

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**MELLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

**Gorton, Manchester**

**LEA area: Manchester**

**Unique reference number: 105615**

**Headteacher: Mrs J O'Kane**

**Lead inspector: Adrian Simm**

**Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11th March 2004**

**Inspection number: 258946**

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	115
School address:	Holmcroft Road Gorton Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M18 7NG
Telephone number:	0161 223 9915
Fax number:	0161 230 6919
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Sarah Fuller
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Melland High School educates 62 boys and 53 girls aged 11 to 19 years who have severe and profound learning difficulties. Around 17 per cent of pupils have more challenging behaviour, which is higher than at the last inspection. Pupils come from the north, east and centre of Manchester, which includes areas of high social deprivation. Fifty three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is high. Pupils' attainment on entry is low in comparison to their chronological age. Around 23 per cent of pupils come from family backgrounds other than white British. Just over 20 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language. For these pupils, the principal languages are Punjabi, Urdu and Somali. They are at the very early stages of communication and language development and as such are at the same level of learning as other pupils. Most pupils have statements of special educational needs. Four pupils are currently having their needs assessed. The school is involved in a range of initiatives that include:

- Excellence in Cities – Information and communication technology club
- Outreach and inclusion work with local mainstream schools
- A bid to re-locate and share the site of a local high school

The school has achieved the following awards:

- Investors in people in 2002
- School Achievement Award in 2003
- Healthy Schools Award in 2003

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21138	Adrian Simm	Lead inspector	Geography History Personal, social and health education and Citizenship English as an additional language
12536	Sylvia Bullerwell	Lay inspector	
32176	Becky Harrison	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Art and design Special educational needs
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music
7994	Pam Weston	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Melland High School is **outstandingly effective**. It is an oasis of excellence. In subjects that are the main focus of provision, pupils achieve very well as a result of excellent teaching and learning. Pupils' personal development is far ahead of expectations because of the outstanding ethos for learning in the school. First-rate leadership and management by the head teacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and head of administration have ensured excellent improvement in provision since the last inspection. Given that the school's funding is reasonable, the exceptional results achieved means that the school offers excellent value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Inspirational leadership and management and exceptionally effective governance have transformed the school since the last inspection.
- Excellent teaching and learning ensure that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution.
- Pupils achieve very well or better in everything that they do.
- Part of the school's exceptional ethos is the very strong systems of care and curriculum provision that is highly effective.
- Very strong links with the community and other schools and colleges have a significant impact on provision. This is particularly obvious in supporting the excellence of accreditation of students' work in Post 16.

The school's progress in improving pupils' achievement has been outstanding since the last inspection. This is most obvious in the support for pupils' personal development, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education, although all areas of school life have improved significantly. Development issues from the last inspection have all been dealt with very effectively.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Year 11	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Year 13	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

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

Pupils' achievement is **very good** in English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, physical education and at Post 16. Achievement in personal and social development, which pervades all parts of school life, is excellent. Achievement in other subjects was not the focus of the inspection although here also, where lessons were seen, learning was very good. Boys and girls, pupils with different ethnic backgrounds, those with English as an additional language and pupils with differing special educational needs achieve equally highly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. Whilst attendance is good overall, many pupils attend very well.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **excellent**. Teaching is **outstanding** in Years 7 to 11 and in Post 16. This results in pupils learning exceptionally well. Teachers and support staff work so closely together that their roles inter-link seamlessly. They know exactly how pupils will react to different situations. They

either plan for this in advance or react spontaneously to little signs of potential difficulty, which are then immediately overcome. This results in excellent relationships, which in turn leads to pupils who grow in confidence and want to learn. Staff frequently check on what pupils know and understand by careful and very effective question-and-answer sessions throughout lessons. The school is rightly very confident that all of the work it has done in introducing the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has paid off in abundance. Every minute in the day is a teaching and learning situation, regardless of whether it is in the classroom, on the playground or in the dining hall. One outstanding example of this is how well pupils in tutorial sessions are prepared for collective worship taken by other classes. This means that during the assemblies, everyone is fully involved and knowledgeable about the focus whether they are leading the activity or not.

The curriculum offers very good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning. Provision for personal and social development is excellent. One small example of this is at break times. Pupils can choose to purchase tuck from a wide variety available. Whilst this is a learning experience in itself, pupils' very high level of personal development means that not one packet or other item of litter is left on the playground. Pupils take part in a very good range of educational visits off site in which they learn practically and from residential experiences. Links with other schools and colleges are very strong and ensure that pupils' learning opportunities are much broader than would otherwise be the case. An example of this is the way in which the school overcomes the drawbacks of its own accommodation for physical education. Staff work extremely hard to ensure very high quality provision. Links with most parents provide very effective opportunities for them to support their children's education.

