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations with a rising trend, which is above the national trend although in this school, boys outperformed girls. At Key Stage 4, the percentage of students achieving grades A* to C is below the national average but with a steady rise over the last three years. When compared with similar schools, both Key Stage 3 and GCSE mathematics results are just above average. A level results are below the national average for the subject, showing a dip this year after a substantial rise in the pass rate last year. Standards seen in workbooks and lessons are in line with national expectations across the school. Students' achievements are at least satisfactory and many students make good progress.

109. Students develop and practise their numeracy skills across both key stages. In Key Stage 3, there is an emphasis on estimation and times tables and the "Key Maths" scheme incorporates regular mental arithmetic tests. Students do not as yet build on or practise the mental strategies introduced in Key Stage 2. Students apply their numerical skills in mathematics appropriately, for example, in Year 7, in work on factors multiples and primes, in Year 8 work on enlargement and in Year 9 in work on area and calculation of the mean from grouped data. At Key Stage 4 some lower attaining students show very good understanding of the use of inverse operations when solving linear equations. Higher attainers show confidence in algebraic manipulation and mensuration work.

110. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 86 per cent of lessons observed. It is good or very good in 36 per cent. There is some unsatisfactory teaching at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and at 'A'-level. All teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics is sound. Planning is thorough but does not always include effective differences in the material to match the needs of mixed ability Year 7 students prior to setting. In the best teaching, lessons are well structured and students respond well to the clear learning objectives given; there is a main teaching section and summary, which highlights what has been learned. Within this structure; setting students deadlines to work to provides good pace; effective questioning draws out and extends students knowledge; appropriate resources are prepared and teachers model mathematical techniques well. This leads to effective learning and good progress being made. Some teachers include a mental starter to practise numerical skills and tune students in to their mathematics lessons. By contrast, the unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by a lack of structure and pace and poor demonstration or modelling by the

teacher and a lack of preparation of resources. In one instance, poor classroom management skills allowed too many students to remain off task for too long and resulted in unsatisfactory learning. Student's behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They pay attention in class; tackle the work set and show respect for each other and their teachers.

111. The curriculum overall is broad and balanced and statutory requirements are fulfilled. The adoption of the "Key Maths" scheme in Key Stage 3 gives a more enriched curriculum than at Key Stage 4 which is examination driven. Detailed schemes of work have been written which provide for continuity and progression from Year 7 and in general departmental documentation is exemplary. Exercise books are marked regularly and include helpful comments. Assessment procedures are adequate. In Key Stage 3, these are largely the result of the "Key Maths" scheme. Key Stage 2 assessments are not used to inform planning prior to setting in Year 7. Homework extends and consolidates class work and contributes to assessment.

112. ICT provision is inadequate. The mathematics department does not possess any class-based computers and can only access the ICT suite at specified timetabled times. This makes it impossible to integrate ICT effectively into curriculum planning, despite the information and communication technology scheme of work, which exists, or use it to enhance teaching. Although the development of ICT is identified in the departmental plan, it is hard to see how this can be realised with the present level of access to computer hardware.

113. The department is well led and managed by an able head of department who leads by example. There is a clear sense of direction. Examination results are carefully analysed, targets set and appropriate strategies adopted which account for the steady improvement in results in both Key Stages 3 and 4.

114. Accommodation is inadequate. Almost a third of all mathematics lessons take place in mobile classrooms, which are particularly cramped and are situated some distance away from the other suited rooms. Both these and the suited rooms provide little freedom of movement to allow students to move around the classroom to select resources and, hence, they must be dependent on their teacher. Black boards are old and do not support teachers in their efforts to demonstrate mathematical concepts and techniques. In the main building, lack of blinds is a problem and affects visibility of blackboards. The department does not possess any overhead projectors, which would enhance teacher demonstration. Classroom displays contribute positively to students learning and are a strength of the department.

115. Since the last inspection, standards in both Key Stages 3 and 4 have risen steadily. The restructuring of the A level course is beginning to show benefit. A formal system of monitoring and evaluation has been put in place. Each member of staff has been interviewed twice to identify their training needs. Teaching was previously judged to be a weakness. It is now much improved. Teachers strive to incorporate a wider range of teaching styles and lesson planning is good. The change in leadership has effected many improvements across the department, which is in a good position to move forward further. The development plan correctly identifies key areas for future development. The time has

come for all subjects to embed numeracy plans into their schemes of work. There is a need to liaise with primary schools regarding the development of numeracy in order to ensure consistent methodology across the phases.

SCIENCE

116. At the end of Key Stage 3 students' performance in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was below the national average and below average for similar schools. However the standard of work seen in lessons was in line with national expectations and indications are that this year's National Curriculum test results are in line with the average for similar schools and approaching the national average. The overall trend over the last four years is one of improvement. Boys slightly outperformed girls reflecting a similar picture to English and mathematics performances. By the end of Key Stage 3, students are able to understand the differences between mixtures and compounds and are able to separate a mixture of salt, sand and water using appropriate techniques. They understand how sound travels through air and many are able to interpret and apply ideas such as frequency, amplitude and wavelength. In a Year 7 biology lesson, students demonstrated a good level of understanding of fertilisation and the human reproductive system. In scientific investigative work, students are able to record observations and present data as line graphs but they need to emphasise the scientific basis for their predictions.

117. In 1999, the proportion of students obtaining A*- C grades in the GCSE was below the national average and this year's results were similar. However, performance in science relative to other subjects taught in the school was satisfactory and the standard of work seen in lessons was in line with national expectations. The overall trend over the last three years is one of significant improvement moving steadily towards the national average. Boys performed slightly better than girls at this stage. During a demonstration of transpiration in plants, students were able to make predictions based on scientific ideas. In a Year 10 practical lesson, concerned with investigating the best liquid for use in liquid filled radiators students, students were able to demonstrate the control of variables very well. Students studying for the higher tier of the GCSE were confident in their understanding and use of terms like atomic number, mass number and had a good grasp of the electronic configuration in atoms. A class of Year 10 students studying for the Certificate of Achievement in science were able to distinguish between acids and alkalis and ascertain their strengths very confidently.

118. The GCE grades students obtained for A level sciences overall for 1999 were above the national average being slightly below average in physics, above average in biology and well above average in chemistry. Indications are that the results in 2000, for all three 'A' level sciences are above average. Over the last two years the proportion of students gaining higher grades has increased significantly in biology and chemistry. This is an area of improvement since the last inspection. It is difficult to make comparisons with national data when group numbers are often small. However, group numbers have risen substantially this year and work seen in lessons and files was in line with national expectations at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress in both key stages and good progress in the sixth form. Since the last inspection, the proportion of students achieving higher grades has increased. Students showed creative thinking in a Year 12 lesson on particle physics, when they demonstrated the forces between particles by a ball throwing exercise. In a Year 12 chemistry lesson, all students were able to balance chemical equations and most were able to successfully carry out molarity calculations in order to complete the conclusion of a titration experiment.

