

INSPECTION REPORT

RAWTHORPE HIGH SCHOOL

Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107756

Headteacher: Mr A Gaunt

Reporting inspector: Mr R C Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 20 - 23 May 2002

Inspection number: 207452

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Nether Hall Avenue
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire

Postcode: HD5 9PG

Telephone number: 01484 221892

Fax number: 01484 221894

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Rock

Date of previous inspection: 5 October 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7281	Robert Drew	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9710	Elizabeth Burgess	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
4677	Valerie Banks	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Geography	
2928	William Baxendale	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11891	Steven Cushing	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
19586	Wendy Easterby	Team inspector	English	
10209	Vincent Gormally	Team inspector	Design and technology	
11975	Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Team inspector	Music	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	
31680	Phil Redican	Team inspector	Art	
27485	Mark Sims	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
7222	Alan Watson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Religious education	
12972	Anthony Weaden	Team inspector	Physical education	
8341	William Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rawthorpe School is an 11 to 16 comprehensive school of 461 pupils: much smaller than average, though growing. It serves a small, highly populated area of Huddersfield in which social and economic disadvantage are very marked. Four pupils in ten are eligible for free school meals - twice the national average - and the neighbourhood is part of a government regeneration area. About three quarters of the pupils are white and the remainder come from several ethnic minority communities, including a significant number of Bosnian refugees. Fifty pupils use English as an additional language with eight of these at an early stage of language acquisition.

Attainment on entry is well below the national average. Many pupils have special educational needs: 166 are on the special educational needs register, twice the national percentage, and 11 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, compared with 2.5 per cent nationally. There is also a resource provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, based at this school, which serves the whole of the local education authority area. Large numbers of pupils move in and out of the school during the year, with about 10 per cent of pupils arriving or leaving part way through each year. Since the previous inspection in 1998, the school has appointed a new headteacher and a new deputy. The school was acknowledged as one of the country's most improved schools in 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school with several good features but some serious weaknesses. Teaching is satisfactory overall and although pupils' standards are well below national averages, they make satisfactory progress by the time they leave school. The quality of leadership and management is good. Spending per pupil is above average and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides very good leadership and management at senior level, especially in planning, taking decisive action and offering visible support to staff and pupils.
- There is very good teaching and learning in geography and music and the quality is good in English and design and technology.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good overall progress.
- Staff give pupils good personal support and guidance.
- Relationships are good between staff and pupils and between pupils of all ethnic backgrounds.
- The formal curriculum is very well enhanced by good extra-curricular activities, good links with other schools and colleges and good careers education.
- There is very secure financial management.

What could be improved

- Attendance, while improving, is very low by national standards. Punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory.
- Standards have risen, but are still well below national averages, especially in English, mathematics, science, history and modern languages.
- Teaching and learning and progress are unsatisfactory in Years 8 and 9.
- The attitudes of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory.
- Links with parents are not sufficiently extensive.

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

This school has serious weaknesses in terms of attendance levels, standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and learning in Years 8 to 9. However, the school is improving in all of these areas and its current leadership has demonstrated the capacity to implement the additional changes required.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good overall improvement. In 1998 this was judged to be an improving school with good features, and was asked to act on a range of issues. It has made satisfactory improvement on these. There is now more monitoring of teaching and of middle management roles, and better use of assessment. Improvements have been made to assemblies, but they still do not claim to be acts of worship; provision for pupils' spiritual development is better. Attendance levels declined after 1998, but are now recovering. Mathematics and science results for 14 year olds have risen and GCSE results have improved more rapidly than the national trend.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment that for many years have been well below average. Standards amongst pupils aged 14 are also well below average in National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science when compared with results for all schools. Compared with results in similar schools, standards are broadly average. While still in the same broad category - 'well below average' - standards have improved since the last inspection, especially in mathematics and science with similar standards in English, while standards for 14 year olds are in line with national averages in music and religious education, but well below average in history, modern languages and art.

While pupils make progress across Years 7 to 9, the overall rate is unsatisfactory. It is good for pupils with special educational needs, due to effective, focused support, and gains are impressive in some subjects, such as music and geography. Overall, however, teaching and learning for Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory, reflecting poor attitudes amongst a significant minority of pupils and shortcomings in some teaching. Pupils with English as an additional language make unsatisfactory progress due to inconsistent support. Girls progress more rapidly than boys, but the school is having some success in promoting boys' progress.

At the age of 16, standards are well below average compared with attainment in all schools. In 2001, they were below average compared with similar schools, though in other recent years, they have compared more favourably. Results are improving from a very low base, but at a faster rate than the national trend. Girls reach higher standards than boys, but by a narrower margin than nationally. With 26.4 per cent of candidates gaining five or more A* to C GCSE passes in 2001, the school fell short of its targets of 33 per cent. Results in music and religious education were above average in 2001, and in geography and physical education they matched national averages. They were well below average in English, mathematics, science and history and very low in modern languages.

Progress across Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory for pupils as a whole. In geography, it is very good and it is good in music and design and technology. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and those deemed gifted or talented make satisfactory progress, but for those using English as an additional language, progress is unsatisfactory. High absence rates counter any positive factors and stop progress from being good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Unsatisfactory. The school has a growing number of very positive pupils but it has not fully eradicated the anti-learning stance of an influential minority of pupils.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. In the majority of lessons, behaviour is good and it is sensible and orderly in assemblies and in the dining area. A minority of pupils behave badly, and exclusion levels are high, but on both issues the school is improving matters.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. The teaching style of most staff allows for considerable involvement by pupils in lessons, and there are numerous extra-curricular activities and other openings, such as the school council, where pupils take on responsibilities. There are good relationships among pupils from different ethnic groups, as well as across gender and ability boundaries.
Attendance	Poor. With levels of 86 per cent for the previous year, the absence of pupils is a serious weakness, severely hampering the learning and attainment of many pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

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 is satisfactory for the school as a whole and for Years 10 and 11 in particular. In the lower school as a whole, notably in Years 8 and 9, teaching is unsatisfactory. Learning, heavily influenced by teaching, is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and unsatisfactory in Years 8 and 9, but for the school as a whole, too many lessons have shortcomings in learning and the situation is therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and absences also influence learning and cannot always be overcome by teaching quality. In English across the school as a whole, teaching and learning are good; teaching is satisfactory in science, but learning unsatisfactory, while in mathematics, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and sound in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are very effective in geography and music and good in design and technology. Learning is unsatisfactory in modern languages.

Teachers are consistently confident in their subject expertise and their communication skills. Overall, relationships with pupils are good, reflecting a very strong commitment from teachers and the ability to sustain a professional approach in both easy and difficult situations. The less successful aspects of teaching are the use of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology strategies across the curriculum and the quality of support for those pupils with English as an additional language. Learning by pupils deemed gifted or talented is satisfactory overall, as is that of pupils with special educational needs. Marked contrasts exist between year groups, with Year 7 having entirely satisfactory teaching and Year 9 accounting for a disproportionate share of the school's unsatisfactory teaching and learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is significantly enhanced by good extra-curricular activities, good links with other schools and colleges and good careers education. Information and communications technology provision and, in Years 10 and 11, religious education, fail to meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised, staff are well briefed and learning support assistants operate effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. The help given to pupils using English as an additional language has beneficial effects at times, but too often it is insufficiently focused.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Opportunities for pupils to reflect have increased since the last inspection and spiritual development is now satisfactory. The school provides good encouragement in the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Arrangements for ensuring a safe and secure environment for pupils are good. Their personal and academic progress is very carefully monitored.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The relatively newly appointed headteacher and very recently appointed deputy headteacher give very clear, direct and well-informed leadership. They make themselves very accessible to both staff and pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have, between them, a very good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Most statutory duties are met, but not those for religious education and ICT.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has a very strong commitment to improvement and evaluates much of its work well. It is not yet monitoring and reviewing some of its initiatives and day-to-day teaching as systematically as it should.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has clear priorities and links funding to these very carefully. Financial management is impressively efficient.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Amongst those replying to the Ofsted questionnaire, parents were most pleased with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's expectations of pupils; the fact that the school is very approachable; 	<p>A proportion of parents, both at the meeting and through the questionnaire, would like improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> homework arrangements;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the fact that their children like school; • the quality of teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' behaviour; • the closeness with which school and parents co-operate.
---	---

Links with a significant minority of parents are very good, but, overall, the situation is not satisfactory: too many parents have not been drawn into actively supporting their children's progress and the school's aims and activities. There is scope for better day-to-day communication through the effective use of pupils' planners.

Inspectors find much that is good in the school and endorse the parents' predominantly favourable view of it. Inspectors and the school accept that homework arrangements are not satisfactory and that there is some poor behaviour that has undue influence.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils have for many years entered the school with well below average standards of attainment. Their scores on nationally used tests indicate that some pupils are academically gifted, but many more have a wide range of learning difficulties. Over a third of all current pupils have special educational needs. This pattern is beginning to change and current Year 7 pupils have test scores close to the national average.
2. At the age of 14, Year 9 pupils have consistently demonstrated well below average standards of attainment, compared with those in all schools. This is true in the case of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science, where, for example, the school had 48 per cent of its pupils gaining level 5 or above in mathematics, when the national proportion is 66 per cent.
3. However, standards compared with those of similar schools were average in 2001 and close to average in previous years. Results, while still in the broad category 'well below average' have also improved, with average points scores rising from 28.5 in 1997 to 29.7 in 2000, a rate of improvement broadly the same as the national trend.
4. In work seen during the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were all well below average for current 14 year olds. In English, at the age of 14, higher-attaining pupils read well and can see how authors create distinctive effect in their writing. They can express their ideas at length, both orally and on paper. Their expression is accurate and they use paragraphs, though not to create effect. Middle-attaining pupils understand what they read, but their writing is less secure: they use basic sentence structures and employ very little punctuation within sentences. Lower-attaining pupils, similarly, are stronger at reading and speaking and listening than at writing: they can recall the events of texts, and show interest in the characters, but struggle to remember detail such as the names of minor characters. Written work is short, with little attempt at punctuation or paragraphing, weak spelling and a very basic vocabulary.
5. In mathematics, in the work seen during the inspection, standards are well below average at the end of Year 9. Although standards are improving slightly, they are not improving at a fast enough rate. Number skills are not well developed for many pupils. Many have difficulty with handling numbers mentally. For example, many pupils do not recall tables confidently in mental activities and even some of the highest-attaining pupils in Year 9 have difficulty with the units used in questions on proportion. Algebraic skills are weak for most pupils. Pupils' understanding of shape and space and data-handling are better, although still not developed sufficiently for many pupils. Problem-solving skills are not yet well developed for most pupils.
6. In science standards are also well below average. The work of some pupils - especially those with lower attainment - is sometimes incomplete or of a quality that would make later revision difficult. By the age of fourteen, the school's higher-attaining pupils show broadly national average standards in investigative skills and in their knowledge of most topics, whilst lower attainers show only partial understanding of some key aspects of science. It is noticeable that higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 have a better knowledge for their age: for example, they show a secure grasp of aspects of the solar system, the cause of day and night and seasons of the year and their understanding of rock types and formation is above average.
7. Amongst the other subjects of the curriculum, 14 year olds reach a wide range of standards. Attainment in religious education and music is in line with national norms and in physical education, geography, information and communications technology and design and technology, attainment is 'below' rather than 'well below' average. In history, modern languages and art, standards are well below average.

8. Progress across Years 7 to 9 is very variable, but overall is unsatisfactory. It is good in geography and design and technology, and in music is very good. This success reflects the impact of strong and very strong teaching in very effectively managed departments. In mathematics and modern languages, on the other hand, progress is unsatisfactory, largely reflecting weaknesses in teaching or leadership of the subject. Pupils with identified special educational needs receive specific support – of good quality – and generally make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are less well identified and supported and make unsatisfactory progress. For this stage of learning as a whole, most pupils undoubtedly make significant gains in knowledge and skills, but they do not collectively make as much progress as they should. This is firstly because in too many lessons – about one in five of those seen during the inspection – learning is unsatisfactory. Many pupils have deficiencies in learning skills, which the school is partially, but not wholly, managing to redress; a significant minority have poor attitudes and behave badly and they disrupt their learning and that of others in an unacceptable number of lessons. The school has done much to reduce this problem, but more remains to be done to ensure that teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 as a whole become satisfactory, so that pupils' progress might also become satisfactory. Secondly, pupils' attendance is quite poor in all school years except current Year 7, with up to one in five, sometimes more, absent from classes. The loss of momentum in learning and the disruption to the whole class of absentees returning seriously hinder progress.
9. At the age of 16, standards are 'well below average' compared with those for all schools, but average compared with similar schools. The trend since the last inspection has been for results to improve at a faster rate than the national one. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades was extremely low in 1997 at 14.4 per cent, but rose rapidly to 33 per cent in 2000, falling back slightly in 2001. The proportion gaining five or more A* to G grades has been very variable from year to year, but is currently lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school fell short of its targets for 2001, with 26 per cent, rather than 33 per cent of candidates gaining 5 or more A*-C passes, and a points score of 27 as opposed to a target of 30. Progress towards 2002 targets suggests they are very likely to be met. Nevertheless, the average scores of all candidates in all subjects have improved at a pleasing rate, more rapidly than nationally.
10. These standards at 16 indicate satisfactory progress across Years 10 and 11 for pupils as a whole. Many pupils have received three years of focused support to help them meet specific learning needs, and teaching and learning for this stage are satisfactory. Teachers have more consistent success in dealing with poor attitudes and behaviour, and both of these are less common than in the lower school, reflecting the school's increasingly beneficial impact on pupils as they move up the school.
11. Attainment data from the local education authority has been used to monitor minority ethnic groups at risk from under-achievement. By the end of Year 9, the most under-achieving group are Black Caribbean boys; by the end of Year 11 it is White/Irish/European pupils. By the end of Year 9, pupils new to English make good progress where mainstream teaching is good and pupils are fully integrated into lessons. Progress is unsatisfactory where teaching is unsatisfactory, the behaviour and attitude of a significant minority of pupils disrupt learning for all and where there is an absence of effective language support teaching. There is a similar pattern in Year 10 although there is much good language teaching practice in mainstream classes, for example in business studies, science, geography and physical education.
12. As with the stage from Year 7 to Year 9, the differences between subjects illustrate how the school's constant pursuit of better progress and high standards is indeed possible. Religious education and music, for example, already achieved GCSE results in 2001 above the national average. This is partly by virtue of small groups of pupils opting to pursue subjects they like, but it equally demonstrates the result of very high expectations being placed on pupils by extremely effective teachers. Geography and physical education also achieve impressive results, broadly matching national averages, and art results are close to this level. Progress over the Years 10 and 11 is very good in geography, given the pupils' standards when aged 14, and good in music and art. There is satisfactory progress in all other subjects except information and

communications technology, where the current schemes of work in Years 10 and 11 do not offer sufficient support to some pupils or challenge to others.

13. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11. The support is essentially focused in Years 7 to 9, but across the school their progress is good. Pupils who use English as an additional language again lack adequately focused and widely available help and their progress is unsatisfactory. Gifted and talented pupils are increasingly being identified and their specific needs met; so far, this allows them to develop their particular skills satisfactorily, but good progress is the likely outcome as the programme continues to be extended. Poor attendance across Years 10 and 11 again hinders progress. Good overall gains require much higher levels than the 80 to 85 per cent currently prevailing. In both stages, girls reach higher standards and make better progress than boys, but the school has begun to have some success from the strategies it has introduced. For instance, the teaching of English through short, self-contained modules has significantly improved the learning of boys.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are unsatisfactory. Absence is too high and too many pupils arrive late in the morning or for their lessons. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to become fully involved in school life, but too many pupils, most notably, but not only, in Year 9 do not display these characteristics, behave inappropriately, and make insufficient progress. Generally good attitudes were seen in Years 7 and 10 in particular. As at the last inspection, relationships in the school are good, and an atmosphere of racial harmony prevails. While there are notable exceptions, not enough pupils show initiative and take responsibility for their own actions and learning.
15. Pupils are attentive and respectful in assemblies, and the period of silence for reflection, both in assemblies and tutor time, is observed well by all pupils. Pupils in all year groups express positive views about the school. They appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities in sport, music and drama. Increasing numbers take part in sports activities, entering competitions in the local area. The basketball team has enjoyed success both at regional and national levels. About a hundred pupils were involved in a recent production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. Groups of musicians perform in concerts in school and in the local community, visit local junior schools and participate in large-scale events organised by the local education authority's music services. However, too many pupils do not take advantage of these opportunities and as a result do not benefit from the school's good provision.
16. Behaviour in the school is satisfactory. In moving around the school, arriving and leaving, behaviour is satisfactory; in the newly refurbished dining area, it is good and pupils appreciate these facilities. Behaviour in lessons is usually good and sometimes very good. Exclusions are high for a school of this size, but over the current school year the number of both permanent and fixed-term exclusions has fallen. The response to the school's strategies to improve behaviour is good. Pupils who misbehave usually respond appropriately to teachers' instructions, for example, to leave the class, but when class management is weak, lessons are disrupted. As some parents reported, this is particularly evident in lower-attaining sets in Year 9. Boys are often, but not always, the culprits.
17. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour; bullying, sexism or racism are not evident. Any bullying that occurs is well handled and is not an issue for most pupils. Pupils do not always appear to understand the impact of their actions on others, although generally they show a satisfactory respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. For example, in a history lesson, pupils of different racial backgrounds spoke openly about their feelings of offence at the manner in which black people have been treated at different times and in different places.
18. Pupils' ability to show initiative and demonstrate personal responsibility is not satisfactory. Some pupils are able to initiate their own work and seek positions of responsibility on the school's year councils or in the library; many are keen to represent the school in sport or music and drama, or as buddies to befriend Year 6 children who will start school in the next academic year. Pupils

readily offer support to others when they see a need. A newcomer with learning difficulties was immediately included within a small group of girls, and in a music lesson those sitting near a pupil with spelling difficulties prompted her unobtrusively. However, too few pupils are involved in the school community in these ways. Relationships in the school are good, both between pupils and teachers and among different groups of pupils. Pupils are co-operative in lessons and work well together in pairs and in groups. In most subjects, pupils regularly talk and work in pairs and small groups.

19. The substantial majority of the pupils with special educational needs have a satisfactory attitude to learning. There are occasional disruptions when one or more of the pupils loses concentration and presents challenging behaviour that adversely affects their learning and that of other pupils. The attitude and behaviour of EAL learners in lessons is very good: pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn. There is a positive attitude to learning and to receiving support, and EAL pupils do not feel self-conscious about receiving support. In some instances, however, they sit on their own without peer support.
20. Attendance is poor and well below the national average. Unauthorised absences are well above the national average. The level of absence was criticised in the last two inspections and, although some improvement is evident in the current school year compared to last year, attendance remains at an unacceptable level for a significant number of pupils.
21. Some pupils respond well to the rewards given for good attendance and a small proportion achieve attendance records of 100%. However, there are too many pupils with poor or disrupted attendance records. The school acknowledges that absence from lessons, as well as tests and examinations, detracts from the overall academic performance achieved.
22. Punctuality is unsatisfactory, both for morning registration and for lessons throughout the day. Many pupils show little sense of urgency in arriving at tutor time or for lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Teaching across the school as a whole is satisfactory. Nine out of ten of the lessons observed during the inspection had satisfactory or better teaching and in nearly a quarter, the quality was very good or excellent. In Year 7 teaching and learning were both at least satisfactory in every lesson seen. However, in Years 8 and 9 teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of pupils' learning matches that of teaching in many respects and is unsatisfactory in Years 8 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, learning in the school as a whole is unsatisfactory because of the poor attitudes of a minority of pupils, which stop others learning as well as themselves.
24. Teachers collectively have many strengths. Across the school as a whole, for instance, subject expertise is good, sometimes very good, and is linked with good communication skills; nearly all lessons seen during the inspection had teachers working in their specialist areas. Learning support staff are used well by teachers in the vast majority of lessons: they have often been involved in aspects of lesson planning; they complement the teachers' role; and teachers have helped the assistants gain knowledge of the subject being taught, reflecting the school's wise decision to attach support staff to specific subject departments. In general, teachers' management of pupils is good and in many instances it is very skilful. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of the potential of different individuals or classes for good behaviour or negative attitudes. They nearly always apply the school's policy on rewards and sanctions effectively and, as a result, ensure a successful outcome to lessons even when a minority of pupils in some classes have sought to be disruptive.
25. Underpinning this usually successful management are consistently good relationships between staff and pupils. These flourish and lead to a very positive working atmosphere in a majority of lessons, but they also survive even when teachers need to take firm action with some pupils.

26. There are aspects of teaching across the school that are weaker. The teaching of basic skills is not yet satisfactory because the training for using literacy and numeracy and information and communications technology strategies in lessons has not yet equipped all staff appropriately. Monitoring and support for teachers in these skills also lacks consistency so that good practice is not adequately shared. Similarly, the regular use of marking or assessment grades to set clearly focused targets for pupils is good in some lessons, but inconsistently used and homework is marked too erratically. Both of these shortcomings are most noticeable in Years 7 to 9, where teachers' expectations of pupils also lack consistency. While there is no doubting the teachers' commitment to pupils and their desire to help them reach higher standards, the strategies for doing this are used less well by some than by others. In particular, varied questioning, and tasks and materials to meet the wide range of pupils' needs are too often under-used.
27. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is unsatisfactory. There is little pre-planning or preparation of activities or resources before support lessons and there is insufficient liaison with mainstream teachers before, during and after lessons. A narrow range of strategies is used in supported lessons to raise language achievement. No objectives or targets are set or reviewed for lessons or individually targeted pupils. No evaluation of the impact of support over time is made, nor the measurement of the progress of EAL learners over time. Some EAL learners are isolated, either where there is no teacher or peer group support or where there are long periods of one-to-one support reducing the opportunity for EAL learners to interact with other pupils.
28. The overall quality of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. For a growing majority of pupils, learning is sound and often good because they enjoy school, behave well and respect the skill and commitment of their teachers. There is every sign that with exclusions falling, behaviour referrals are dramatically declining and there are particularly positive attitudes in Year 7 that show that the school is succeeding in establishing an improving culture of learning. However, there were too many lessons seen during the inspection - about 14 per cent - in which this was not the case. The greater part, but not all, of these were concentrated in Years 8 and 9, especially Year 9. For a significant minority of pupils, a lack of study skills, literacy ability, powers of concentration and respect for others are major shortcomings. They profoundly affect these pupils' learning and hinder that of others. The poor behaviour of this minority and their very negative attitudes to learning also contribute to insufficient learning taking place in their teaching groups.
29. The quality of teaching and learning in some subjects is particularly good. Across the school as a whole, it is very good in music and geography, and both teaching and learning are good in English and in design and technology. In Years 7 to 9, science teaching is also good and in Years 10 and 11, the quality is good in art, physical education and information and communications technology. In nearly all other subjects, teaching is on balance satisfactory, but in Years 7 to 9, mathematics teaching is unsatisfactory. Learning is unsatisfactory in modern languages in Years 7 to 9 and in science in Years 10 and 11. When teaching is at its best it combines a wide range of strengths to great effect. For example, in a very well taught English lesson with Year 7, the crucial strength was the good pace and varied levels at which questions were put to pupils. This allowed all of them to be involved in the tasks and it enabled the teacher to place high demands on pupils. The careful planning also ensured that learning support assistants were used effectively by the class teacher. There was very good teaching in a Year 8 German lesson on the topic of illnesses and injuries. It benefited from a lively pace throughout and a clever use of good visual aids, with a range of rewards for participating well. The teacher included a good range of relatively easy and more demanding work so that pupils were fully stretched and learnt well as a result. A well-taught Year 10 physical education lesson on sprinting techniques had many strengths, but most notably, the teacher made the lesson objectives very clear from the start and used pupils extensively to help demonstrate movements and to analyse aspects of performance. As with other good teaching in the school, the lesson illustrated how well-timed interventions by the teacher can make sure that pupils have learnt securely before they move onto new material.
30. In those lessons with unsatisfactory teaching there was nearly always a strong challenge from poor attitudes from a significant minority of pupils. Failure to deal with this satisfactorily was

often the result of applying the school's behaviour policy too late or hesitantly. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, the teacher did not insist fully on complete attention during explanations and discussions, which allowed poor behaviour to persist and to confuse the start to a new task. In other respects, however, the disruptive activity of individuals was dealt with correctly, in line with school policy. Another recurrent feature in less successful teaching and learning is lack of differentiation: in a Year 9 ICT lesson, for example, there was too little variation in the level at which work was pitched, despite an enormous range in pupils' prior attainment. The movement of the teacher from pupil to pupil was not sufficiently systematic to ensure that all received help in good time. As a result of these factors, pupils' attention wandered too often and led to unsatisfactory learning.

31. This is a demanding context in which to teach. The areas of greater success are generally with experienced, confident staff who successfully incorporate good pace and challenge for the full range of pupils. Most unsatisfactory teaching occurs amongst staff new to the school or to the profession, so that monitoring and support from colleagues, currently unsatisfactory, is crucial to their success.
32. The overall quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. This is particularly evident in those classes in which pupils receive additional help from teacher assistants. Individual learning programmes for pupils with special educational needs should be improved. In those lessons in which teachers match challenges to the individual pupils' special needs, pupils then make good progress over time. Teacher planning is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Overall planning is satisfactory and a variety of teaching styles and appropriate resources enables those with special educational needs to learn well. Teaching links with literacy are satisfactory and key words are displayed and used in lessons. There is little evidence of continuous writing. When teaching is less effective, limited use is made of assessment and target-setting, with insufficient emphasis being placed upon individual learning programmes.

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

33. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. It has breadth and balance. Pupils are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. Curriculum 2000 has given the school opportunities to be innovative in its use of the National Curriculum to broaden the offer of its provision. For example, GNVQ information and communications technology has been introduced for Year 8 and some Year 9 pupils. The school also provides discrete lessons in drama. There is broad coverage of work in art, where pupils have opportunities to work in two and three dimensions in a range of materials, such as print, batik and ceramics. In physical education, dance is well provided for boys. In music, the school makes very good efforts to include effective information and communications technology. Provision in terms of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The curriculum is socially inclusive, with good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experience beyond lessons. Pupils at an early stage of learning English lack systematic help in some lessons. Planning to meet different needs is inconsistent. There are some weaknesses in provision of information and communications technology at this stage of pupils' learning. Too many pupils, across the whole ability range, do not have sufficient access to the subject, and the GNVQ materials used, in particular, need to be modified more consistently and fully to meet the problems of access. German, now the sole foreign language in the school, has been reduced to two periods a week, an insufficient allocation of time. Where it is offered, religious education is taught satisfactorily, but there is insufficient time allocated (one lesson out of thirty) for effective delivery of the local agreed syllabus and the school fails to comply with statutory requirements. Similarly, provision of collective worship, though of good quality, is inconsistent and insufficient, and the school fails to meet requirements.
34. Provision for Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory in terms of both breadth and balance. In addition to studying the core subjects, pupils select from a wide range of National Curriculum options, which

include humanities, arts and music. New methods of delivery are employed effectively. For example, the school offers GCSE modular programmes in mathematics and English and, in the latter, the movement between staff that accompanies the changes of module helps maintain interest and attention, particularly amongst boys. The school also provides an appropriate vocational education curriculum, which augments the GCSE in business studies with a GNVQ in manufacturing and in leisure and tourism. There are some good features at this stage of learning. For example, in physical education, the curriculum has been expanded for girls in order to increase their participation and includes swimming and a 'look good, feel fit' element. Pupils undertake a work-experience programme at the end of Year 10 and the school does well to place its pupils in local industry in the face of severe competition for the limited places from the local sixth form colleges, and even from the local university. This provision is augmented by a sensible and sensitive alternative for some, including a link course with the local technical college and a range of accreditation options and a mentoring scheme. This last involves local business representatives and targets those pupils in Year 11 who demonstrate the ability to undertake a modern apprenticeship pathway as their post-16 career route. Work-related learning and activities are used well as tools for integration and raising aspirations in pupils who would otherwise become disaffected. There are, however, some limitations to the curricular provision in this stage of the pupils' learning. In order to run the link courses, the school has to withdraw pupils from German and technology. Furthermore, the school's current schemes of work do not fully meet National Curriculum requirements for ICT, because the course used only offers GCSE grades up to D and the cross-curricular provision of information and communications technology lacks adequate mapping. However, the common practice in ICT lessons is increasingly to enhance this basic provision for pupils capable of attaining the higher grades. The time allocated for the religious education short course is insufficient to meet effectively the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.

35. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in all years from 7 to 11 is good. The school's provision offers equal opportunities for boys and girls to access the whole curriculum, and effective measures are taken to ensure inclusion of all pupils in all activities within the mainstream. For example, in physical education, the curriculum provides for equality of access for pupils with a range of learning disabilities. Their participation is enhanced by the good use of the learning support assistants who accompany them to classes. The needs of the 53 pupils with statements of special educational need are effectively met and their reviews provide a good focus for future learning. However, provision for gifted and talented pupils is still at an early stage of development. Special provision is being made for 30 identified pupils and a further 30 in a 'shadow group' across different age groups. This provision includes extension work, links with other educational establishments, visiting specialists and a summer school. For example, identified pupils in a Year 10 art class attended a 'life drawing' class at the local university run by the Royal Academy. This initiative is well managed with effective mentor support, but in day-to-day lessons, extension work is intermittently set. Numeracy provision is also in its early stages of development and does not yet contribute as widely to curriculum enhancement as literacy. This latter, which is taught well both during term time and in extended provision, such as that offered in the catch-up booster classes for pupils at levels 3 and 4, is having a good impact on raising standards.
36. Provision for pupils with EAL is unsatisfactory. The allocation of four days' teacher support per week is insufficient to meet all the EAL needs in the school. The additional mainstream history teaching commitment leads to restraints in selecting lessons for support. The present support timetable is heavily weighted towards Year 10. Little support is provided in English lessons. Awareness amongst mainstream staff of EAL and ethnic minority achievement is variable, with good practice not sufficiently disseminated. Some training on ethnic minority achievement has been provided to newly qualified staff. The support teacher's time is well organised, given the restraints of the timetable, and work has begun on keeping exemplars of written work that over time can be used as an instrument to monitor progress. A database has been produced to record the achievement data of all minority ethnic pupils in the school, but as yet has not been used to monitor progress over time. It is now being used to target some support for Black Caribbean achievement. There is no timetabled bilingual support, although the local education authority adviser provides some Swahili support. Accommodation for the department is limited. There are no information and communications technology resources within the department.

37. Overall provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There are programmes of study for all pupils, which include work on relationships, the environment and citizenship. Good provision is made for some elements of the programme, especially for careers education. A dedicated team of teachers, supported by other staff, have responsibility for the delivery of teaching. There is good provision for careers education and guidance throughout Years 7 to 11.
38. Links with the community make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' education. The local regeneration scheme involves the school, together with several nearby primary schools, in a range of performance-learning activities that increase pupils' knowledge and awareness of potential routes in education and careers. The school runs Enterprise Days, in which local businesses participate. External speakers and visitors, such as the artist in residence, contribute to the curricular provision. Transfer arrangements to ensure smooth transition from primary to secondary school are good. They include a Year 5 'High School Experience' day as well as a Year 6 taster day, in which potential pupils are introduced to aspects of the school which they will meet on arrival and in some cases, for example in mathematics, are informed about the summer school programme offered to help the transition process. Links to the local colleges for post-16 education are strong, with particularly good links to Huddersfield Technical College and Greenhead and New College Sixth Form Colleges.
39. There is good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and the provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Improvement in this area since the previous inspection is satisfactory.
40. The school does not provide a daily act of worship. However, assemblies, which take place twice weekly for each year group, include a period of silence for reflection, observed well by all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with the plights of others when, for example, they are involved in the charitable fund raising activities of Red Nose day. During tutor time, the thought for the week is discussed, and two minutes of silence, which pupils treat with respect, are observed, generating a calm atmosphere at the start of afternoon sessions. On occasion, however, silences are observed when there has been no discussion of the theme, and sometimes, although pupils may be sitting silently, tutors do not share the silence, occupying themselves instead with another task. Arrangements for prayer space for Moslem pupils are good. There is no policy to include opportunities for spiritual development within schemes of work and lesson plans in subject departments. Nevertheless, opportunities arise in some subject areas and these are generally sensitively explored. For instance, Year 10 pupils discussing capital punishment expressed firm beliefs in the sanctity of human life, and in art, pupils reflect on the Buddhist representation of the eye and use themes such as good and evil as starting points for their painting.
41. The ethos of the school conveys a strong moral message. Staff, who provide very good role models, are highly committed to supporting pupils, particularly those with personal difficulties, and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Most pupils respond by behaving in a mature manner as they move around the school, and have learned to tolerate the disruption caused by the current programme of refurbishment. Pupils' achievements and involvement in activities are celebrated in photographic displays set around the school. The programme for personal, social and health education, as well as providing education about sex and the misuse of drugs, includes the exploration of social issues. Good opportunities for discussing moral issues arise in a number of subject areas. In history, pupils openly spoke about their feelings of offence at the manner in which black people have been treated at different times and in different places; in physical education an ethical approach to conduct in competition is encouraged. Racial harmony is evident in all year groups, with pupils from different ethnic background working and socialising amicably in lessons and during break and lunchtime. Incidences of bullying are relatively few, and swiftly dealt with.
42. The school encourages pupils to adopt supportive roles and take on personal responsibility, and provision for development in this area has improved since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 8 train in listening techniques and act as befrienders to newly arrived pupils in Year 7. The recently formed school council is currently discussing ways of extending the scheme in other year groups.

Year 10 pupils support younger pupils in paired reading, several pupils act as librarians, and pupil prefects are chosen in Year 11. Pupils readily offer support to others when they see a need. There are, however, too few examples of pupils taking initiative and exploring ways of contributing to the school and the wider community.

43. Pupils' social skills develop well as a result of a range of opportunities provided by the school. In most subjects, pupils regularly talk and work in pairs and small groups. In art, pupils planned and prepared work for murals. Increasing numbers take part in extra-curricular sport, entering competitions in the local area. Foreign visits are being reinstated and arrangements are in hand for pupils to visit Berlin this summer. As a result of studying texts and work by famous authors, playwrights, composers and artists during lessons in drama, English, music and art, pupils learn about the culture and traditions of this country and its close links, particularly in art and music, with western European culture. In addition, there are many very good opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and traditions of other people and races. Religious education lessons include examination of the customs of Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam, although there are as yet no visits to different places of worship. Dance from other cultures is included in physical education, and in music, pupils learn about many different styles, including those of Japan, Africa and North and South America. The library has a very good range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction, by authors from minority ethnic backgrounds, and there is a collection of books in Asian languages. Asian food is served in the dining hall from time to time. However, around the school there are no Asian language signs or posters, which would be useful for some new pupils, their parents and other visitors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school makes good provision for the care of its pupils. Procedures to ensure the well-being of all pupils, to recognise and deal with child protection issues and to provide a safe and secure working environment are good. All pupils have access to personal support from a number of people.
45. The school's monitoring of academic performance and personal development is satisfactory, and the educational and personal support and guidance available to pupils are good.
46. Procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. Attendance has declined since the last inspection and, although the procedures currently in place have helped the rate to rise during the last year, they have not risen sufficiently to suggest that a satisfactory level will be achieved in the near future. Some pupils respond well to the rewards offered for reaching the targets set, but the rewards are not high enough to ensure that pupils do not miss lessons and fall behind in their learning. The number present is accurately recorded and reasons for absence requested, but the data is not analysed closely enough. Reasons for the patterns of absence are not fully understood and strategies do not encourage persistent absentees to improve their attendance, nor are sufficient parents encouraged to recognise the importance of ensuring their children attend regularly. Staff meet regularly with the educational social worker to discuss attendance issues.
47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory and those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Exclusion is appropriately used when the hierarchy of sanctions fails and a pupil is abusive or violent. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour in the school and pupils of all ages report that when bullying occurs it is dealt with swiftly and well. Racial harmony is evident in all year groups, with pupils from different ethnic backgrounds working and socialising amicably in lessons and during break and lunchtime.
48. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and academic progress are satisfactory and the data is used satisfactorily to guide curricular planning in most subjects. In English, music and design and technology, assessment is good; in history and information and communications technology it is unsatisfactory. Data is beginning to be used as the basis for setting targets, and to make curricular changes to meet pupils' needs, for example, by changing to modular GCSE courses in mathematics and English. In some subjects, marking is unsatisfactory and does not ensure that

pupils understand clearly what they must do to improve; the school does not have a consistent system for marking work in all subjects. The use of the review day to set personal targets for all pupils is recognised as effective in raising standards by pupils and staff.

49. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Individual pupil achievements are recorded, as are instances of unsatisfactory behaviour or attitudes. The quality of educational support and guidance is good, particularly for pupils in Years 9 and 11 when they have to decide on exam options and make career choices. Pupils who join the school in Year 7 or at other times are well supported.
50. Since the last inspection, a positive and supportive pastoral system has been maintained and there have been some improvements to assessments procedures, although greater use needs to be made of the data in many subjects to ensure that it is an effective tool to raise standards. There is an urgent need to understand fully the reasons for the poor attendance and to find effective ways of continuing the improvement in attendance levels and punctuality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Seventy parents expressed their opinions about aspects of school life in a questionnaire. In general, they view this as a good school. In addition, six parents made written comments and 16 attended a meeting. Parents are pleased with teachers' expectations and the progress their children make. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem and say that their children enjoy school. They are pleased with the support given to children with special educational needs, including those who are gifted or talented. However, they expressed some concerns about the arrangements for homework, which they felt is often insufficient and not recorded properly. Concern was also expressed about the information given to them on their children's progress. Some with children in Year 9 said lessons were too often disrupted by poor behaviour. The inspection team supports the positive views expressed by parents and agrees that arrangements for homework and reporting progress in subjects are not always satisfactory. They found that behaviour in some Year 9 lessons was unsatisfactory or even poor, but where teachers' control of the class was effective, and expectations appropriately high, all pupils were able to learn.
52. Overall, the school's links with parents are unsatisfactory. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is too variable and only a few are involved in the work of the school. The quality of information provided to parents is unsatisfactory. There are omissions in the statutory information provided in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents, particularly with regard to comparative data on test and examination results. A useful calendar was published for the current school year so that parents have advance warning of the dates of school events and there are regular newsletters to keep parents informed about school events. Reports on individual pupils' progress are unsatisfactory in a number of subjects. There are comments on pupils' attitudes, but insufficient information on what pupils know and understand, and exactly what must be done to effect an improvement in attainment.
53. Parents have formal opportunities to discuss progress with teachers and many, especially in Years 7 and 9, take advantage of these. Attendance at consultation evenings is often good, and many parents with children in Year 7 came in to talk to subject teachers during the inspection week. Planners are under-used as an effective link between home and school, both by parents and teachers. Many teachers do not insist that homework is recorded in planners and the majority of pupils do not do so without prompting. A small number of parents work actively to improve school facilities, through involvement in the parent and teacher association or by serving as parent governors. However, the majority have little direct involvement in the work of the school.
54. Some parents criticised the quality of progress reports at the last inspection, and there is no indication that these have improved. Effective communication through the planners has not been sustained. A good partnership still exists between the school and some parents, but for the majority the quality of this partnership is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. Overall leadership and management in the school are good. The relatively newly appointed headteacher leads very well, providing clear aims for the school, ensuring these are well understood and shared by staff and demonstrating by example how they should be implemented. He has acted decisively to improve staffing quality and to ensure better arrangements for major rebuilding and renovation of school premises. His high profile presence about the school on a daily basis offers support to both staff and pupils and ensures a very good awareness of day-to-day circumstances. He is strongly assisted in all aspects of his work by the new deputy headteacher.
56. Delegation to this colleague and to middle managers is good. They have extensive responsibilities and are given ample scope for initiative and independent action. Arrangements for collective decision-making and regular sharing of information are good. The formal monitoring of the work of heads of department under 'Performance Management' arrangements is satisfactory. For it to be good, the strengths of some heads of department need to be disseminated to other colleagues more consistently. For example, the excellent support for newly qualified teachers and the very effective literacy strengths seen in the English department are less evident in other departments, and regular, formal monitoring should have ensured the spread of best practice in these areas. Overall, however, subjects are soundly managed: the quality is very good in geography and music, good in English, art, physical education and design and technology, and satisfactory in all other subjects.
57. Current whole-school development plans are very good, with well-chosen priorities, clearly expressed. The school's commitment to making itself the preferred first choice of parents in this part of the town is strong: the strategies for ensuring this are readily understood and are clearly beginning to have an impact. Financial planning has long been a strength of the school and it ensures that funds are very closely matched to educational priorities. The school has also sustained a balanced budget under changeable circumstances for many years. Day-to-day financial control is also very efficient.
58. Monitoring aspects of the school's work is not yet extensive enough. Key areas, including lesson observation, have been introduced relatively recently. Some well conceived initiatives, including the literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology strategies and English as an additional language provision, lack the rigorous systematic monitoring they require and as a result are developing inconsistently. While the school's small size and good staff relationships allow much informal gathering of information and individual examples of support, a formal, comprehensive monitoring and supporting arrangement is now required if best practice is to be recognised and shared, and weaker practice strengthened.
59. The governing body contributes well to leading the school. Collectively, governors gain a more detailed and reliable picture of their school than is usual. Key governors are often on the premises and see the school at work. In addition, there is a more regular contact between staff and governors than usual through presentations made to committees or full governing body meetings, and through governors contributing to appointment procedures for staff at all levels. The regular formal communications between headteacher and governing body are thus enhanced by numerous other sources of information. As a result, governors show a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which enables them to give good strategic advice and support. Their very strong desire to see the school prosper is immediately apparent in meetings between inspectors and governors, which provides immense moral support for senior managers.
60. The staff, with governing body support, have made good overall improvements since the previous inspection. While the school has some seriously weak aspects to its work, these are not new, and they are receiving considerable attention. On many other fronts, beneficial changes have been made and some key issues raised in the previous report have been addressed. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 has been reduced, even though too much remains. The

school has improved provision for spiritual development and agreed to use assemblies to promote good social and moral values, though without offering an act of worship. There has been considerable success in clarifying learning objectives, initiating a literacy strategy and setting up assessment systems. Attempts to improve attendance have had mixed success, so that levels worsened for some time, but are now slowly improving. Despite this modest overall gain on key issues from the last report, the school has nevertheless ensured that GCSE standards have risen, with A* to C passes rising from 14 per cent in 1997 to 33 per cent in 2000. In addition, very unsatisfactory arrangements and pupil attitudes in modern language provision have been dealt with and the school is close to having an entirely new or refurbished set of premises. The skills and commitment needed for improvement have proven successful in many areas, so that good overall gains have been made.