119. The teaching in Key Stage 3 is good overall and is an area of improvement since the last inspection. This is characterised by teachers preparing good lesson plans with clear

objectives that the students can understand and demonstrating effective teaching methods with good management of students. As a result, students learn well in the majority of lessons and objectives are met. About one fifth of the teaching seen was very good or excellent, resulting in very good learning by the students. In a Year 7 lesson on the effects of acid rain excellent teaching resulted in the students making very good progress. The lesson plan was very clear with excellent objectives. An excellent demonstration on acid rain enthralled the students from the start and this, together with skilful enthusiastic exposition captured their imagination. Their interest was sustained throughout the lesson by a variety of activities which were timed well and which allowed them to take some responsibility for their own learning. The work was well matched to the ability of the students and included excellent differentiated homework. In Key Stage 4, the teaching seen was good overall. Lesson plans were good and were translated into meaningful experiences for the students that resulted in good learning. A third of the teaching seen was very good and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Very good teaching was characterised by very well structured lessons, stimulating resources and an enthusiastic delivery by the teacher. For example, in a lesson to investigate the function of arteries, veins and capillaries, the topic was introduced with a highly motivating video accompanied by an interactive worksheet that captured the students' interest from the outset. This was followed by worksheet generated research that included a range of resource material accessible to all members of the group of varying abilities. The teacher acted as a guide throughout enabling the students to take full responsibility for the own learning. This resulted in students sustaining interest and being able to describe the functions of blood vessels to different levels of complexity. Teaching at A level is good, resulting in good learning in physics, chemistry and biology. A third of the lessons seen were excellent. In a lesson on muscular contraction, the excellent lesson plan included varied, stimulating and challenging tasks orchestrated in a hierarchical manner leading students progressively towards an understanding of the sliding filament hypothesis. The activities culminated in students individually visiting a web site to access a structured learning programme. The teacher's enthusiasm, high level of expertise and support resulted in students being well motivated and taking responsibility for their own learning. Overall, learning is good across both key stages and the sixth form and this is due to good teaching. This is an area of improvement since the last inspection. Students behave well in lessons because teachers provide good classroom management and appropriate learning experiences. Students demonstrate respect for their teachers and for each other. They work very well in groups for practical work.

120. The science curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides breadth and balance in both key stages although the 18 percent time for double award science in Key Stage 4 falls short of the national recommendations by 2 percent. The Key Stage 4 science curriculum enables students who find the subject difficult to access the Certificate of Achievement without depriving them of the opportunity to prepare and qualify for the GCSE. All three separate sciences, physics, chemistry and biology are well in place at A and AS level, satisfying the requirements of curriculum 2000. There are good examples of provision for students with special educational needs and individual education plans are in place and addressed. Challenging work is also set for the more able students. Whilst ICT for all students is available the computer suite booking system is often problematic. It is also difficult to address scientific uses of ICT such as the use of sensors and data-logging. To ensure continuing development in this area the department needs to address the availability of computers in the laboratories. Literacy is being addressed well in science with well-structured worksheets, writing frames and individual key word notebooks. However, opportunities for the development of numeracy skills are often missed and this aspect needs to be developed by the department.

121. At both Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, the standard of marking is good, providing information to the students on what they need to do to improve. Student progress is

monitored by end of unit tests and prior attainment is used to predict future performance. Homework on the whole is set regularly and marked in accordance with departmental policy. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 are accurate for this year and coursework for Key Stage 4 is well marked with appropriate levels being awarded. The use of assessment to improve lesson planning has improved since the last inspection.

122. An enthusiastic, very effective teacher, who is raising standards through excellent leadership and management, leads the department. She addresses the professional development needs of all staff in the department both teaching and non-teaching. She sets high expectations for both teachers and students and is supported by a committed, hard working team who share the departmental vision of improving standards. The department is very well run with excellent planning, implementation, and evaluation.

123. Staffing is adequate and well qualified. Learning resources are adequate although the provision of computers for the department needs to be addressed. The science laboratories are kept clean and well organised. However, the accommodation is not adequate. Laboratories are often cramped and far too many science lessons have to be taught in classrooms. This has a negative effect on learning in science, particularly in Key Stage 3, in which Year 9 students spend a third of their science time in ordinary classrooms. The science department meets the statutory requirements in respect of the storage of radioactive materials, poisons, flammable and hazardous substances.

ART

124. At Key Stage 3, standards are in line with national expectations. In the lessons seen, particular strengths included good pattern and tonal work, using pencil and ink, and strong designs using colour. With some media, however, notably clay and paint, the students' technical skills are underdeveloped resulting in an untidy quality to otherwise promising work. Teachers' assessments of students' works are over generous and clear benchmarks are needed, possibly in the form of a folio of assessed work, to unify teachers' expectations of standards across the department and to set clear targets for students.

125. In 1999, the percentage of students gaining A*-C levels at GCSE was, at 59 per cent, slightly below the national average of 61.2 per cent though this represents a significant improvement on 1998 when the results were well below the national average. There is no significant difference in performance between boys and girls at this level. At both key stages in the work seen, standards were in line with national expectations and students make satisfactory progress.

126. Students' attainment was also in line with national expectations in all the lessons seen in Key Stage 4. A class working on still life paintings with decorative borders demonstrated good painting skills and a strong sense of composition. Some students, by the age of 16, are developing a strong creative identity and a readiness to tackle difficult issues; for example the girl making a large pastel drawing from her own sculpture of a Caesarean birth. A common weakness amongst many of the students in this age group was the use of inefficient working methods that wasted valuable time and drained enthusiasm and urgency from the work.

127. Standards of attainment in the sixth form are above national expectations. The art department has maintained a 100 per cent pass rate at A level since 1998 and the students' average points score is close to the national average. The girls have performed better than boys over recent years in the A level examinations. In the lessons seen in the sixth form, students' attainment was above average and they made satisfactory progress. Hallmarks of the sixth form art work are the dramatic, large scale, pastel pictures which are of very high quality. Drawing skills in the department are good from secondary sources but often less confident from direct observation.

128. The art department has made good progress overall since the last inspection. Lesson time in Key Stage 3 has been increased to four per cent of the timetable. Although this is still below the national average for art, it has enabled students' attainment at Key Stage 3 to rise to a level in line with national expectations. Pastel and collage work, which were unsatisfactory, are now a mainstay of Key Stage 4 and sixth form work including some excellent examples. Teachers' long-term planning, however, still lacks the necessary structure to ensure a balanced programme of activities for students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

129. In Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall with one quarter of the lessons being considered good. Particular strengths noted in the successful lessons were the teacher's clear, confident delivery and good support for individual students. Good use was also made of students' work in progress to make specific teaching points and to give students a clearer understanding of the standards expected. Where lessons were less successful, teachers were seen to spend too long with individual students that allowed the rest of the class to drift and lose concentration. This was particularly noticeable in lessons where learning intentions were not made clear. For example, in creating a design, students did not know whether imagination or neatness would gain the higher grades.

130. In Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching was, again, satisfactory with half of the lessons seen being considered good. The more successful lessons featured the crisp delivery of well-pitched information, which engaged the students well. Good support for individual students was again a feature, being well targeted for students of lower ability and challenging for those of high ability. Again however, where teachers spent too long with individuals, the progress of the group as a whole was seen to slow. The development of a clear mutual respect between teachers and students is apparent in this age group and above.

131. Extensive individual support continues into the sixth form where it is very appropriate for the smaller groups. The teacher has a very sound knowledge of art techniques that are successfully employed by the students. A range of strategies and processes for enlarging images has been introduced to help students in making large and striking pictures with the aid of projectors and photocopiers regardless of their drawing skills. The ethos in the sixth form allows all students to make good progress while the gifted and talented students are able to make very good progress.

132. The social development of students is an important aspect of the art department. Students and students from all key stages work alongside each other in the art rooms at lunchtimes. There are also occasions where year groups are mixed enabling younger students to learn from those in the older years. Students' relationships with staff and their peers are very good, particularly in the sixth form, and all students feel confident to contribute to class discussions. Good links are being established with feeder schools and

the wider community with the intention of displaying students' work to a wider audience through the Millennium Volunteers project.

133. ICT is largely undeveloped for research or as a creative tool in art. Difficulties in obtaining regular access to computers are a significant factor in this. Isolated examples of very good Year 13 work were seen which made good use of scanned images and word-processing.

134. The sixth form curriculum in particular is enhanced by outings to galleries and visits from artists and past students. Across all key stages, however, teaching about artists and their work is not sufficiently explicit and students retained knowledge and understanding of this is very limited. Resources for research through books, videos and CD-ROMs are inadequate both in the department and in the school library.

135. The department is well staffed and strongly led but, although teachers work well together and observe each other's teaching very frequently, this is too informal for effective evaluation and development. There are some practical difficulties with continuity where two teachers share the timetable for certain classes resulting in a significant loss of teachers' and students' time. Above all this is a committed staff who care greatly for their students as developing individuals.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

136. Standards at Key Stage 3 have risen over a number of years. Teacher assessment at the end of the key stage shows the number of students achieving level five and above to be higher than the national average. Overall, standards of work seen in lessons and students' files are satisfactory. Designing skills have improved since the last inspection but there is some variation between the material areas. Good standards were observed in Year 9 food when students designed airline meals to meet client needs. In textiles Year 7 students design kites using various techniques to apply colour effectively. Poorer standards exist in resistant materials when students do not understand how the mechanisms they are making will work and in textiles when students do not understand how the patterned pieces of a cushion will be put together to achieve the desired effect. Students are now making satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the design process. This is due to the improved Key Stage 3 course which has been implemented and which includes a common method of delivery between the material areas and leads to progression at Key Stage 4. Currently this is not mapped to identify areas of the national curriculum, which are not being covered. These include elements of Computer Aided Design (CAD) Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM) pneumatics and control. Problems exist at the moment because the department does not have sufficient information communication technology equipment to meet its needs. Elements of the design process in which students show strength include research, generation and development of ideas and planning. Making skills are good in some materials, but some products display poor quality finish. Students use tools and materials confidently. There is good attention to Health and Safety by the majority of students. Students are less successful at getting all their work finished on time, leaving little if any time to evaluate finished projects. A good system of assessment now operates but students are not made sufficiently aware of their current national curriculum level of achievement and what they need to do to improve.

137. At Key Stage 4, examination results have risen over a number of years but dipped in 2000 and are well below national average. There is considerable variation in results between the material areas and girls perform better than boys do. Few students achieve the highest grade and there are a large number of students achieving grade D. Students build on the good foundation laid in Key Stage 3 and make satisfactory progress in furthering their

understanding of the design process. Some well-presented portfolios were observed in electronics, food and graphics showing a thorough approach to problem solving and sound development of design ideas. Students in all material areas were less successful in evaluating their work and in particular in relating their evaluations back to the original specification. A few instances of poorly presented work were observed with untidy handwriting, poor spelling and weak sketching skills. There exists a noticeable difference in the quality of work which individual teachers are prepared to accept. Knowledge of the design process is less well embedded in the work in textiles than it is in other areas.

138. On limited evidence available, standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. An A Level course was included in the curriculum this term in response to a demand by a viable group of students. Inevitably, forward planning has been limited and this is a weakness. This is offset to some extent by the enthusiastic teaching and the dedication of the students, most of whom achieved results in the higher grades in GCSE graphics. The students work well in small groups on a mobile phone project. The standard achieved is satisfactory with some good features.

139. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3 but two unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. In the best lessons, teachers were well prepared, enthusiastic, with a good knowledge of the design process, which was well communicated to students. Students receive good feedback on their work particularly at Key Stage 4. There is good provision for students of all abilities including those who have special educational needs. Although few instances occur when special educational needs students receive individual classroom support in lessons they are well supported by teachers. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, students did not understand what they were doing or the design process was not clearly apparent in the work. In a minority of lessons, the tasks were uninspiring and failed to motivate students to produce original ideas. Although teachers have strategies in place to develop students' literacy skills, like displaying technical vocabulary on the classroom walls, the development of numeracy skills is minimal. Generally students respond well to what is offered and take a pride in their work. They enjoy design and technology lessons and work well together in pairs, groups and individually.

140. The head of department has addressed issues mentioned in the last report for which he is responsible and initiated considerable improvement. An improved curriculum model has been adopted that ensures progression and takes account of the requirements of Curriculum 2000. A detailed assessment system is in place. A good feature of this is the compilation of group records. The quality of teaching and pace of lessons has improved as a result of various initiatives like commonality of approach and monitoring. The poor accommodation highlighted in the last report is still unsatisfactory. Although some refurbishment and redecoration has taken place it remains unsuitable for current technology courses. Current provision for ICT is inadequate and has a detrimental impact on standards. Some health and safety measures are currently being implemented.

GEOGRAPHY

141. Recent GCSE A*-C grades results have been well below the national average and improved standards noted at the previous inspection were not sustained. Very few students attain the higher grades. When compared with other GCSE subjects within the school, geography results have fallen well below the average. Recent A*-G results have been broadly in line or better than the national position. Boys perform better than girls do when compared with the national position. Recent Advanced Level results vary but have usually been well below the national averages.

142. Most students in class attain levels that are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 but the difference is much less than attainment at GCSE would indicate. The standard of work is improving, helped by good recent staffing appointments. By the end of Key Stage 3, students have a sound grounding in geographical skills. Most can use and interpret maps and present statistical data graphically but they need more practice in their analyses. Students' knowledge of place is satisfactory but understanding of spatial patterns needs developing. Progress overall at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and often good. However, in some classes, high attainers are not stretched enough with higher level work and some low attainers need more manageable materials and tasks. There is insufficient specialist support in lessons for students with special educational needs although, with good teaching and support by the class teacher, they also make satisfactory progress.

143. By the end of Key Stage 4, students can explain a range of physical and human processes, for example river processes and management and urban land use models well. Some can also apply a variety of geographical skills competently to their independent study project work but for many more emphases should be given to ensure that standards of work more closely match their course work. Progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and for some students good.

144. In the lessons seen teaching was predominantly good at Key Stage 3 but there was some unsatisfactory teaching. It was mainly very good at Key Stage 4. Teachers are committed, caring and very supportive of students and manage and control them very well. The best teaching has clear and manageable aims shared with students and tested at the end of the lesson to ensure that learning is effective; detailed and imaginative planning which encourages interest and offers a variety of suitable learning opportunities; lively presentation with good pace, challenge and high expectations. In these lessons staff have a secure knowledge of the subject matter taught and teaching is well structured and focused and this helps students' understanding and thus promotes learning. Visual aids when used clarified lesson aims and had a significant positive impact on the quality of students learning.