Staffing

61. Staffing is good. Although one third of the teaching force left in the past year, suitable, often good, replacements have been found through the school's quick-fire, effective advertising policy. Helpful recruitment has also occurred as a result of the good arrangements with local providers of initial teaching training and also as a result of providing training for qualification for further education certificated instructors. The governors have resolved issues of long-term sickness to the advantage of the pupils. The teachers' qualifications now match well the subjects taught, except in religious education. The enterprising policy of employing a large contingent of teaching assistants, mainly through charitable support funding, produces very good results. They are effectively deployed to help pupils to make improved progress and to allow teachers to extend their teaching methods.
62. Provision for professional development is satisfactory. Whilst its rationale is not tied closely enough into the school development plan, the influence of training on teaching and learning quality is generally effective.

Resources

63. Resources for learning are satisfactory and improving. General and specifically allocated funds are used well to support identified needs. All departments are at least satisfactorily resourced to allow them to make a relevant contribution to the curriculum. A refined allocation of capitation responds effectively to agreed planned need and use is held closely to account.
64. Funding through, for example, Excellence in Cities, has expanded the range of visits and extra learning activities for gifted and talented and other pupils. The learning resource centre is an effective, well-used resource that is much appreciated by the pupils, for instance, to help project work in GNVQ courses. Whilst information and communications technology provision is satisfactory, the school sees it as insufficient for the pupils' particular learning needs; both books and access for pupils to information and communications technology resources are unsatisfactory.

Accommodation

65. At the time of the inspection, the school was halfway through a comprehensive building project that is intended to provide many areas of new and refurbished accommodation. It is too early to judge the overall impact of the complete building project, but it is expected to make a significant difference. Several areas, such as the classrooms for English, geography, history, mathematics and religious education, have already been completed and the refurbishment affords much improved accommodation, enhanced by worthwhile displays. The outcome of this refurbishment is to offer a more positive atmosphere for learning in those subjects. Some deficiencies remain in music, drama, art and the lack of a gymnasium for physical education, but completion of the works should also provide good accommodation for these subjects. There may still be a shortage of practice rooms for music, inhibiting development, and some inadequacies in the provision for

modern languages and science. There is no dedicated teaching space for physical education theory, which means transporting resources around the school.

66. Over the year, the cost of the disruption in terms of curricular continuity and strain on staff has been acute in several areas, particularly modern languages, art, drama and physical education. Staff have worked hard to reduce the impact of this disruption on learning overall. Substantial progress has been made since the last inspection through the appointment of a project/site manager with specific responsibilities. The attracting of specific grants and funding, combined with overseeing the current project, has been impressive and has directly benefited the improvement in accommodation. The appearance of many classrooms and teaching areas has been significantly improved. There have been several other major improvements, particularly the refurbishment of the dining area. In turn this has contributed to better behaviour during lunchtimes and immediately afterwards. The standard of cleaning and day-to-day maintenance is good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to continue the improvements already taking place in the school and to rectify its serious weaknesses, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) radically improve attendance levels and punctuality to lessons in order to remove these major hindrances to satisfactory learning and progress by:
 - implementing all existing strategies with increased efficiency,
 - devising new and imaginative strategies to ensure a marked increase in the present rate of improvement;

(see paras: 8, 14, 20-22, 46)

- (2) raise standards throughout, especially in English, mathematics, science, history and modern languages by:
 - extending the programme for monitoring teaching and reviewing the implementation of crucial strategies, especially literacy, numeracy, cross-curricular information and communications technology and EAL provision,
 - using monitoring and other evaluation methods to extend
 - the use of assessment, to set challenging targets for all pupils,
 - the effective use of regular homework, especially in Years 7 to 9,
 - the swift application of the school's sanctions policy in all lessons;

(see paras: 12, 68,86,87,99,130,131,137,148,149,150,151)

- (3) take all necessary steps to eradicate the negative attitudes and poor behaviour of an influential minority of pupils;

(see paras: 8, 14, 23, 28)

- (4) extend the good, active, links enjoyed with some parents to a far greater number by:
 - ensuring the best possible use of pupils' planners for day-to-day communication,
 - creating additional mechanisms for sharing the school's successes with parents and gaining increasing parental awareness of the school's work.

(see paras: 51, 52, 53)

Minor issues:

- (1) Ensure that religious education in Years 10 and 11 and formal ICT schemes of work for Years 7 to 11 comply fully with statutory requirements.
- (2) Give greater clarity in reports to parents about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress in each subject.
- (3) Increase, in line with current plans, the use of information and communications technology in school management and administration.

(see paras: 34, 52, 140, 141, 147)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	118
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	24	44	33	11	1	0
Percentage	4	20	38	28	9	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	461
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	168

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	53
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	166

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	49

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

Attendance

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
%	%

School data	10.4
National comparative data	8.1

School data	3.18
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(Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	45	47	92

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	10	23	26
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	32	44	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	35 (39)	48 (41)	53 (34)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	8 (16)	19 (24)	12 (15)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	16	23	24
	Girls	21	19	25
	Total	37	42	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	41(51)	46 (45)	54 (40)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (25)	16 (23)	13 (17)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	34	50	84

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	7	32	34
	Girls	16	39	45
	Total	23	71	79
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	27 (33)	85 (87)	94 (95)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	28.1
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	26
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	34
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	329
Any other minority ethnic group	65

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	12	1
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	50	5
Other minority ethnic groups	10	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	31.5 (inc SEN unit)s
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	547

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.1
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.7
Key Stage 4	17.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1,835,312
Total expenditure	1,848,259
Expenditure per pupil	3,140
Balance brought forward from previous year	127,360
Balance carried forward to next year	51,400

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
--	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	461
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	44	1	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	60	31	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	41	10	7	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	35	32	9	1
The teaching is good.	35	51	6	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	38	22	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	34	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	41	15	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	46	34	4	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	41	4	1	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	35	7	1	15

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

ENGLISH

Overall the quality of provision for English is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching, which leads to good learning
- Very good attitudes and behaviour from the majority of pupils
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Good leadership and management of the department

Areas for improvement

- Standards are well below average when compared to all schools
- Frequent pupil absence adversely affects standards
- Computers are under-used
- Homework is not sufficiently rigorous

68. Results in the national tests in Year 9 in 2001 were well below average compared to all schools and well below average compared to schools with a similar number of free school meals. Pupils did less well in English than in mathematics and science, and less well than as assessed by their teachers. Results have been declining for the last three years, whilst results nationally have been rising. Girls performed better than boys by about the same amount as is common nationally.
69. Results in GCSE examinations in English and English literature in 2001 were well below average compared to all schools, but average when compared to schools with a similar number of free school meals, and average when compared to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils did marginally less well in English than in most of their other subjects. Girls did far better than boys, more so than is found nationally. Very few pupils attained the highest grades of A*, A and B, and most of those who did were boys. A high proportion of pupils were not entered for the examinations, usually because of absence problems. Of those who were entered, however, most took both examinations, a higher percentage than is normally seen.
70. Standards seen during the inspection week confirm that standards at the age of 14 and 16 are well below average. However, in both cases they are better than last year and are set to improve still further. There are several reasons for these improvements. There were problems with the long-term absence of staff through illness last year, which severely affected continuity of teaching and consequently standards of attainment. These problems are much diminished, though not completely resolved. There is now a strong team of very committed teachers. The department has moved to a system of setting groups by ability from Year 7, which is helping to ensure that all pupils are doing work appropriate to their ability and having a good effect on raising standards. Having pupils in Year 10 moving round different modules with different teachers not only helps to keep pupils more motivated, but also lessens the adverse effect of staff absence. Beginning the GCSE syllabus at the end of Year 9 also helps to keep pupils, especially boys, working and interested.
71. At the age of 14, higher-attaining pupils read well and can see how authors create their effect in, for example, their choice of exciting verbs to describe the fight in 'Tickets Please'. They can express their ideas at length, both orally and on paper. Their expression is accurate and they use paragraphs, though not to create effect. Middle-attaining pupils understand what they read. For example, they have an overview of the events in 'Macbeth' and some understanding of how it might be presented on stage. Their writing is less secure. They use basic sentence structures and employ very little punctuation within sentences. Lower-attaining pupils, similarly, are stronger at reading and speaking and listening than at writing. They can recall the events of texts such as 'Kes', and show interest in the characters, but struggle to remember detail such as the names of

- minor characters. Written work is short, with little attempt at punctuation or paragraphing, weak spelling and a very basic vocabulary.
72. Pupils enter the school with very low attainment in English and achieve satisfactorily overall. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, and especially pupils in Year 7, make good progress. Frequent absence affects the achievement made by many, however. Pupils with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented make progress in line with the rest of the pupils. The very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs has a beneficial effect on all pupils. Teaching assistants have a close working partnership with teachers and give very good individual help to pupils.
73. At the age of 16, judging from coursework folders, as no Year 11 pupils were in school during the inspection, higher-attaining pupils read well. They use quotation to support their argument and show good awareness of the social and cultural background of texts. Written work is confident and uses a wide vocabulary, but there is some inaccuracy in the use of punctuation, for example, apostrophes. Several pupils attain the highest grades in their coursework. Middle-attaining pupils show good understanding of plot and character, but analysis of language is less effective and written work lacks detail. Lower-attaining pupils have a very limited range of expression, especially in a formal register. Their spelling is inaccurate and full stops are often omitted. Several folders contain much short work and some have assignments missing.
74. Achievement at this age is severely affected by frequent absence, which affects not only the absentee but the whole class as teacher time is taken up helping pupils to catch up. However, many pupils make good progress despite this so that, overall, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs, the gifted and talented, and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in line with their peers. Provision for pupils with special educational needs remains very good, but, for those with English as an additional language, there is insufficient specialist support.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are many strengths in teaching, which is often very good. Only occasionally, when the specialist teacher is away, does the teaching fall below satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for language and literature that brings out a lively interest from most pupils. Pupils develop their understanding effectively because of the good pace of lessons and the effective use of a variety of teaching methods. The television was well used, for example, to develop understanding of the media and how two very different films of the sinking of The Titanic create their effects. Pupils often work in pairs and groups so that they deepen their awareness through discussion. Pupils in Year 10 discussing the characteristics of Mr Gryce in 'Kes' made very good strides in their pairs, preparing for their GCSE coursework assignment. In the majority of lessons, teachers manage pupils very well so that relationships are pleasant and productive. On occasion, especially when the regular teacher is absent and especially in Year 9, the poor behaviour of a significant minority stops pupils from learning as much as they should, despite the best efforts of the teacher. At the other extreme, behaviour and attitudes are often very good. Lower-attaining Year 7 pupils hugely enjoyed the story of 'The Gold Cadillac', and listened carefully to the reading both of their teacher and their classmates and searched for towns on the route conscientiously. In this very good lesson, as in many others, the teacher had high expectations and pupils responded by working hard. Teachers and teaching assistants give very good support to individual pupils, both in controlling their behaviour and in helping them in their work. They use good strategies for enabling pupils to sustain their writing and develop their ideas in a structured way so that pupils concentrate well on increasing their skills. On occasion, especially in high-attaining groups, pupils need to be encouraged to be more independent. There is a very good focus on developing basic literacy skills, such as spelling and vocabulary, but the strategies for developing numeracy in the English classroom have yet to be considered. Pupils use the Internet regularly for research but, other than that, computers are under-used. Further use is planned in the schemes of work and more should be done when the new computer suite is complete. Though appropriate homework is set, the system is not rigorous enough, either in the way it is recorded by pupils or enforced by teachers.

76. Leadership and management are good. Very good help is given to teachers new to the department or to teaching, and teaching is well monitored. Developments such as the new Year 7 schemes of work are carefully evaluated and adapted as they are trialled. There is excellent team spirit within the department and all work together to push up standards. The department is efficiently managed and procedures for assessment are clear. Pupils know their strengths and how they can improve. However, as noted at the time of the last inspection, data is not analysed precisely enough to determine exactly where the department is successful and where it needs to improve. For instance, precise details of how much the department adds value to pupils' prior attainment is not known, nor are the differences between boys' and girls' attainment analysed sufficiently.
77. Standards since the last inspection have remained similar. There is now less unsatisfactory teaching and most of the issues raised at that time, such as the lack of opportunities for speaking and listening, have been successfully dealt with. In addition, many new improvements to the curriculum have been introduced and are having a beneficial effect on raising standards. Some have been mentioned previously; others include the effective introduction of starter exercises for each lesson, to focus pupils' attention immediately, and the more detailed schemes of work that are being written. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Literacy

78. Standards of literacy are well below average, and the attention given to developing literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. A literacy co-ordinator has been appointed and some training has taken place on how talk can be used to further pupils' understanding and how pupils can be helped to write for different purposes. However, at both school and subject level, there is a lack of policies indicating how all teachers can contribute, on a consistent basis, to this important area of pupils' development.
79. Standards are better in reading and speaking than in listening and writing. Pupils are able to understand texts and worksheets used in lessons and the very good library is well used and accessible, but there are insufficient opportunities to practise systematically reading different types of writing. Pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening in several subjects. For instance, in religious education, pupils worked in groups to develop a short play showing how someone unkind could be reformed. This gave them a good practical understanding of the theme of the lesson and improved the vocabulary necessary to write about it. In physical education, pupils extended their vocabulary by the careful introduction of words such as 'nutrients' and 'balanced diet'. However, too often, pupils are not taught to extend their argument sufficiently, and find it difficult to listen quietly. There is no school marking policy and spelling and punctuation errors are not consistently corrected. Pupils do a variety of kinds of writing and sometimes, but by no means always, receive guidance and help in how to develop their ideas. For instance, in science, pupils in Year 7 wrote a letter to an alien about our solar system and life on earth. In history, Year 8 pupils received good help in how to structure their writing on Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary.
80. Fifteen pupils in Year 7 whose attainment is just below average attend regular and effective additional classes that are well run by carefully trained teaching assistants and enjoyed by the pupils.