145. However, on the few occasions when teaching was unsatisfactory it was due to low expectations of students; a lack of rigour in explanation of graphical skills being taught resulting in major errors in students practice and a failure to analyse the geographical implications of the methods used.

146. However, learning generally, would be further enhanced by greater consolidation and re-inforcement of the main teaching points visually on the board; the regular use of a permanent display map to develop students visual understanding of geographical patterns and place; a stronger emphasis on students learning needs in selecting materials and activities for lessons, particularly for high and low attainers; more visual materials and actual examples in teaching and the use of more investigatory resource based learning as an element of a lesson or series of lessons. Literacy skills are satisfactory but key words need emphasising and integrating more into students learning. Numeracy skills are satisfactory. Many students at both Key Stages 3 and 4 have difficulty with the retention and recall of

knowledge and understanding and this greatly hinders personal development in the subject. There is need of a sustained programme of study skills and regular testing of learning to improve these skills. The use of revision pamphlets and even more examination techniques and skills would also help many students to reach their full potential. The quality of day to day assessment is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4 when students work is marked meticulously with helpful, formative comments that have a positive effect on students progress. A modification to current policy with the involvement of students in evaluating their own work and setting targets would be beneficial. Fieldwork undertaken locally at Key Stage 3 and at Holderness in Year 10 and Hebden Bridge and Sowerby Bridge in Year 11 enriches the curriculum significantly. However, the Key Stage 3 programme is inadequate and needs the inclusion of a study of physical landscape and an area outside the local area. There is need to implement a coherent programme of information and communication technology skills suitably linked to curriculum themes that ensures progression over both key stages.

147. Students' attitude to learning is very positive and a real work ethos exists. Many students display a real interest and enjoyment in their work. They respond productively to teaching. Behaviour is always good and usually very good. Good relationships are established with their teachers and often a real rapport exists. Students also relate very well to each other. Students' individual responses to questions are good but in many lessons a greater class response needs nurturing. There were some excellent examples of interaction between teacher and students during question and answer sessions re-enforcing what had been learnt in the previous lesson with every student involved in the learning process. This was integrated with students annotating photographs of urban land-use in Least Economically Developed Countries including shantytowns in Brazil. A high attaining student consolidated the learning by placing contributions from fellow students on a spider diagram on the board

148. The subject is effectively led and managed by the acting head of department and a good team spirit exists. The teaching staff are competent practitioners and have a desire and a very good capacity to improve standards. Documentation within the department for the inspection was good but there is need of a more detailed operational plan which is annually evaluated. There is currently too little monitoring and evaluation of teaching to assess how standards can be improved. Standard of performance of students at external examinations is reviewed but needs closer analyses. Accommodation is suited in specialist rooms but not all provide sufficient space for investigatory resource based learning. Resources are satisfactory overall but there are some serious shortfalls such as the need for more local OS maps; an overhead projector video monitor and a standing display map in each specialist room and a fieldwork budget. Many of the concerns raised at the previous inspection have been addressed. However, the school needs to work on improving standards of attainment in examinations using some of the ideas identified by staff and those mentioned in this report.

HISTORY

149. The attainment of students at Key Stage 3 in teacher assessments is in line with national expectations. Work seen in books and lessons shows that standards achieved by students with special educational needs are satisfactory. Students' knowledge of the periods studied is good. For example Year 7 students investigated written sources to arrive at conclusions about the character of the Emperor Augustus and the trustworthiness of written sources. Year 8 students worked in groups to extract and communicate information about Henry VIII. Year 9 students role-played farmers making decisions about enclosure of land, learning about the unequal nature of land distribution. Students understand the importance of using evidence, recognise bias and the difference between facts and opinions. There are opportunities for independent research. Attainment is regularly assessed through formal assignments and levels of response mark schemes, and teachers keep records to assess

levels against national expectations and predict GCSE grades. The department has strategies for differentiating tasks for students with special needs. Key Stage 3 is clearly laying good foundations for future work at GCSE.

150. GCSE results in 1999 were below the national average at grades A*-C and above the national average for grades A*-G. The number of students obtaining grades A*-C decreased in 2000. The number attaining grades A*-G was slightly lower than in previous years. The results achieved were above the targets set by the school. Inspection of lessons in Years 10 and 11 shows that attainment in lessons is at least satisfactory and often better. For example, Year 10 students combined knowledge of the First World War acquired from visiting a museum, watching a video and research to make presentations on different topics. Year 11 students are acquiring knowledge and understanding of how the geography and climate of the American Plains affected lifestyles of different groups of people.

151. A level results have been disappointing for the last two years. In 2000 50 per cent of students achieved grades C-E; 50 per cent failed. Analysis indicates that absenteeism by some students affected the standards achieved, and that some students should not have been entered, given prior GCSE and subsequent levels of attainment. The present Year 13 group has good GCSE grades and attendance. Targets set suggest the possibility of one grade A and three grade Bs. Inspection of lessons shows that students are acquiring a good knowledge of topics, for example the development of trade unionism in 19th century Britain and of the Russian Revolution and Civil War. In Year 12 students show a good understanding of political developments within the Conservative Party under Disraeli. They demonstrate a good level of critical skills when investigating sources, make sensible judgements of events and issues, and can conduct their own research using textbooks, other reference materials and the Internet. The level of discussion in lessons is good.

152. Progress in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is good in terms of knowledge, development of skills and understanding of key ideas such as cause and effect, change, chronology and bias. Students' written work improves steadily. They can make notes, write essays, reports, newspaper accounts and letters, and imaginative writing shows understanding of the points of view of people in the past. Speaking and listening skills are progressed through planned opportunities for discussion, debate and oral presentations. Students seek information from textbooks, the school library and selective use of data on the Internet. Progress is due to careful planning by teachers, knowledge of students resulting from regular assessment and by setting targets and advice on revision.

153. In the lessons seen teaching at Key Stage 3 was good and sometimes excellent. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, it was good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject and planning of lessons is very good. Explanations are clear and lively. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are used. Questions encourage participation. Time is used well in lessons. Good use is made of resources including textbooks, teacher-produced materials (which are of a high standard), audio-visual resources, pictures and photographs. Relationships are consistently good and supportive and expectations of students high. Work is marked regularly and homework consistently well used.

154. Students enjoy the subject, evidenced by the numbers choosing to take history at Key Stage 4 and their comments that are consistently positive. Students enjoy using artefacts in lessons and the opportunities for visiting museums. They work hard, collaborate well and respect each other's ideas. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good.

155. Good leadership is offered by the head and second in department. Teachers share commitment to raising standards. There is a comprehensive handbook containing policies, a scheme of work and guidelines for teaching, assessment, record keeping and reporting.

Annual reports provide analysis of examination results. Money is spent to meet the priorities set out in the Development Plans. Teachers attend in-service courses. There are resources for ICT although implementation has been delayed by changes within the school. The quality of display is very good. A useful contribution is made to raising standards of literacy. Teachers are concerned that their support for students with special educational needs is limited by unavailability of extra staff for lessons. Numeracy needs to be addressed.

156. At the last inspection, the department was judged to be achieving high standards. Issues raised have been addressed - consistency in planning, analysis of GCSE results, identification of ways in which standards in Key Stage 4 and at A level GCE can be raised.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

157. At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to address the key issue to introduce measures to improve information and communication technology. This resulted from unsatisfactory standards overall, unsatisfactory management and co-ordination, a lack of clear curriculum targets and a failure to meet statutory requirements. Much has changed since then although the current arrangements are still unsatisfactory because they still fail to meet statutory requirements. However, the subject is now well managed and measures have been introduced that should improve information and communication technology. All the equipment in the school has been updated and a new course is now in its second year at Key Stage 3. Although results at this key stage have fallen consistently over the last three years, they are likely to improve significantly when the current Year 8 is assessed next year. Progress is thus satisfactory since the last inspection although the school still has more to achieve.

158. Students in Year 7 successfully follow a course originally designed for Year 10 students. This is the only school in the country to offer this option. The current Year 8 students were the first to take this course and over 70 per cent will receive a certificate to acknowledge that they achieved the required standard. This standard is similar to Level 5 of the National Curriculum, the level expected of students at the end of Year 9. Year 7 students are following the same course this year and their work in progress suggests that the majority is also likely to achieve accreditation.

159. Students in Year 9 did not have this advantage and consequently overall standards are at best in line with national expectations. They do not follow a specific information and communication technology course and have limited cross-curricular experiences. For Year 9 students, the school does not meet statutory requirements. Year 8 students do not have a follow-on course of equal intensity to their Year 7 experiences. Instead of one session each week they have only one each fortnight. In Year 8, the students who did so well in Year 7 do not have the chance to fully develop their experiences either through specific information and communication technology sessions or in work across the curriculum. On balance they have sufficient experiences to meet statutory requirements but do not build on their earlier experiences. The school is aware of the problems in Years 8 and 9 and is planning appropriate courses and cross-curricular experiences to enable students to cover the full programme of study.

160. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average. At Key Stage 4, students can opt for a full or short GCSE course in information and communication technology. The students who take this course achieve at an appropriate level. The current Year 11 students will be the first to take the examination and, as such, there is no history of results. However, their work shows that the most able are likely to obtain the highest grades and that the work of the groups as a whole shows the full range of ability in the subject.

161. There are a large number of students in Key Stage 4 who did not choose to take the GCSE course. For these students the school does not meet statutory requirements since they do not cover the programme of study for Key Stage 4. The school is aware of this and wishes to introduce the GCSE short course for all who do not take the full course.

162. In the sixth form, students can opt to take a GCSE in information and communication technology. Those following the course achieve at the full range of ability although the numbers of high attaining students is limited because the students have limited understanding of the capabilities of the new software.

163. The best teaching and learning takes place in Year 7. The lessons are very well planned, some to an exemplar standard. Good use is made of guide sheets and demonstration files and the students are involved in self-assessment, a model that is being considered for the rest of the school. As a result, lessons enable students to acquire and consolidate their skills quickly. There is something of a tension between finishing the work and developing skills and teachers need to examine their approach to ensure that learning objectives are not obscured. Much of the software is very new to the staff and the process of fully mapping the skills has yet to be completed. There is a good example of transferring the responsibility for skill development to the students in Year 8 where the skills have been listed and given to the students who then have the responsibility of ensuring that each skill is covered and that they have the evidence to prove their expertise. This is particularly effective and is a good model that the school intends to develop further.

164. The new software has also highlighted a need for skill development for the staff. Many have been able to transfer their skills effectively to cover Word but skill levels in Excel and Access are far too limited. For example, when using Excel, students frequently ignore the principles of good spreadsheet design. They do not appreciate the database properties of the spreadsheet, do not use simple functions like grouped worksheets and have great difficulty in creating a simple IF statement. In Access, students show no understanding of the purpose of the primary key, do not establish relational properties and do not recognise the possibilities of forms for summarising data.

165. Wherever information and communication technology is taught or experienced, students are very positive. They are motivated by technology and clearly enjoy working with it. They can concentrate for extended periods and have a good understanding of their own capabilities. Relationships are always positive and students are willing to support each other and share their experiences. Behaviour is very good and students show a lot of respect for their environment.

166. The school has made progress with information and communication technology. There are three new facilities linked together as a single network. This had been in operation for three weeks at the time of this inspection. As yet, the supplier has not shown the school how it access subject specific software stored on CD-ROM. Some departments, for example science, are keen to become involved others, for example design and technology find the concept of rooms of computers does not match their need to have computers at the point of learning. The school is aware of this difficulty.

167. Currently, the greatest challenge for the school is to increase the available equipment. The level is below the national average and there are only 9 periods each week when the computer facilities are available for booking. These nine periods would have to ensure that Years 8 and 9 had regular contact, that all Year 10 and 11 covered the programme of study and that the facilities were available to support the work of departments. Clearly this is not possible and the school is hoping to develop further resources during the next academic year.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

168. In 1999, GCSE results in French at A*-C were below the national average, although slightly higher than the previous year. Results at A*-G were below the national average. The GCSE results at A*-C in German in 1999 were well below the national average, and lower than in the previous year. The results at A*-G in 1999 were in line with the national average. In the past three years, girls have consistently attained higher grades than boys. In 1999, both boys and girls performed less well than in other subjects. This year, results in both languages were affected by lack of continuity in teaching and were lower than in the previous two years. In recent years, small numbers of sixth form students have taken French and German to A level, the majority gaining A-E grades. A substantial minority entering for French and about half of those taking German have attained the higher grades A-B.

169. The current attainment of students in French and German at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average, but lower than the most recent assessment by their teachers. Students' attainment in the most challenging lessons is higher than average. Most students can follow those parts of their lessons that are in French or German, and can understand short descriptive texts and taped conversations. Most students in Year 7 progress quickly from classroom responses to conducting simple surveys based on questions about life in and out of school. By Year 9 they can compose and perform humorous sketches about winning a lottery prize or taking home a bad report. Their writing ranges from short captions and labels to longer, detailed descriptions of past and future events using a range of tenses. All students have regular access to computers for extending their communication skills.

170. Current attainment in French and German at Key Stage 4 is mostly in line with national expectations, and higher than that indicated by the most recent GCSE results. Girls are more numerous in the higher attaining sets, although boys learn equally well within these classes. By the end of the key stage, higher attainers can write in various styles, for example brief jotted answers, when listening and reading, and tourist information and formal letters. The scope of their ideas and expression expands through the use of dictionaries and other resources to include the world of work, the environment and teenage concerns. Most students express their opinions clearly, using more or less complex grammar, depending on their ability. A few are incoherent when reading from scripts. Lower attaining students, including some with special educational needs, work steadily in small classes towards an alternative certificate. They consolidate work they did in Key Stage 3, practising the basic language needed for living and travelling abroad. Generally, students make good progress.

171. In the very small sixth form classes, attainment is satisfactory, though limited by the lack of opportunities for exchanging ideas, enrichment or personal experience abroad. Students must first improve their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, before learning to talk and write discursively on moral, social and cultural issues. They use computers for research and to improve the presentation of finished work.

172. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. The majority of teaching is good or better, and a substantial minority is very good or excellent. Teachers are fluent in French and German, but occasionally use English more than is necessary. They plan their lessons well, briefly explaining and summarising the content of each. They interpret the work in various styles ranging from formal explanations of grammar to a more managerial approach allowing students greater independence. Most students respond well to the different techniques. Teachers make good use of up to date course books, handle audio-visual equipment effectively and produce attractive, informative visual aids that encourage active learning. Most

lessons include a good variety of short exercises designed to exercise different skills, culminating in a game or simulation that adds realism and interest to students' learning. Teachers and their assistants have very good relations with their students, most of whom are co-operative and curious about how language works. They deal patiently but firmly with any occasional instances of disaffection. Teachers work in close co-operation with their assistants to stimulate reluctant learners with mime and competitions, giving extra support to students with special educational needs. They work closely with sixth form students, taking turns to offer them as varied an experience as possible, but do not fully exploit Internet and e-mail links with Europe. Teachers continually monitor their students' attainment, asking them frequent questions, encouraging their involvement in presentations, and checking the quality of their work in pairs and groups. Their marking is thorough and supported by useful comments and advice. They set homework regularly to extend the work done in class but do not always adapt the tasks to suit the range of ability.

173. The department is very well managed, buoyant and cohesive, despite poor accommodation scattered across the school site. Its documentation is attractive, clear and informative, reflecting the most recent revision of the National Curriculum. Many of the good features of the last inspection report have been restored after a recent unsettled period, and standards are improving. Higher attainment is evident as students concentrate on one language at Key Stage 3. Teachers share many examples of current good practice such as using visual prompts and display, involving students in presentations and setting them individual targets. They need to improve attainment in German, bring boys' performance into line with girls and promote languages as a more attractive offering in the sixth form.

MUSIC

174. The number of entries for GCSE and A Level in the last three years is too low for meaningful comparisons with national figures, or to give indications of trends. However practically all candidates at A Level achieved grades A to D and GCSE candidates achieved similar success with grades A* to C.

175. Current standards of attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 are above national expectations. Ensemble skills are very good both in class and in extra-curricular activities such as the school wind bands. Students are able to hold independent parts and keep well in time with each other in small groups as well as in larger class or instrumental ensembles. At the end of Key Stage 3 students are able to control keyboards and select appropriate voices. They are able to play melodies, accompany them with rhythmic chord patterns and then improvise effectively. They are familiar with graphic and staff notation but many students are over-reliant on letter names when reading staff notation. Singing standards are above average; the students sing in two parts with good pitch definition and intonation. At Key Stage 4 the students perform well on their instruments. The school's senior wind band achieves very high standards, playing challenging repertoire and fulfilling an extensive programme of concerts. In the sixth form standards are in line with average national expectations at this stage of the A Level course. Instrumental performance is good with listening skills developing well. Composition standards vary from very basic techniques such as adding chords to a melody to fluent writing showing structure and style with assured use of modulation. The level of achievement for all three key stages is good. No significant differences were observed in the attainment of boys and girls or different ethnic groups. Students of differing levels of prior attainment achieved appropriately.

176. The quality of teaching and learning is good at all key stages. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and four fifths ranged from good to excellent. The teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to good effect. Lessons are well planned with a good balance of activities. The management of students is very good and this combined with

the students' good attitude to music, enables the teachers to generate a good ethos for learning.

177. The good behaviour of the students and good control by the teachers helps the department to overcome some of the difficulties caused by the poor accommodation. The students acquire skills progressively, for example moving from ensemble work with graphic scores and loose rhythmic structure in Year 7 to performing in ensembles, reading from staff notation using chords, rhythm and melody in Year 9. Clear explanations and objectives, set by the teachers, results in students' interest and concentration being maintained. Students generally complete the tasks set because the staff give energetic support to individuals and groups throughout the lessons. Students with special educational needs make good progress as a result of teachers adapting the tasks for them and giving individual attention. The teaching of band and orchestral instruments is soundly based on good specialist knowledge and pitched according to the individual needs of the students.

178. All the concerns expressed in the last inspection report have been addressed to some degree. Attainment at Key Stage 3 has improved, as have standards of teaching. More opportunities are provided for composing and there is now systematic recording of students' work. Some attempt has been made to include music from a wider range of styles and cultures but development is still needed in this area. The accommodation is poor, there is insufficient space and this has an effect upon standards. For example A Level teaching is carried out in a tiny room with no windows and insufficient space for even a table. The quality of resources for learning has been improved but the lack of equipment for information technology means that there is insufficient use of it in Key Stage 3. The small groups in Key Stage 4 and sixth form make very effective use of the limited equipment, which the department has.

179. The department is a strength of the school and is well led by an experienced and enthusiastic teacher. He has a clear vision of what he wants the department to achieve and this reflects well the schools aims and values. Efforts should now be made to improve the take-up for music at GCSE and A Level, implement the use of information technology at Key Stage 3, give more emphasis to music from non-European cultures, and improve the accommodation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

180. GCSE results in physical education for 1999 were in line with the national average when compared to all other schools, with results in 2000 indicating similar standards. When compared with the school's other GCSE results, those for physical education were among the best.

181. When students enter the school they are attaining at a standard below average for their age against national expectations. By the end of Year 9, knowledgeable teaching linked to high expectations ensures standards for the majority of students, including special educational students, are in line with the national average. In dance and gymnastics students show imagination, control and fluency when linking movements together to create a sequence. In netball, girls have good ball handling skills and have started to develop the technique of turning in the air when wanting to make a quick pass. At the end of Year 11 standards overall are in line with the national average but are below national average in the sixth form. Students use the trampoline with confidence, linking drops, jumps and turns with a good degree of skill and fluidity. GCSE students have a good grasp of technical vocabulary and a sound knowledge and understanding of the theory underpinning physical activity. Sixth form students have a reasonable understanding of the body's muscular system. A wide range of extra-curricular activities helps students to extend and improve their performance including inter-school competitions where the school has been successful in several areas including football and netball. At every stage students develop a good knowledge of safe practice, health, hygiene and fitness. Students who are gifted with a particular talent are encouraged and supported, sometimes through the good links the department has with community sports clubs. Progress is good, overall.

182. The behaviour and attitudes of students in physical education are never less than good and are often very good or excellent. Students work hard, show confidence and use sports equipment safely and responsibly. They listen attentively to instructions, readily answer questions, think about what they are doing and make efforts to improve. When working in pairs or groups they help and support each other.

183. The vast majority of teaching in physical education is good or very good and is never less than satisfactory; the teaching of theory to GCSE and A level examination classes is very good. Teachers expect students to work hard and make progress. Good relationships encourage students to be involved and committed. Effective organisation ensures that little time is wasted and despite the difficulties posed in moving around the site, students are quickly changed and ready for their activities. Lessons are carefully planned, are varied and interesting and with clear demonstrations and explanations which enable students of all abilities to learn quickly. Day-to-day assessment is good, appropriate records are kept and students' own planning and self-evaluation is a regular feature of lesson activities. For GCSE students, mentoring and target-setting help them achieve good results. Although they understand the need to "warm up" before physical activity, students are not given enough responsibility for devising and leading the routines themselves.