DRAMA

The quality of provision for drama is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Standards are at the national average by the end of Year 11
- Good teaching leads to good involvement of pupils
- Drama is available for all pupils, though few choose to opt for it in Years 10 and 11

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is poor
- Some pupils lack self-control, especially in Year 9
- In GCSE lessons, pupils need to make more decisions for themselves

81. In 2001 results in the GCSE examinations were average. Four out of the five pupils entered gained A* to C grades and all gained A* to G grades. No pupils gained the highest grades. There are no pupils studying drama in Year 11 this year, but standards in Year 10 confirm these average standards. Pupils' achievement is good and they show enthusiasm for and interest in their lessons. Year 10 pupils, all of whom are girls, take on roles successfully, and some can sustain them effectively, for instance, when dramatising a meeting of various interested parties. They make sensible suggestions on how the drama and characterisation can be improved, but largely take their lead from the teacher.
82. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils find it difficult to listen to each other and lack self-motivation. They work reasonably co-operatively once they settle in their groups. Higher attainers sustain their roles well and have imaginative ideas, though they do not employ a range of dramatic techniques. Lower attainers are slow to come up with ideas, for example, in creating advertisements, and do not extend their ideas. Almost all participate, though some need to be cajoled. In Year 7, pupils are keen and enthusiastic and enjoy drama. Their standards are average, and they can already adopt roles imaginatively, use good self-control and work sensibly together in groups. In a lesson in which they enacted family preparations for a journey, they listened to each other appreciatively and made useful comments in analysis.
83. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented all achieve in line with their peers. There is often additional support used in lessons, which is very effective, and all pupils receive much individual help. There are many opportunities for those talented in drama to take the lead in group discussion and in acting, and also to join in the regular school productions. There have also been several visits from theatre groups to the school, which give pupils valuable experience of live theatre.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Despite the restrictions of the poor accommodation, soon to be improved under the building schedule, teachers have high expectations that pupils will join in the warm-up activities and the group presentations, thus developing their self-confidence. They have good subject knowledge and good classroom management, so that lessons move at a good pace and pupils learn quickly. Relationships with pupils are strong and lessons are lively and interesting, ensuring pupils develop creatively and imaginatively. In a Year 7 lesson, some 'grandfathers' had very lifelike characteristics, much appreciated by the audience. In Year 10, the good use of teacher in role helped pupils to sustain their own roles. However, pupils do not yet make enough decisions for themselves on how the drama can be improved. The department makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy, especially in the area of speaking and listening. Little use is made of computers and numeracy skills are not yet being addressed.
85. The department is well led with clear schemes of work. All pupils have the opportunity to study drama. Assessment is regular and to clear criteria, so that pupils know how they are progressing. Drama was not reported on at the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Good planning to implement the National Numeracy Strategy

- Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them to explain skills clearly
- Good support for newly qualified teachers
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9; pupils do not make sufficient progress
- Pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory
- Standards in Years 7 to 9 are not improving rapidly enough
- The contribution made by other subjects to developing numeracy skills is poor
- Insufficient use is made of computers to support learning

86. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, results were well below average. A significant improvement was made in results in 1998 and results have remained at this level since. Results were well below average when compared with all schools nationally and close to average compared to similar schools. Girls performed slightly better than boys. Results were better than those in English, although not as good as those in science. These results represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment when they entered the school in Year 7.
87. In 2001, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in GCSE examinations was well below average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G was below average. These results were well below average compared to all schools and below average compared to similar schools. Results improved steadily from 1999 to 2000, but fell back again in 2001. The results represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9. The performance of girls and boys was similar. Although girls performed as well in mathematics as they did in most other subjects studied, boys did not do as well.
88. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were well below average at the end of Year 9. This attainment matches recent test results. Standards on entry are improving. Pupils have entered the school in previous years with standards that were well below average. In the present Year 7, standards are broadly average. Although standards are improving slightly, they are not improving at a fast enough rate. Number skills are not well developed for many pupils. Many have difficulty with handling numbers mentally. For example, many pupils do not recall tables confidently in mental activities and some of the highest-attaining pupils in Year 9 have difficulty with the units used in questions on proportion. Algebraic skills are weak for most pupils, with only a small proportion handling algebraic expressions and equations with confidence. Pupils' understanding of shape and space and data-handling are better, although still not developed sufficiently for many pupils. In science, pupils have difficulty in using units of measurement, although in art, pupils carefully measure proportion. Problem-solving skills are not yet well developed for most pupils.
89. Standards in the work seen at the end of Year 11 are well below average. Number skills are still not well developed and algebraic skills are still weak for many pupils. Most find calculations without a calculator difficult, although the highest-attaining pupils in Year 10 use percentages confidently. Only the highest attainers can use algebra with any confidence; they simplify algebraic expressions involving brackets and solve a range of equations confidently. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of shape and space and they demonstrate satisfactory data-handling skills. They use frequency tables and draw a range of graphs to represent information with confidence. Problem-solving skills are satisfactory for many pupils. Most can now identify patterns and rules. Higher-attaining pupils can predict and test results and find appropriate formulae.
90. The overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In about one third of lessons, the teaching is good. Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that they are able to explain concepts clearly to help pupils understand new topics and skills. The three-part lesson is used in planning lessons and individual lesson plans have clear objectives. In most lessons, objectives for the lesson are clearly written and discussed so that pupils are aware of what they are going to learn. Starter activities are used at the beginning of lessons to develop pupils' number skills. There is not enough variety in these

activities at present to have a major impact on standards. In addition, the plenary session is not being used as effectively as it might be to review learning at the end of lessons. Insufficient attention is given to literacy skills in lessons, with the result that many pupils are not able to use the technical language in their replies to questions. Where support staff are available they are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Due to limited access to equipment, computers are not used effectively to support learning. Where teaching is least effective, weak management means that time is wasted maintaining order and as a result pupils do not concentrate as well as they should. Often there is little difference in the tasks provided for different groups of pupils within lessons so that pupils with special educational needs do not make sufficient progress. The pace of some lessons is slow, with activities that are not sufficiently demanding. Homework is used to support learning, although the tasks set are often limited to completing work done in lessons and do not challenge pupils sufficiently. Although teachers mark pupils books regularly, they frequently fail to comment on what pupils need to do to improve their work

91. Overall, the quality of learning is unsatisfactory. In Years 8 and 9, most pupils do not make enough progress with their learning. Pupils in Year 7 make satisfactory progress. In Years 7 to 9, only pupils in the top sets make satisfactory progress. Pupils make better progress in Years 10 and 11, where most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils do not acquire skills, knowledge and understanding well enough in Years 8 and 9. The poor attitude of a significant minority of pupils has a major impact on lessons, which is affecting the learning of all pupils in the class. Pupils other than those in the top sets do not apply themselves well enough to their tasks and do not make a reasonable amount of effort. The productivity and pace of learning is often slow. The poor attendance of many pupils is affecting the progress they make. Some pupils' books show large gaps, with work often not completed. Gifted and talented pupils make broadly satisfactory progress, but for those with EAL progress is unsatisfactory.
92. Attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory. They are poorest with pupils in Years 8 and 9. There is a significant number of lessons where the pupils' negative attitudes have a marked impact on the learning of others. Although the behaviour of the majority is satisfactory, a significant minority do not behave well enough and disrupt lessons. Listening skills are not well developed; often pupils have to be regularly reminded to pay attention and are not keen to participate in discussions. The amount of work that pupils produce is often insufficient and generally the presentation of work in books is unsatisfactory. These areas are better in Years 10 and 11. Pupils generally do not appear enthusiastic or interested in lessons. Despite the negative attitudes of some pupils, relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
93. Leadership and management in the subject have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Appropriate schemes of work are in place and have been updated to take account of the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject's development plan provides appropriate priorities for moving forward. Good support is provided to newly qualified teachers through the monitoring of teaching within the department. Pupils are assessed regularly and results are used effectively to monitor the progress of individual pupils as they move through the school.
94. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Standards in tests and examinations have improved. The new accommodation has improved significantly the ethos for learning. The improved leadership has resulted in better planning of the curriculum. The structure of lessons provides a more common approach to teaching.

Numeracy

95. The contribution made by other subjects to developing pupils' numeracy skills is poor. The school does not have a whole-school policy for numeracy with the result that few subjects plan effectively to develop numeracy skills. For example, in science, no attempt is made in lessons to reinforce pupils' numeracy skills although it is clear that many pupils have difficulty with number and measurement. A few subjects, for example, geography, art and design and technology, are making a satisfactory contribution, but in most other subjects opportunities are missed to support pupils' numeracy skills. Good support was seen in a geography lesson where the teacher

provided support materials to help pupils to analyse information and draw appropriate graphs. This approach, however, is not common across the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Standards for pupils at the end of Year 9 have risen
- Pupils are managed well
- Staff work well as a team
- There is a strong commitment to future improvement

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment data is not used well enough to provide appropriately differentiated and challenging material to meet the needs of all pupils
- The marking of pupils' work
- Strategies for teaching and assessing the skills of investigation in science are unsatisfactory
- The use of ICT in the science curriculum is too limited
- More effective monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning

96. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school shows a higher proportion of lower-attaining pupils than found nationally. This pattern of attainment shows a trend over recent years towards slightly more pupils in the higher-attainment ranges, but overall attainment remains below average.
97. At the age of 14, attainment of pupils is well below that found nationally. Attainment is well above national averages when compared to similar schools. Teacher assessment is in line with standardised test results. In 2001, boys' attainment was slightly above that of girls and attainment in science was above that in mathematics and English. Progress in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.
98. The sequence of learning shows a logical progression, but the work of some pupils – especially those with lower attainment - is sometimes incomplete or of a quality that would make later revision difficult. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 have good knowledge of the solar system, the cause of day and night and seasons of the year. Their understanding of rock types and formation is typical of pupils of above average ability. Other pupils, with help, can describe distinguishing features of mammals but cannot describe feathers as a distinguishing feature of birds. By the age of fourteen, the school's higher-attaining pupils are working at national average standards, or slightly higher, whilst lower attainers show an insecure understanding of some key aspects of science, illustrated, for example, by their desire to classify humans as mammals because they have two legs.
99. The standards attained by pupils at the age of sixteen are well below average. The proportion gaining A* to C grades was 34 per cent compared with 50 per cent nationally and the school's average points score for all candidates falls well short of the national one. The proportion of A* to G passes is broadly average. Overall, pupils do not perform better or worse in science than they do in other subjects. In 2001, girls gained a higher proportion of A* to C grades than boys. Over recent years, there has been no consistent pattern in the attainment of pupils at GCSE level. Local authority and national data show that progress in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils show good understanding of organic chemistry, can correctly name hydrocarbons and understand terms such as viscous and unsaturated in this context. They also show good understanding of blood flow and the link between respiration, breathing and the energy demands of the body. Lower-attaining pupils find some concepts difficult – some claiming that gravity pulls things down and others that it helps things float. Other pupils have poor recall of the distinction between elements, mixtures and compounds. The work of Year 11 pupils, who were not present during the inspection, shows understanding of particle theory in relation to rates of reaction and of electrical resistance expressed correctly in terms of electron flow. The topics chosen for investigative coursework are largely appropriate, but there are weaknesses in the use of scientific

knowledge in the planning and analysing stages. Some suggested investigations demand only relatively simple skills and do not readily allow access to higher marks.

100. Overall, there was no significant difference in the progress of different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and those with English as an additional language, whilst small in number, make progress. Differences between boys and girls, though identified, do not form a consistent pattern over time.
101. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9, teaching overall is good and in Years 10 and 11, it is satisfactory. Where teaching shows strengths, as in a Year 7 lesson about rocks, good use is made of question and answer techniques to probe pupils' knowledge and incorporates individual and group work and different approaches to learning. In this lesson, the support teacher was used to good effect, the pace of the lesson was maintained, learning was consolidated and homework was clearly explained. In a Year 10 lesson, there was good opportunity for individual research and small group work, followed by pupils feeding back their findings to the class, an effective means of developing the necessary skills of speaking and listening.
102. Where teaching is less successful, teachers have difficulty in settling the class. Worksheets are often provided for lower attainers, as in lessons on asexual reproduction or on elements, mixtures and compounds, but their content and use are not always sufficiently well thought out. In some lessons, there was insufficient source material to enable pupils to complete work effectively, the pace of lessons was slow, tasks were not clearly explained and the science content of the lesson was not sufficiently rigorous. There was a need for closer attention to health and safety issues in one instance.
103. Overall, teachers manage pupils well and pupils show good attitudes to their work, each other and their teachers. In the small number of cases where management of pupils is less satisfactory, pupils are indifferent to teachers and their learning, which requires teachers to have skills and access to a wider range of strategies than they can draw on individually.
104. Management is satisfactory. Schemes of work covering National Curriculum and examination board requirements are established. Review of these, to meet new curricular demands, is planned and they should then more clearly identify appropriate lesson content. Assessment data is collected and used for grouping and monitoring standards, but this information is not routinely used to plan appropriate teaching and learning activities. Teaching in the department has been monitored, but this monitoring is not sufficiently frequent or rigorous. The procedures to support newly qualified teachers should anticipate and meet needs more effectively. The provision for information and communications technology in science is currently unsatisfactory. The development plan identifies appropriate areas, but would benefit from a more long-term view of intended progress. The contribution that the department can make to numeracy is at the planning stage. The contribution to pupils' literacy development is good, though pupils' spelling is weak. Marking is carried out, but this area is in need of review to consider the style, frequency and purpose of marking and the most appropriate means of conveying to pupils what it is they should do to improve their standards and presentation.
105. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. Standards at the age of fourteen have improved. The department has undergone extensive refurbishment, providing greatly improved facilities, though this work has put extra demands on the department. Support staff are now more effectively used and pupils are more aware of their standards of attainment. Information and communications technology is still unsatisfactory, assessment data, whilst being used to better effect, is still not used to aid teaching and learning, expectations of pupils remain in need of attention, as do approaches to investigative work and marking.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Results at GCSE have shown steady improvement
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development
- Work in oil pastel is vigorous and bold
- Three-dimensional work is well made and lively

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough use of information and communications technology to support and extend pupils' work
- There is a slow pace in some lessons
- Pupils' drawing from observation lacks confidence
- Pupils' research skills are weak

106. At the age of 14, standards are well below average. Teacher assessments for the previous Year 9 pupils were very low, but were too severely graded, because they were not checked sufficiently against those in other schools. Standards in the work in the school are well below average. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, as pupils' attainment is well below average when they come to the school in Year 7. Pupils make steady gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of art and design. They learn to make interesting figures in three dimensions from wire and paper which capture the lively attitudes of the human figure, for example, when running, jumping and diving. Their colour work is bold, and they use pattern well to produce interesting designs. They also make batik prints on fabric, which show an increasing confidence in using materials. However, their drawing skills are weak, and their use of line and tone is heavy and rather muddy. Their painting skills are well below average, and paint is applied crudely to the picture surface. In addition, there is not enough use of information and communications technology to support and extend their work effectively.
107. By the age of 16, standards are below average. Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were below average, and similar standards are seen in the work in the school, although results have shown a steady improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement is good when the work of pupils in Year 11 is compared with their work when they started the course in Year 10. They build on their strengths in three-dimensional work, and create large pieces in card and paper, which are based on the study of masks from other cultures. These are well made, and show a good variety of surface decoration, which includes using bright primary colours and metallic paint. They also make good gains in their ability to use oil pastels, and they produce atmospheric pictures, which effectively recreate the effects of light reflected on water. Their composition work also shows good improvement, and they carefully place shapes and colours to create pleasing effects. Their work from observation, however, lacks confidence and vigour, and they do not do enough. Their research skills are also weak, and a lack of sketchbook work means that they do not develop their own ideas as effectively as they could. Opportunities are thus also lost to develop literacy skills, for example, by making notes in sketchbooks.
108. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in Years 10 and 11, as do other pupils. This is because they receive good support and advice from learning support assistants, who are confident in art activities. These include drawing and modelling in clay.
109. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9, they are satisfactory and, in Years 10 and 11, they are good because attitudes and behaviour are better in Years 10 and 11, the work set is more varied in scale, and materials are used more vigorously. In the best lessons, there are good teacher-pupil relationships, a good variety of materials, and vigorous approaches. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, the good relationships created a positive learning atmosphere, and attitudes and behaviour were very good. In addition, pupils could work in paint, oil pastel, or make three-dimensional constructions, on a variety of scales. These factors produced good engagement with the lesson, a good pace, and good learning was the result. Teachers also have good subject knowledge, and are able to give sound individual advice, which produces good learning. However, in some lessons there are difficulties gaining the full attention of the class, and behaviour and attitudes are no better than satisfactory. The teacher then spends too much time managing

pupils' behaviour, and the pace of the lesson slows. At other times, the atmosphere in lessons is comfortable, and lacks a sense of urgency. Pupils then chatter without fully concentrating on what they are doing. This again slows the pace of the lesson, and learning is no better than satisfactory as a result.

110. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, and results at GCSE have risen steadily. Achievement has also improved, and is now satisfactory overall. Leadership and management are good, and the efforts made to improve standards have had some success. The subject also makes a good contribution to the cultural development of pupils, with a range of planned provision. This includes introducing pupils to a good range of artists, such as Chagall, Monet, and Lichtenstein. The art of other cultures, including Japanese and African masks, is often used to add variety to pupils' work, and there are other organised visits and activities. For example, a woodcarving class was led by an artist in residence, and gifted and talented pupils attended a life-drawing class at a local university.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good quality teaching
- Good leadership and management
- Provision of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11

Areas for improvement

- The development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- Marking policy
- Links with primary schools

111. At the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is below average. This, however, represents good achievement from a well below average level of general attainment on entry. Pupils make good progress in designing and making in a range of activities. An imaginative project to produce an animated clown, for example, combines the study and application of mechanisms alongside electronics. Design sheets for the project are lively and inventive. In food technology, pupils are able to analyse dietary requirements effectively and show knowledge of the needs of special groups such as diabetics. In practical work, they design and produce dishes for chosen focus groups successfully. The nature of projects allows for success at different levels and helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
112. Information and communications technology skills are developed continuously from entry to Year 9. Pupils show skill in the use of word processing, spreadsheets and control. Literacy is addressed by the analysis of subject terms, but extended writing includes a significant amount of copying text and there is a need to review the curriculum in order to ensure a more searching and critical approach to writing. Although pupils experience measurement and calculation, this aspect of their work is not well developed as an additional contribution to general numeracy.
113. Pupils' attitudes are generally good and they concentrate well and show a good level of interest. Behaviour is usually good, but marred by the poor behaviour of some boys, particularly in Year 9.
114. At the end of Year 11, pupils' results in GCSE examinations again show below average performance. Progress over recent years, however, shows steady improvement. In the resistant materials area, improvement has been continuous during the period since the last inspection. In food technology, improvement has also taken place over the same period, but progress has been somewhat uneven and less marked. In relation to other subjects within the school, pupils' results compare very favourably. Pupils also make good overall progress across Years 7 to 11, including those with SEN and those deemed gifted and talented

115. Work seen indicates that a significant number of pupils are working at the average level and a small number beyond. Products in wood and metal are well designed and carefully made. In food technology, satisfactory progress is evident in techniques for the preparation of food, including the manufacture of food in bulk commercially. Written work is careful, but comparatively undemanding and, though serious research is undertaken, copying text still takes place, as at the earlier stage. Presentation of project folders is, however, often very good and they are neatly composed.
116. An important development at this stage has taken place with the introduction of GNVQ manufacturing, which represents a major curricular advance since the last inspection and extends pupils' experience in a new direction. Pupils develop the ability to work as a team in a situation where components are machined and made separately prior to assembly. In classes observed, pupils showed maturity in the necessary sharing of responsibility and a real interest in efficient methods of production. Progress in the use of information and communications technology is continued from the earlier stage and pupils show a satisfactory range of computer skills in their project work, presentation and research.
117. Pupils' attitudes are good. They take their work seriously and concentrate well. In GNVQ groups, interest is particularly high and behaviour good.
118. The quality of teaching is good at both stages in most lessons and in some lessons very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Work is thoroughly prepared and carefully presented. A strength is the sensitive one-to-one tuition during work in class. This gives rise to a good working atmosphere and good pupil-teacher relationships. Individual help and encouragement related to need are offered and promote progress across different levels of prior attainment. This assistance, linked with equal access to courses, provides fully for inclusion of all pupils at all levels.
119. Assessment is thorough and is carefully analysed at each stage to assist curricular planning. Grades up to Year 9 are related to National Curriculum levels and are used to project forward targets for examinations at age sixteen. There is, however, no baseline assessment from primary schools. In Years 10 and 11, the examining board's assessment objectives are used. Pupils are made fully aware of their standards and progress. A comparative weakness in the overall pattern of assessment is the marking of individual pieces of work, which tends to consist of terse comments that do not indicate ways of moving forward.
120. The department is well managed. Standards have improved steadily since the last inspection. The curriculum has been enhanced by the inclusion of GNVQ courses and is broad and varied with an appropriate range of designing and making opportunities at both stages. Extra-curricular provision is good, with access to workshops on a regular basis outside the taught programme. Additionally, pupils visit local industrial establishments and enjoy contact with the local technical college.
121. Relationships within the department are very good. Staff are united in their aims and are supported by a well-qualified and experienced technician. Resources for learning are adequate and the accommodation provided is of good quality.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **very good**.

Strengths

- Strong leadership has considerably improved standards
- GCSE results in 2001 were at the national average
- Pupils' achievement is good despite the below average standards in the work seen
- Teaching is very good
- Teachers manage and motivate pupils very well so that they work hard

Areas for improvement

- Attendance rates
- Written comments in Years 7 to 9 do not show pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve
- Developing homework in Years 7 to 9 to support classwork more effectively

122. GCSE examination results have improved considerably since the last inspection, both in the short geography courses and in last year's full course. In 2001, every pupil gained a grade and almost two thirds reached the national standard. Pupils do better in geography than in most of their other subjects. This is due in good part to improvements made by a new head of department who has changed the syllabus to one more suited to pupils' needs, improved planning, placed more emphasis on examination preparation and after-school support, and used information about the pupils to help them to improve. As a result of the improved curriculum and lively teaching, the numbers choosing to take geography as an examination subject have risen dramatically.
123. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below those expected of 14 year olds. This is reflected by the results of the teacher-assessed tests. However, many start the school with poor general knowledge and skills in the subject and have difficulties with reading and writing. They make satisfactory progress from this starting point, those who are regular attenders making good progress. Most acquire sound basic map and data-handling skills. Lower attainers and some average attainers find it difficult to remember where places are and to find them on a map. Atlases are not used enough for this purpose. Pupils in Year 7 in particular quickly acquire skills. For example, in an employment survey, supported by the teacher and informative worksheets, they sorted jobs into different types, calculated the percentages in each category and drew pie charts to illustrate their findings. In general, there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their numerical and analytical skills through information and communications technology, although it is used well for simple research and for presentation purposes, as in Year 8 work about the York floods and Year 9 work on volcanoes. Most have some understanding of patterns and processes developed in learning about places. Teachers pay good attention to issues of sustainability. During the inspection, higher-attaining pupils gave sound explanations for the causes of pollution in Tokyo Bay and offered solutions. Average-attaining pupils outlined the basic causes. Lower-attaining pupils identified different types of pollution, but were less sure of the causes and effects. Teachers' good attention to literacy is helping pupils to improve their vocabulary and organise their ideas. Most use technical words correctly. Higher and average attainers write clearly for purpose, although their written work lacks detail. They enjoy applying and summarising what they have learnt in letters, posters and leaflets. Nevertheless, lower-attaining pupils still have difficulties in expressing themselves in written work.
124. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 11, although below average, show that pupils are achieving very well according to their potential. Pupils in Year 10, in particular, benefit from focused teaching that builds effectively on earlier work, such as rivers, and from their positive attitudes. For example, higher-attaining pupils showed good understanding of how river meanders were formed. In another lesson, the teacher used video, whiteboard and worksheets effectively to help lower-attaining pupils describe how waterfalls were formed. At least half showed sound understanding of the process. Pupils at an early stage of learning English made satisfactory progress because of the visual nature of the lesson and the support given by the teacher. Otherwise their progress is slower because they lack targeted specialist support in lessons. Pupils acquire a satisfactory range of skills. Higher and average attainers make good notes that are useful for revision, but the work of some lower-attaining pupils is incomplete because of absence. Their numeracy skills are adequate to support data-handling in their coursework about land use patterns in Huddersfield when they were able to apply what they had learnt to an investigation. Higher-attaining pupils identified the theory clearly and followed their questions through logically to reach valid conclusions, though their evaluations were too brief. Average attainers reached sound, but less detailed, conclusions. Lower-attaining pupils gathered and sorted information, but their answers were less focused. Not enough use is made of information and communications technology to develop research techniques and numerical skills, although the department plans to develop this area now that new facilities have been installed.

125. The majority of pupils enjoy geography. Most work diligently and behave well because their teachers work very hard to establish good behaviour and through their enthusiasm to sustain their interest. The few instances of disruptive behaviour were managed calmly and effectively. A significant minority finds it difficult to listen, concentrate and work on their own. Most show their commitment by their carefully presented work, although unfinished work caused by absence is not always followed up. Older pupils willingly attend after-school revision. Most work harmoniously together. Grouping arrangements encourage good social skills and different ethnic groups and pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. A significant minority of pupils arrive late to lessons so time is wasted because they have to be updated.
126. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers use their knowledge and experience well to capture pupils' attention and teaching is lively. Interesting introductions are a strong feature. They expect pupils to take an active part in lessons and, through their careful questions, build up their knowledge and understanding. The good relationships that exist mean that pupils are happy to ask or answer questions. Activities are varied, carefully chosen to match different needs and structured so that they become more demanding. They are supported by a range of well-chosen resources. Teachers are well organised and plan lessons well so that pupils are clear about what they have learnt, what they need to do in the lesson and what they have to do next. The whiteboard is particularly well used to develop ideas. Common work plans ensure consistency. Teachers and support assistants work closely together to support pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they make good progress. Most achieve a grade at GCSE. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress overall. Their needs have been identified and there are plans for them to take the GCSE short course in Year 9.
127. In a Year 8 lesson about Mexican migration to the USA, lively role-play between the teacher and pupils at the beginning interested everyone and led to a discussion about different standards of living in the two countries, carefully linked to the reasons why people migrate. Good use was made of resources: atlases to find places and writing frames to help pupils organise the information researched from their textbooks. Groupwork and individual help from the teachers and learning assistant developed their speaking skills. As a result, pupils improved their skills and increased their understanding of migration.
128. Most lessons have good pace. Occasionally teachers do not intervene quickly enough to refocus attention, for example, when pupils linger over easier tasks or are not listening, thereby missing important points. In Years 7 to 9, homework to support classwork varies in its effectiveness. Some is too little or too easy. Marking is often overgenerous and grammatical mistakes are not always corrected. Comments do not show pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve,
129. The subject is very well led and managed. Planning is very good and teachers work well together. The new head of department has successfully implemented improvements and is very clear about what needs to be done. For example, there is an awareness that monitoring needs strengthening and that procedures for sharing information in Years 7 to 9 need refining so that work can be modified and the information used to help pupils. Assessment and target-setting are used very well at GCSE to plan suitable work and to help pupils improve. The library is used well for research. Very good progress has been made in dealing with the issues of the last report. GCSE results have improved considerably from well below average to average in 2001 as have numbers taking it as an examination subject. An improved curriculum and well-planned lessons with a variety of activities to involve and sustain interest have raised standards in Years 7 to 9 and are beginning to raise them in Years 10 and 11. Staffing has improved, and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. More helpful marking in Years 7 to 9 is recognised as an area for attention. The department is well placed for future development.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Satisfactory progress, especially in first three years from a low base of historical knowledge and skills
- Attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils are satisfactory
- There are some models of good teaching practice
- Accommodation is very good

Areas for development

- Assessment procedures need to be more sharply focused
- Monitoring of teaching and of pupils' progress is not sufficiently developed
- Schemes of work need adapting to reflect new features of the curriculum
- Development of retention skills for pupils

130. At the age of 14, standards are well below national figures. In teacher assessments, 57 per cent of pupils attained level 5 or above. This is below national averages. In work seen during the inspection, standards of pupils' attainment were well below national expectations. A pleasing aspect of the inspection, however, is that, in lessons observed, pupils sometimes attained in line with national norms. In these lessons, they handled facts well and they increased their short-term knowledge. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on slavery in the United States in the nineteenth century, pupils could effectively categorise a series of statements about slavery. However, the transfer of such short-term historical material to meaningful knowledge that can be used in longer-term revision is not yet successful for a large proportion of pupils. Few pupils have developed independent enquiry skills. The school has a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. The low levels of literacy of many of these pupils impede their progress. This situation is exacerbated by their lack of retention techniques and therefore they attain well below national expectations.
131. At the age of 16, standards at the GCSE examination, at 35.7% A* to C grades, are well below the standards achieved nationally. Standards in work seen are also well below national expectations. In the small number of lessons seen, pupils attained below national expectations. Pupils are skilful at linking several facts together to make a comprehensive and cohesive historical picture. For example, in a coursework assignment preparation lesson, following a visit to Ravensknowle Hall, where a series of photographs were taken, Year 10 pupils effectively recalled the factual evidence before them as features of the building. However, pupils did not demonstrate either the oral or the written analytical ability that is important to acquire higher grades at GCSE, and most failed to analyse and evaluate the historical importance contained in the evidence. The irregular patterns of attendance of some pupils have an adverse effect on their attainment. However, for those pupils who attend regularly, there are more general reasons for results that are well below average. These are, mainly, the lack of strategies for retention of facts and pupils' heavy reliance on staff support in class. The absence of these skills and support later becomes apparent when pupils are dealing with the complexities of analysis and evaluation in tests and examinations. The department is aware of the work needed in these areas.
132. Pupils' progress in each year from Year 7 to Year 11 is satisfactory overall. This success is especially pleasing in the first three years, since many pupils enter the school with a very low base-line of skills, knowledge and linguistic ability. By the end of this stage of their learning, pupils have a good knowledge of the periods they are studying and can effectively relate causation to effect. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build on the progress made in the first three years. Learning through empathy is a strength of the subject. A Year 9 class, for example, was clearly moved at the accounts of the suffering of slaves in the USA in the nineteenth century. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, largely due to the particularly good use of appropriate in-class specialist support. Provision for gifted and talented children is as yet under-developed and their progress is unsatisfactory.
133. The response of pupils is satisfactory overall. With the exception of a small but significant group of pupils of very low ability, who exhibit unacceptable and poor attitudes towards both work and behaviour, pupils generally show application to their work. They respond diligently and sustain concentration, although their oral contribution is often better than their written work. Pupils'

positive behaviour and response, which are important factors in their increased learning, is often a direct result of good teaching and good management of pupils by the teacher. Equally, the obverse is true.