184. Following the promotion of the previous head of department the school appointed a joint team of two teachers, neither of which has a role specification, to be in charge of the department. Whilst this team has been effective in maintaining the high standards that prevailed at the time of the previous inspection, in the medium to long term this arrangement is unsustainable. Since the previous inspection several new and successful initiatives have been introduced. The introduction of GCSE has been a great success and the results in summer 2000 were, in school terms, excellent. In 1999 the school was awarded the prestigious Sportsmark Award. The effective leadership the team provides makes a significant contribution to the high standards students achieve and the good progress they

make. Members of the department are experienced, well qualified, enthusiastic and committed, giving up a great deal of time for after school and lunch time activities as well as annual camps and trips abroad. Planning and organisation is strong and safety considerations during activities are given a high priority. Only girls do dance in years seven to nine which discriminates against boys. Areas for further development include developing a policy for the use of information technology, especially in examination groups, developing a tracking system that will chart and record students' achievements as they progress through the school, the introduction of more mixed gender teaching groups and an on-site risk assessment of facilities and equipment.

185. The facilities that the school provides for physical education are poor. There is no sports hall and the two indoor areas are unsuitable for racquet sports such as badminton. The outside courts are in need of resurfacing as they hold water, which makes them dangerous to play on after heavy rain. In winter, when the inside areas are used for examinations, the outside courts are flooded and the field surfaces waterlogged it is impossible to teach a meaningful curriculum. This is clearly having an adverse impact on the standards that students can achieve.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

186. At the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, the standard of attainment is below the standards outlined in the Agreed Syllabus, but students make satisfactory progress. They only have a very general understanding of various concepts, which are common to world religions, concepts such as holy books, festivals and rites of passage. Better standards occur where the students are able to make meaningful reference to specific world religions and can talk about Sikhism and Islam in a more developed way. Generally however the students ability for example, to explain the similarities and differences that exist between religions is not very marked nor is their ability to reflect on and make connections between what might be learnt from religions for their own beliefs and experiences. The general skills of the students are good, particular discussion and comprehension. The skill of extended writing is not very developed. Across both key stages, the students need to have a clearer and more systematically developed understanding of Christianity in particular and a more general overall view of the central differences in belief that exist between the religions of the Indian traditions and the traditions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

187. In Key Stage 4, the department has recently introduced an option course. As yet no examination has been taken so no statement can be made about the standards of attainment in comparison with national averages. Of the written work and other work seen in the classroom in the GCSE option classes, the standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. The students have an adequate knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Islam and they can recall, select and use this knowledge and understanding in a meaningful way. Some of their knowledge of basic beliefs needs to be expanded but other than that, various religious concepts such as beliefs, sources of authority, practice and organisation are familiar to them and they can relate these concepts to others aspects of religious traditions, such as morality and lifestyles. The standard of attainment in the non GCSE classes is below the standards indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Much of their knowledge and understanding is restricted to a range moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia. A systematic and detailed comprehension of individual religious traditions is not very evident and so the students find it difficult to answer specific questions about particular world religions. The students can discuss and give opinions on a range of general thematic issues such as religion and medical ethics and questions of truth and meaning but they are not so able to make connections between these topics and the various belief systems of the major world faiths. Often their general skills of information gathering and processing are good, but these skills are not always profitably directed at understanding the central theories

and practical outworkings of the major religious traditions. The students can work well both individually and collaboratively. Writing skills need more emphasis as it is not a significant aspect of their work.

188. Only one lesson was seen in the sixth form during the inspection and there is very little written work. It is not possible therefore to make a statement about the standards of attainment at this key stage.

189. Overall, the students' progress in relation to their prior attainment is satisfactory. The progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory as the teachers are aware of their needs and support them accordingly. The progress of students who have English as an additional language is good as they are sufficiently able in the second language. Suitably chosen work provides opportunities for the higher and lower achievers but this needs to be more systematically developed, particularly more extension work for the more able. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

190. Across the key stages, the attitude and behaviour of students is very good in a minority of lessons, good in larger proportion and satisfactory in the majority. No unsatisfactory behaviour or attitudes were seen during the time of the inspection. Where the response of the students is very good, the students work enthusiastically and engage themselves actively in verbal responses and written work. Here the students are responding to clear expert teaching and to clear objectives being set for them at the beginning of the lesson. These students are also responding positively to a fast demanding pace and where the tasks are sufficiently demanding. Where the response is unsatisfactory, the students lose concentration and begin to waste time. This happens where the teaching is uncertain due to lack of expertise and consequently where the work is insufficiently clear, demanding and specific. In general the students are willing to respond to the various issues raised in the lesson. This willingness could be further utilised in encouraging them to respond on a more personal level.

191. The teaching is excellent in a minority of the lessons, good in a larger proportion and satisfactory in the majority. Where the teaching is excellent, the lessons are thoroughly prepared and the objectives of the lessons are clearly indicated to the students themselves. As a result, the students know what they are doing and what is expected of them by the end of the lesson and so their learning is distinct and purposeful. The excellent lessons are also characterised by a fast pace and high expectations. These excellent lessons also have a clear unambiguous religious content and the teaching has firm expertise and is consequently the teacher is able to deal with the questions posed by the students. Where the teaching is satisfactory, lack of subject expertise is often a predominant factor and it is having a significant impact on the attainment and learning of the students. These lessons, though well prepared and managed, either have minimal religious content and are largely about moral issues and vague talk about 'religions' in general, or have specific religious content which is simply restricted to learning about religions and not learning from them. Learning from religions is an important area of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Some uncertainty in subject knowledge at times leads to confusion among the students, particularly when the teacher is unable to answer their questions. This leads to a loss of interest and concentration. Some of the information given is not very accurate. Overall and generally, a faster pace and higher expectations would be of benefit in the lessons that are not classed as excellent. More intellectual rigour would ensure that the students learning is less superficial. Also generally, the teaching needs to encourage more specifically personal responses to specifically religious issues so that the students will be able to see the immediate relevance of what they are learning to their own personal lives and experiences. More written work and less drawing and colouring would make more demands on the students and would be of additional benefit in revision and assessment. Homework is set. There is a pleasant positive working

atmosphere. An assessment policy is implemented by the department.

192. The department is well managed by specialist head of department who does about 50 per cent of the teaching. A very significant amount of teaching is done by non-specialists. This staffing situation is unsatisfactory as this non-specialist teaching is having a marked effect on the attainment and learning of the students. It was an issue at the last inspection. The Agreed Syllabus is being implemented at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, while a GCSE option group has been introduced since the last inspection, about 90 per cent of the students are still not receiving their statutory entitlement as there is insufficient time to meet the requirement of the Agreed Syllabus. The time allocated for religious education at this key stage is about less than half of that recommended in the Agreed Syllabus. It was an issue at the last inspection. Statutory requirements are not being met in the Sixth Form as there is insufficient time to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. It was an issue at the last inspection. On other issues raised at the last inspection, writing still needs to be significantly stronger and more still needs to be made of the part religion plays in peoples' lives. Restricted access is making it difficult for the department to include information and communication technology in its work. The accommodation is satisfactory and the resources are good. The department makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of school life and also a good contribution to literacy with the introduction, explanation and use of new words and phrases.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

193. Recent GCSE A*-C and Advanced Level results in business studies have been mostly above and often well above the national average. However, 'AS' results have been well below the position nationally. Teaching observed at Key Stage 4 was very good. It was lively and characterised by good pace, challenge and high quality lesson presentation. The lesson was very well focused on learning expectations, as exemplified by linking together the ways in which a questionnaire can be prepared with visual illustration using the overhead projector. This resulted in students gaining new knowledge and understanding of these skills and making impressive progress. At Advanced Level in Year 13, most students are working steadily on their studies and have a satisfactory understanding of the course elements but some are not and there is evidence of some underachieving due to a less than full involvement in their work. Students are given sound support and academic guidance on examination skills and techniques in preparation for their examinations. In Year 12, students worked conscientiously and were able to assess correctly in a practical exercise whether demand for a product was elastic or inelastic. They were also learning the importance of business terminology and the need to use it appropriately. A strength of the teaching generally is that teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, learning is well organised with lessons very structured and practical examples are well used to explain theory so that students understand what they are being taught

194. GNVQ health and social care is offered at intermediate level at Key Stage 4 and at intermediate and advanced level in the Sixth Form. Standards are improving at both levels. The teaching of the subject is good and students respond particularly well when real life situations are discussed. Students are well motivated in the subject and this is reflected in the high standard of research and presentation in their portfolios. Recent GNVQ business studies results have been generally satisfactory at intermediate level and good at advanced level. GNVQ advanced level teaching was enthusiastic and of good quality with the teacher providing very helpful information on how to handle assignments on the course and giving a careful explanation of how the course is assessed. Students generally make a good start to the assignment. In the leisure and recreation and travel and tourism GNVQ taught course at intermediate and advanced level in the lessons observed planning is thorough and coursework is well applied to the work situation. The quality of work varies considerably with some students finding the demands of the course greater than expected which together with other factors resulted in a very high withdrawal rate in Year 12 last year so that a very small number of students remain in Year 13. There was a generally enthusiastic cohort of students following the leisure and recreation course in Year 12 and they were showing good level of understanding of the course requirements. However, the travel and tourism group were finding the programme of study more of a challenge and the pace of their work was rather slow indicating less confidence and lower attainment levels.

THE SIXTH FORM

195. One exemplary feature of the sixth form is the Millennium Volunteer Project. Ryburn Valley High School is currently the only school in the country to run this Government initiative and only one of five national organisations to have been chosen to accredit existing voluntary activities.

196. Under the scheme, sixth formers plan, manage and participate in volunteer schemes that benefit and strengthen the community. Although participation in the scheme is entirely voluntary and involves students using many of their free periods and giving freely of their time out of school, almost all sixth formers have chosen to participate. Some have already received prestigious awards for performing 100 or 200 hours of voluntary service.

197. The school is rightly proud of the achievements of their sixth formers. Students have capitalised on their varied skills and interests in a wide range of innovative and exciting ways. Drama, art, sporting, information technology, interpersonal and organisational skills have been some of those skills used by students to reach out to and improve the lives of local people. Many hundreds of people have already benefited, from the youngest children in local playgroups to senior citizens in their homes and social settings. The voluntary schemes that have been and are being run are as diverse as the imaginations and skills of the students who participate. For example, students in local primary schools that are too small to be able to afford to employ coaches have received sport coaching in football, tennis and other sports. Mentoring schemes have been established for younger school students, manned by trained and competent sixth formers. Self-esteem enhancing schemes have been run to help students in primary schools prepare for the major changes they experience when moving to a secondary school. School web pages and networks have been established. A library of students' artwork is being created to enable local schools to draw on students' artistic talents to enhance and enrich the environment in their own buildings.

198. A common theme of all the projects has been the strengthening of the community. Schools, colleges, universities, voluntary organisation and older citizens organisations have been just some of the wide range of communal services and facilities which have been motivated to strengthen their working relationships under the umbrella of the Millennium Volunteer Project. Students themselves have benefited enormously. Their self-confidence and pride are evident in abundance as they speak most articulately of their voluntary work and experiences. At a comparatively young age they have become valued citizens and have begun what for many will undoubtedly be a lifetime of contributing their skills, time and empathy for the benefit of others. The school and in particular its sixth formers are to be congratulated for an excellent initiative.

199. There are 150 students on roll with numbers in classes ranging from two to 24. The average class size is ten. Money spent per student is £2,800, which is close to that spent in the rest of the school. The sixth form is, therefore, viable in terms of numbers and cost-effectiveness. Attainment is of a high standard given levels of achievement on entry to the school and at Key Stage 4. In 1999, the average points score of candidates entered for two or more A levels was above the national average even though the same cohort in Year 11 achieved only modest numbers at grades A*-C. Teaching is good with a range of staff including some newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers. A varied curriculum is offered which meets the needs and aspirations of students. It includes the full range of National Curriculum subjects at 'A' level together with GNVQ at Intermediate and Advanced level in three subjects. There are opportunities to retake GCSEs in English and Mathematics. All students take the A/AS general studies course, which includes a religious education strand. Whilst there is no minimum requirement for entry to the sixth form, four GCSEs are required for entry to A level GCE courses but this can be modified at the discretion of Heads of Departments who can also override minimum grade level requirements for their subjects. Last year there was provision for lower attaining students through ASDAN but this has been abandoned this year because of cost. It is intended to re-introduce this next year, and the school is also exploring alternatives. There is a very well organised induction programme. All students participate in physical education and games and there is a Sports Coaching Award taught in collaboration with Leeds University, which enables students to become involved in working with local Primary schools. Support, welfare and guidance is offered through tutor groups and includes a very good programme which is valued by students and parents. This includes in Year 12 a course in Core Skills (Information and Communication Technology, Communication and Study Skills), which provides a good bridge between the structured learning of Key Stage 4 and the study skills required of advanced work and which is continued in individual courses of study. The programme in Years 12 and 13 includes health education, careers guidance by Calderdale Careers Service and mentoring for UCAS and job seekers. Attendance, which has been a problem for some students, is monitored and a range of sanctions is in place. There is excellent involvement with the school and local communities mainly through the Millennium Volunteers programme. Each year students can apply for Senior Student awards, which are given on the basis of contributions to the school community.

COMMUNITY LINKS

200. The school has developed excellent links with the local community. The school sees itself at the heart of the community and takes that role very seriously. The drama and expressive arts department regularly takes plays and drama workshops round to local primary schools and media studies has developed important curriculum links with the National Museum of Film and Photography. Members of the community visit the school for plays and concerts and to talk to students about their memories of life in Sowerby. At Christmas senior citizens are invited to a Christmas party. The school's community wind band draws many students from local primary schools. In local churches, concerts and services are accompanied by the school's musicians; the choir sings in Christmas carol services.

201. The local environment is a major resource. Students visit a wide variety of places from graveyards to sewage works. Every year groups of students are taken on a tour of Zeneca in Huddersfield. The physical education department has links with local sports clubs who often share the school's facilities. Students are encouraged to join clubs and their sports coaches often come to school to work with students.

202. Guest speakers are a regular feature of school life. Local poets and writers come to talk to students about their work. Victims of the Holocaust have talked to history groups and the Bishop of Pontefract and a team of local clergy have spent time in school visiting lessons and talking to students and teachers. The school has many good links within business and industry. Representatives of the business community come to talk and work with students on industry days, careers conventions and mock interview evenings. During work experience weeks, local firms and businesses provide placements for over two hundred students.

203. Strong links exist with local charities and support organisations such as the Samaritans, Kirklees Alcoholics Advisory Service, Red Cross and Rotary Club. Each year, the school hosts a Health Fair involving many health organisations and local police and ambulance services.