134. Teaching is satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11. Some lessons observed were good and one was very good. However, a small number of lessons with Year 9 were unsatisfactory and one was poor. Weaker lessons are characterised by lack of structure, pace, challenge and of strategies to cope with poor behaviour. In the best lessons, teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and prepared and lead to pupils' learning. Teachers are particularly adept at drawing out significant points from material that is both challenging and exciting. For example, in a Year 8 class studying the conditions in the mines in the early 1840s, the teacher wove a range of historical factors into a story of an accident at a pit. The pupils were exhorted to act as 'historical detectives' to ascertain the causes of the accident. The quality of teaching led to good learning, since they were stimulated by the challenge and applied their best intellectual and creative efforts to fulfil the tasks set. A characteristic of the department's good teaching is the teachers' belief in the value of the subject and their enthusiasm for it. This, together with their good subject knowledge and creative ideas, particularly involving the sensitive choice of topics for study, such as the black history module, has a positive effect.
135. The head of department, who is also head of faculty, offers a vision for the future that incorporates raising standards and the encouragement of pupils to higher achievement. Other important decisions have been taken, such as the introduction of new and stimulating modules, as in the black history project. There are some areas, however, where progress is under-developed. For example, the assessment policy, though based on sound principles and achievable outcomes, requires better, sharper focus on data analysis, from which attainment targets, predicated against National Curriculum criteria, can be produced. National Curriculum levels do not feature strongly enough as a determinant in raising standards. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are in need of further development to support weaker teachers by allowing them to share best practice. Schemes of work require adaptation to reflect the new curriculum.
136. The teaching rooms, which have been recently refurbished to a high standard and which create an atmosphere conducive to learning, have displays of pupils' work that act as an incentive. However, the ambience is not yet matched by modern teaching aids, such as interactive white-boards and a range of artefacts, though these are features of the head of department's planning for the future.
137. Overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, as GCSE results remain too far below national levels. However, there are several encouraging features for the future, not least of which is the school's clear vision of how to take the department further forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes and interest
- A willingness to introduce innovation
- Timetabled lessons for all year groups
- Access to computers outside lessons
- High quality technician support

Areas for improvement

- Overall standards of work in all years
- Cross-curricular information and communications technology
- The organisation of courses in Years 8 and 9 to provide access for all
- Schemes of work in Years 10 and 11
- Meeting statutory requirements in all years

138. Information and communications technology is taught to all pupils in discrete lessons in all years. The school makes equipment available at break times, lunchtimes and after school. The resource is well used by pupils in these sessions. The school has made progress since the last inspection in improving pupils' experience and is moving towards meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, but needs to extend the content of its formal schemes of work to fully comply. Good use of information and communications technology can be found in design and technology, physical education and geography, but there is a need for further improvement in most other areas. Access to equipment is causing problems and some departments make little use of the technology available. Some teachers also lack the skills to put information and communications technology into practice. In some departments, equipment is not up to date, but an ongoing development programme is in place and planned changes to the timetable for the next academic year should help to rectify this situation.
139. Attainment is below average in all years. At the age of 14, pupils' teacher assessments suggests that 65 per cent of pupils achieve level 5 or above, but evidence seen during the inspection indicates that standards are lower than this. Attainment at entry is below average and continues to be so throughout Years 7 to 9, with most students working at the lower levels. Current Year 7 pupils are working at a higher standard. Pupils aged 14 demonstrate a very limited understanding of the use of information and communications technology to solve problems by building models, constructing procedures and then measuring or controlling the results. Assessment procedures are unreliable. Pupils do have adequate keyboard skills. They can load, edit and back up work, handle information using spreadsheets and databases, but cannot assemble information for modeling, exploring lines of enquiry. They develop presentations with appropriate software but do not have a good sense of audience. Pupils do not demonstrate a full understanding of the impact of information and communications technology on real-life situations.
140. The schemes of work for pupils in Year 7 are effective. Pupils progress well and achieve good-quality outputs. The school is aware that reliance on GNVQ materials in the next two years restricts full access to the National Curriculum by all pupils, and will be reviewing this situation in the light of national innovations. The GNVQ course is too difficult for some of the pupils following it in Years 8 and 9 as it requires business knowledge above their level of maturity, with the result that some have become discouraged and lack motivation, using Internet chat lines inappropriately during lessons. No evidence of the system design element of the curriculum was seen during the inspection. Some pupils take the GNVQ award, an adventurous undertaking given the time allocated. Pupils' opportunities to reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 9 are too dependent on ICT practice in other subjects, which lacks consistency. Given their attainment at the end of Year 9, pupils' progress is broadly satisfactory compared with other schools but not as high as it might be. Pupils with special educational needs and those deemed gifted or talented also make broadly satisfactory progress.
141. Attainment at 16 is, for the year group as a whole, well below national averages. There is no GCSE course and all pupils follow a CLAIT examination qualification. The scrutiny of Year 10 and 11 work based on the CLAIT course indicates a failure to challenge pupils to sufficiently high levels and some vital areas of the statutory programmes of study are missing from a significant number of pupils' work: as a result the standards they are reaching are well below average. For example, they do too little work on using ICT to measure, control and automate events or reflecting critically on the impact of ICT on their own and others' lives. Their work also lacks evidence of being able to design information systems and evaluate and suggest improvements to existing systems. The lack of access across the curriculum due to ongoing building and development work contributes to these omissions as it restricts pupils' ability to be independent and to apply their knowledge in other areas of their study and in other contexts. Some pupils' progress is boosted because they have a computer at home. There is a lack of evidence to show pupils' knowledge and understanding of the design of information and communications technology systems. Standards in communicating information using common software applications are good, but pupils do not demonstrate knowledge of how to present information for a specific audience.

142. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good. Lunchtime, break and after-school clubs are very well attended. Pupils collaborate well and generally help and support each other where appropriate. They treat equipment responsibly and maturely. Independent learning skills are under-developed.
143. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good teaching. The specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge. The skills and knowledge of one of the school technicians is very supportive to an effective learning environment. However, some lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers who, despite having good basic teaching skills, do not have the necessary knowledge and understanding of the subject to challenge pupils. The school has introduced strategies to overcome these problems and teachers without the necessary skills are well supported. There is a lack of demonstration equipment, such as a computer linked to a large screen projector. There are, however, plans to rectify this situation. Effective classroom management ensures that little time is wasted and the time available for learning is maximised. Relationships with pupils are good, which gives pupils the confidence to ask questions and risk making mistakes.
144. Some pupils are reliant on the teacher and have to wait to gain attention; while this causes some minor disruption, teachers are attentive and help sympathetically. In specific information and communications technology lessons, the majority of pupils progress satisfactorily. They make good progress when they use computers at home or in the clubs at break, lunchtime and after school. Pupils sometimes have to share machines. Those with special educational needs generally make good progress. In effective lessons, firm and timely management of inappropriate behaviour ensures that pupils sustain concentration. In the lessons where teaching is less satisfactory, planning does not identify clear objectives for pupils' learning, the topic fails to motivate, and instructions and tasks are not clear. As a result, pupils are unable to understand what they are supposed to do and lose concentration. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in their assessment to know where they are and what they must do to improve.
145. Leadership and management are sound overall. Staff work well as a team and have tried to introduce innovations. The school clearly sees information and communications technology as a vital part of the curriculum and is investing in new equipment and resources as fast as building work allows. Maximum opportunity is given to optimise the use of existing resources. Opportunities for pupils to use computers before and after school and at lunch breaks are very good. Many pupils, particularly those without a computer at home, take advantage of the facilities to do research, complete homework or write letters, but some simply visit chat rooms. Assessment procedures in Years 8 and 9 are unsatisfactory, as pupils do not know what levels they are working at.
146. There have been improvements since the last inspection. Teachers' planning and expectations are generally satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. There are now timetabled lessons for all pupils. Information and communications technology is mapped in other subjects on a subject-by-subject basis, but all students do not receive an equal entitlement and there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of this area. The number of computers has increased and is at the national average.

Information and communications technology across the curriculum

147. Access to the facilities restricts effective cross-curricular use. Accommodation and resources are insufficient. Timetabled lessons are sufficient, but there are not enough computer rooms to support cross-curricular information and communications technology effectively. Its use to support learning is good in design and technology. In science, mathematics, religious education, art and history there is insufficient information and communications technology to fulfil statutory requirements. Use of information and communications technology is satisfactory, but could be extended, in other subjects. Subjects are at different stages of development. Some, for example, are only beginning to realise the research opportunities available now that the school is connected to the Internet.

MODERN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Standards towards the end of Year 7 broadly match national averages
- The subject expertise of teaching staff and some teaching assistants is very good
- The school has eradicated the significant weaknesses that undermined standards over the last two years
- There is a good development of pupils' awareness of cultural characteristics of life in Germany
- There is effective use of teaching assistants

Areas for improvement

- Standards are too low and progress too slow for most pupils after Year 7
- Attitudes and behaviour are poor, especially in Year 9
- The department does not have enough time allocated to be able to cover the National Curriculum programmes of study satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9
- The school is unable to recruit additional teachers of sufficient calibre to build on the now firmer ground that has been established

148. Judgements in this report are set against a background of recent turmoil caused by weak teaching, resultant over-stretched leadership and worsening pupil attitudes that have undermined what was, initially, good progress following the previous inspection. Although senior leadership has pruned the weak teaching, the aftermath remains and the school provides only the bones of a curriculum in modern languages. It cannot recruit staff of sufficient calibre for classes in Years 7 to 9 to follow the programmes of study at the anticipated rate. It has also been obliged to arrange for all but eight of the pupils in Year 10 and for one third of those in Year 11 to discontinue prematurely the study of a modern language. As a result, provision is unsatisfactory. French is now phased out and German is the only language taught.

149. Standards are too low. At the end of Year 9, the proportions of pupils reaching expected levels of attainment are very low compared with national averages. Attainment is also much lower than in all their other subjects. More girls achieve expected standards than do boys: only two boys did so in 2001. Large proportions of pupils attain only rudimentary standards that show too little progress over the first three years' learning. Standards attained by those now approaching the end of Year 7 are, however, average.

150. After improving significantly in 1999 and 2000, GCSE higher-grade, A* to C results in German fell and in 2001, were very low in comparison with the national average and were much lower than the GCSE results pupils obtained in their other subjects. However, the school had been entering greater proportions of students for GCSE examinations in languages than is the case nationally, although too few candidates took French to make a secure comparison with national averages. In German, the A* to G results were closer to the national average, but, considering the pupils' potential, the proportions obtaining the lowest F or G passes were far too great.

151. Achievement in lessons is poor in Years 8 and 9, but satisfactory in Year 7. From no prior knowledge when they start the school, pupils towards the end of Year 7 are able to follow simple classroom commands in German and are able to respond accordingly. They have a good knowledge of numbers up to 100, of school subjects and of parts of the body. Copy writing is generally accurate and some compose simple pieces of German prose well. Such achievement contrasts significantly with much of that in Year 8 and especially Year 9, where poor attitudes, attendance and behaviour undermine learning. Although the written work of a few of the highest attainers is satisfactory, reinforcing well the themes and structures covered, the oral work and reading aloud of many indicate poor progress and understanding. The achievement in Years 7 to 9 of pupils from Asian backgrounds is often good and is better than that of most others, whilst that of pupils from other ethnic minority groups, with English as an additional language, is satisfactory overall.

152. Achievement in Year 10 is satisfactory for the very few pupils continuing German. They are interested and try hard in class, benefiting from well-structured grammar practice, for example, in the use of auxiliary verbs in recounting things they have done in the recent past. A scrutiny of their written work and that of a sample of Year 11 leavers indicates the possibility of an improvement in the proportions of higher-grade GCSE passes this year and next. The teaching in Year 10 was systematic, but expectations of what pupils should be able to do at the end of the work set were sometimes too low.
153. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but learning is unsatisfactory, as the pupils do not show enough initiative to get things done. Those in Year 10 had, for instance, prepared e-mails for German counterparts, but had not got round to sending them. Others in different years were happy to chat rather than requesting extra work or comments on what they had done when they had completed set work in advance of the rest. Some good and very good teaching has not yet brought the positive attitudes and learning habits it merits. All teaching is based upon the very good knowledge and understanding of both teachers involved. During and outside lessons, they increase very well the pupils' appreciation not only of its language, but also of Germany's culture and habits. Teachers use learning aids, such as skeletons, well to reinforce learning of parts of the body and, occasionally, use verse and rhythm well, for example, to teach the alphabet in a way the pupils enjoy and do not forget. A very good range of teaching techniques is developing; it includes a good emphasis on teaching basic grammatical skills that provide the pupils with a good knowledge of how language works. In the best lessons, the teachers create a good learning atmosphere that involves the pupils closely in their learning. Praise and rewards are used well to complement the lively pace at which the best lessons go. Homework is set satisfactorily, but its impact depends on how receptive the pupils are to learning; many pupils in Year 9 were clearly intent on not doing any, but its contribution to progress was good in Years 7 and 10. Weaknesses in teaching include too sketchy presentations of and references to the purposes of the lesson, so pupils are unclear about how well they are doing. The checking of pronunciation in chorus responses is not precise enough and the otherwise very effective use of teacher assistants is sometimes weakened by not concentrating on the pupils with special educational needs, who require such assistance. Unsatisfactory management of pupils leads to a slow pace, especially in Year 9. A failure to get the pupils to be actively involved is a recurrent weakness; pupils are required to respond, but are not expected to initiate language activities that also sometimes go on for too long. References to pupils' learning targets are infrequent and the marking of written work, whilst conscientiously done, gives no indication of how to improve its quality.
154. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has kept the department afloat through a very difficult period. There are good working relationships and satisfactory monitoring of the quality of teaching. The scheme of work is too general and does not incorporate either resources or how work is to be set to cover the different rates and ways pupils learn. The department has no clear targets for making headway and it does not analyse closely enough how pupils from different backgrounds perform to allow it to target resources effectively for improvement. Whilst there is a clear commitment and intention to do better, the department's capacity to make satisfactory provision and to raise standards is, without increased capable staffing, unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils in all year groups learn well because teaching is very good
- Leadership and management of the department are very good
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities is making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation makes no suitable provision for any form of group work
- Computers and classroom instruments are in need of upgrading
- Lesson planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' different needs and capabilities

155. In 2001, examination results in music in GCSE were above the national average. Over recent years, results have improved steadily. However, groups are too small for valid comparisons with other subjects. There is no difference between the overall attainment of boys and girls.
156. Teachers' assessments of the attainment of pupils by the age of fourteen indicate that this is below nationally expected levels and that the attainment of boys is markedly below that of girls.
157. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection were above this level and were very close to those expected nationally. Although the attainment of boys remains below that of girls, the gap is steadily decreasing. Differences between the two assessments are explained by insecurity in applying the criteria and by the fact that, although pupils enter the school with attainment below national expectations, as a result of their positive attitudes and response to very good teaching they are making good progress.
158. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good and in some cases very good. Pupils develop a secure base of musical skills and knowledge. They are rapidly gaining a good understanding of staff notation both for performing and composing. One or two very able pupils, on the department's gifted and talented register, create attractive, stylistically consistent pieces that are well above nationally expected levels. Pupils know the importance of careful listening: Year 9 pupils, for instance, listening to an example of Samba, were able to detect and identify unfamiliar instrumental sounds, demonstrating the ability to read and interpret new information, combined with their earlier musical experience. In ensemble work, pupils know the importance of maintaining a regular pulse and of playing rhythmically. Their principal weaknesses are in fluency of keyboard technique, brought about by the necessity of sharing instruments, and a general lack of sensitivity. This is partly because of their exuberance and enthusiasm, partly because of the poor acoustical conditions in which they operate, and also because not enough attention is paid to the need to introduce variety and subtlety as well as precision into their work.
159. The attainment of pupils by the age of sixteen is good. Pupils' strengths are in composition. All understand conventional forms and structures and learn to improvise within these to create attractive pieces. They have a good grasp of harmonic relationships, balance and structure and more able pupils work within these freely and imaginatively. However, none experiments with other than predictable diatonic conventions. Their performing is secure and confident, and occasionally outstanding. Weaknesses are in listening and identifying features of music from different periods because earlier opportunities to broaden their experience have been limited.
160. Pupils at this stage achieve well. Very few begin to play instruments before becoming pupils at the school, but those who choose music at GCSE make good progress in performing, whether playing an instrument or singing, because they avail themselves of opportunities within the school for lessons and practise regularly with various groups.
161. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress because they are well integrated and well supported. However, a few with very particular needs are not well catered for. As a result of the good provision of instrumental lessons and performing opportunities, and because teaching is based on developing pupils' innate musicianship, pupils identified as being gifted or talented make good progress; however, they would benefit at times from the setting of a higher challenge.
162. Pupils enjoy music lessons. They are well motivated, eager to learn and work hard. They arrive at lessons prepared to co-operate and waste little time. They are supportive of one another and are frequently obviously exhilarated by the quality of the experience they share in class.

163. At all stages and levels of ability pupils learn well because teaching is very good. The single teacher, who is head of department, is well informed and constantly strives to raise standards of attainment and to ensure pupils' respect for the subject. Teaching has improved steadily since the previous inspection and is now generally very good; during the inspection, two excellent lessons were seen. Particular strengths are versatility and expertise, excellent organisation of all activities and very good classroom management. Pupils are never in doubt as to what is expected of them either in standards of co-operation or effort, a situation that is achieved with empathy and humour. Lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In the course of most lessons, pupils' literacy skills are challenged and reinforced. More consideration needs to be given to setting challenges according to pupils' different needs and capabilities, and to improving pupils' sensitivity and discrimination.
164. The single-teacher music department is led and managed very well, although the teacher has too little non-contact time to operate all the department's activities and fulfil other responsibilities as head of Year 9. Very good liaison exists with instrumental staff and classroom assistants, and very good support is given to students on teaching practice. Monitoring of the quality of teaching occurs regularly, although subject specific review for the head of department is rare. The assessment system is efficient, but needs some modification to make information more easily accessible. The department's development plan is realistic, but there is no satisfactory planning for obtaining essential costly items such as good quality classroom percussion and updated computers. Accommodation for music is poor. The lack of suitable practice spaces is a serious hindrance to the development of ensemble skills, sensitive refinement of performing and composing, and discriminating listening. The provision of keyboards is low and, because pupils are obliged to share at all times, their technical fluency is inhibited. The lack of sufficient tuned percussion of good quality and variety prevents the delivery of the National Curriculum in music in sufficient depth and, although there are enough computers, all except one is out of date.
165. The head of department devotes a great deal of time to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The steel bands are in regular demand for events in the community and were chosen to play in the Millennium Dome. In addition to the choir and swing band, which rehearse weekly, other instrumental ensembles are organised from time to time. There are regular concerts, a major musical production takes place each year, and opportunities to co-operate with other schools and participate in major events such as the Jubilee concert at the nearby sports stadium ensure that pupils are closely involved and maintain their enthusiasm. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the regard with which the school is held in the community.
166. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The department's high standards have been maintained, attainment has steadily improved, the quality of teaching is consistently very good, and opportunities to enrich pupils' experience have increased.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better with examples of very good teaching in GCSE theory lessons
- Some pupils with specific needs make very good progress relative to their ability when supported by dedicated teaching assistant
- Extra-curricular activities are open to pupils of all abilities; success at local, regional and national level in football and basketball
- Increasing numbers of pupils choosing GCSE physical education

Areas for improvement

- Negative attitudes of a significant minority of pupils, often girls

- Need for baseline assessment of pupils on entry in order that progress over time can be more accurately monitored
- The curricular activities on offer for girls, particularly in Years 9 to 11

167. Standards in the work of the majority of boys in Years 7 to 9 observed during the inspection are in line with expectations for their age in athletics and tennis. In athletics, pupils' attainment in sprinting and relay running is sound. Many are developing appropriate relay changeover strategies, although attention to detail is lacking for some boys. In tennis, about half the pupils have made good progress in developing match play. Lower-attaining boys have also made good progress in modified games, although many are limited in sustaining a rally. Some pupils with ability but a poor attitude under-achieve. The throwing skills of girls in athletics are appropriate for a minority. Progress of girls across Years 7 to 9 in both rounders and athletics is limited and reflects poor attitudes from some pupils who do not care if their actions hinder the progress of others. Some pupils recognise how to prepare for activity and have knowledge of muscle groups and their function. A number are competent to lead stretching exercises for specific activities. The ability to develop critical awareness of their own and other's performance is under-developed. Some pupils with special educational needs make very good progress relative to their ability when supported by teaching assistants. Pupils deemed gifted and talented make sound progress across all years.
168. By the age of 16, the number of pupils gaining A* to C grades in GCSE fluctuates from year to year. Results are broadly in line with the school average, but well below the national average. In the previous year, results were in line with the school average. This reflects in some ways the academic potential of each cohort. Strategies are now in place to ensure that grades for pupils on the C/D threshold will improve as greater emphasis is put on the learning of theory. Indications for the current cohort suggest an improvement in the number gaining A* to C grades. There is no marked difference in the overall results for girls and boys, but girls' attention to detail and presentation in theory work is better. In the marking and feedback of theory work, more could be offered in the way of suggestions for improving individual pieces of coursework. Increasing numbers of pupils are choosing GCSE physical education, although the numbers of girls taking it up is small.
169. Standards in the work of 16 year olds observed in practical sessions are varied. In athletics, some boys show themselves to be able sprinters. In rounders, very few girls have developed sound catching, throwing and striking skills and incorrect movement patterns in these aspects are below the expectations for their age. The range of attainment in tennis is very wide with some, mainly boys, able to sustain a rally while others are still working towards basic hitting skills. Boys enjoy competing, but are less assured in the task of evaluating one another's performance. An increasing number of pupils extend and refine their skills in the extra-curricular sports programme, where teams and individuals have enjoyed district, regional and national success, particularly in football and basketball.
170. The majority of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good or very good teaching. There is often good deployment of teaching assistants in different practical contexts, although a more specific focus may help in some lessons. In Year 10 theory lessons, teaching was very good when it made links to previous learning and progressive tasks were delivered at brisk pace, involving pupils in a variety of learning tasks including individual research on the subject of nutrients. Greater use of directed questions to extend knowledge and understanding for the different abilities within the group is often needed. Across Years 7 to 10, learning of practical skills is satisfactory. There are missed opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding through the use of personal demonstration and developing accurate observation skills. A distinctive feature of the teaching is the subtle encouragement of acceptable behaviour and appropriate attitudes toward competitive or co-operative situations. Unfortunately, with some more challenging groups it is unheeded.
171. Good leadership and management are factors in the overall improvement within the department. There is evidence of a reflective culture and the curriculum is well planned, but under constant scrutiny as the department attempts to resolve the problem of poor attitudes in a number of

groups. Attempts to improve the involvement of girls in physical activity are also under consideration. An effective assessment system ensures that learning outcomes are monitored and in turn keeps pupils informed of their progress. This device should also be used to monitor the effectiveness of units of work and curricular planning. Although the provision of indoor facilities is good, the maintenance of outdoor facilities is poor, grass is often too long for teaching purposes and the lack of rolling provides a dangerous playing or running surface. Overall, there has been very good improvement in several aspects of the department's work since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils who are entered for the GCSE short course achieve good results
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient time is allocated to the subject
- There are no specialist teachers of religious education
- Teaching should make greater demands upon the pupils

172. Standards amongst 14 year olds are below the national expectations according to formal teacher assessment, but since pupils enter the school with limited prior knowledge, this represents satisfactory progress. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 were average overall and attainment is broadly in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils in Year 7 make good progress in their understanding of the Christian marriage ceremony. They confidently discuss the differences between a non-religious ceremony and a religious wedding. Year 8 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the Buddhist, Eight-fold Path. They enjoy writing and acting drama sketches which illustrate how an unkind person changes to become helpful and caring. Pupils in Year 9 make limited progress in their understanding of Sikhism.
173. Attainment amongst 16 year olds is average. Results in 2001 were above the national average, with almost all of the 30 entries in the GCSE short course gaining an A* to G grade and 22 pupils gaining A* to C grades. These results represented the highest percentage for A* to C grades in the LEA and was a considerable improvement on the two previous years' GCSE results. It constitutes very good progress across Years 10 and 11 for these pupils. The majority of pupils, who study religious education only as a small component of personal and social education (PSE), make more limited progress, so that, on balance, gains for the Year 10 and 11 pupils overall are satisfactory. In work seen during the inspection in GCSE lessons in Year 10, attainment was broadly average and pupils were making good progress. The pupils had well-formed opinions and were able to discuss confidently issues concerning capital punishment. However, pupils addressing issues of conservation in a PSE lesson showed less application and made only superficial contributions to the lesson.
174. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the good support they receive from teachers and assistants. They make good progress in relation to their previous learning. Support is most effective when there are individual programmes of work to support learning. Standards of literacy are below average and pupils make limited oral contributions to lessons. Listening skills are limited and written work is below the expected standard. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not often required to write at enough length to explore the subject in depth. Older pupils take sound advantage of opportunities to write and talk about moral, social and cultural issues. Teachers do not provide enough guidance on spiritual issues. The most successful part of a Year 10 lesson on capital punishment was when the pupils were given a structured task and were able to formulate their own opinions. One pupil was most effectively included in the discussion when he

contributed his experiences of crime and punishment in Tanzania. Lessons are less successful when discussion is more general. Information and communication skills are unsatisfactory.

175. Pupils have a satisfactory attitude to religious and spiritual issues. A small, but significant, minority do not enjoy the subject or lessons. The substantial majority of pupils in Years 7 and 8 are well motivated and have a good attitude to learning. A small number of pupils in Years 9 and 10 present challenging behaviour, which adversely affects the learning of other pupils in the class. Younger pupils collaborate effectively in preparing and presenting drama sketches. In the best lessons, pupil-teacher relationships are mature and productive.
176. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are no specialist religious education teachers and currently no head of department. During the inspection, a number of lessons were taken by substitute and supply teachers from other subject areas with an adverse effect on continuity of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is also adversely affected by some teachers' insecure subject knowledge. The planning of the substantial majority of lessons is satisfactory, with teaching objectives being clearly identified. The good management of teacher assistants and their effective deployment make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. The match of levels of work to the needs and abilities of individuals or groups of pupils should be improved. Teaching is good and lessons have good pace when they are planned within a time frame. This was particularly evident with a Year 10 class discussing issues related to capital punishment. Teaching is least effective when the pupils' work is poorly presented, with no individual target setting. Assessment procedures should be improved.
177. In all years, learning is satisfactory and the pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Younger pupils have made an effective study of holy men and religious signs and symbols. They have a satisfactory understanding of such religious events as Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah and Lent. Older pupils have a satisfactory understanding of such issues as euthanasia, abortion, infanticide and medical ethics. Higher-attaining pupils effectively discuss the scientific and religious viewpoints of creation. Lower attainers effectively discuss modesty in relation to religious dress. Individual learning plans would benefit the least and most able.
178. Since the previous inspection improvement has been satisfactory. The subject still fails to meet its legal requirement, with insufficient time being allocated in all years for the effective delivery of the curriculum. There is evidence that pupils are not only learning about religion but also from religion. For example, a Year 8 class applied the story of the Good Samaritan to modern situations. Expectations remain low and a significant minority of pupils have an unsatisfactory attitude to the subject. The urgent need for a specialist to take responsibility for the subject has been addressed with the appointment of a head of department with effect from September this year.