Students in Post 16 build units in most areas of learning in school and in work in the community. This results in their learning being accredited at one of four levels within a locally acknowledged scheme that operates also in mainstream schools. This is an excellent system. The number of students in Post 16 has outgrown the accommodation available.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and head of administration are **excellent**. Their teamwork is outstanding. All other staff in leadership positions make a very good contribution to developing provision, such as staff involved with pupils with more profound learning difficulties. The School Improvement Group, made up of representatives of all parts of the school community, is exceptionally effective. It is a wonderful mechanism for establishing what is the next set of priorities for development and how effective previous initiatives have been. It ties together such areas as self-evaluation, staffs' personal targets for improvement, whole-school targets for improvement and continuing professional development for staff. The ultimate focus is on raising pupils' standards and improving their care. Some governors' involvement in the School Improvement Group is just one example of their excellent contribution. Governors are very highly committed to the school and provide active support. They are fully involved in the school's bid to co-locate to a high-school site, which would incorporate mainstream pupils and other community facilities. All statutory requirements are met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

A very high majority of parents are highly satisfied with the school. Those who attended the meeting with inspectors pointed out the outstanding balance achieved between the quality of pupils' learning and their care. Pupils really enjoy what the school provides for them. They are extremely satisfied.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no significant issues for improvement stemming from the inspection. The school is very clear about improvements needed in their accommodation. It is working towards this with the local education authority.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils' achievement is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding in personal and social development.
- Pupils achieve very well in all aspects of all of the other subjects inspected.
- Pupils with English as an additional language, those with more challenging behaviours and with profound learning difficulties and pupils from ethnic minority families achieve equally as well as other pupils.
- Students in Post 16 achieve very well despite the number of students having outgrown the size of the accommodation.
- Achievement has risen significantly since the last inspection.

#### **Commentary**

1. When they join the school, pupils' attainment is very low. Despite this, they achieve very well against the goals expected of them. In all subjects inspected, pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve very well. This includes achievement in speaking and listening, reading, writing, alternative communication strategies for those pupils who cannot make their needs known verbally, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education and physical education. Also, students in Post 16 achieve very well, despite many group-teaching sessions taking place within hearing distance of other activities, which at times can be disruptive. This very high level of achievement throughout the school shows a marked improvement in standards since the last inspection in all subjects of the curriculum, but particularly in religious education, ICT and personal and social development. The school's approach in supporting staff in continuously building and evaluating their skills is exceptionally effective. This has contributed to the steep upward trend in achievement during a time when the school is admitting pupils with more complex learning difficulties. All pupils' personal and social development is outstanding. This is because they are constantly experiencing excellent relationships with staff and because pupil-choice is integral in all activities within and outside lessons at a level that staff know is right for each pupil.
2. The school sets statutory targets for pupils in Year 9 and Year 11. These were trialed ready for the national assessments of 2003 and again for 2004 with the support of the local education authority and in co-operation with another similar school. This was a very good way of working. Targets use 'P' scales, which are agreed steps leading to national curriculum levels for those pupils for whom this is appropriate. National curriculum levels are used as targets for higher attaining pupils. Regardless of their levels, pupils achieve very well and many exceed their targets. Staff are focused on continually 'sharpening' this system to make the evaluation of targets even more meaningful. By the time students leave school at the end of Post 16, they have a comprehensive progress file. Parents attending the meeting with inspectors spoke very highly of how the school constantly supports their children in aiming high. No 'ceiling' is placed on pupils' opportunities.
3. Most pupils with English as an additional language are in the early stages of language acquisition. They benefit, as do all pupils, from the very well thought out teaching methods to improve pupils' standards in communication, including speaking and listening. Pupils' and staff's good use of alternative methods of communication, such as signing and picture clues, gives all pupils in need of this approach alternative ways of communicating well when they need to draw upon these methods. Staff and pupils frequently learn new signs together to stretch themselves further. The achievement of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is very good and

strengthening, because they are known well to staff who do their best to ensure that their needs are met. This is one example of where the school has set out to improve their expertise through additional training, and is monitoring the effectiveness of their teaching very closely. Staff are very careful to plan activities that appeal to all pupils and to vary the teaching and learning approaches they employ. As a result, the needs of different types of learners are met very well.

4. Students in Post 16 work very successfully on achieving the 'Award for Excellence'. This is a locally recognised award involving high schools throughout the local education authority. Students gain one of four levels recognised as bronze, silver, gold or platinum. To achieve these awards, students do very well in attendance and punctuality, active citizenship, work experience and the key skills of communication, ICT use, applying number, working with others, managing their own learning and problem solving. Students achieve very well on this excellent initiative, which requires a high commitment over time. Great emphasis is placed on students achieving very well in tasks that show initiative, independence and self-confidence. Students' success in this is a major contribution to their excellent achievement in personal and social development. Targets and expectations for younger pupils build over time and feed very well into achievement at Post 16. This is why all pupils and students achieve exceptionally well in personal and social development.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Attendance is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning help them to achieve very well.
- Pupils have many excellent opportunities to develop confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- The school prepares pupils exceptionally well to be thoughtful, caring citizens.
- Attendance is good overall, although on very rare occasions, absence is not authorised correctly.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils are happy and enthusiastic at school. When they first start in Year 7, they settle into school routines very quickly and enjoy the activities. Because the activities are very well matched to their needs, they are interested in what is going on at school and want to learn. This interest and involvement in lessons, in lunchtime-clubs and during play is maintained throughout the school and is common to pupils with different learning difficulties. Pupils try very hard and focus on the task in hand due to the excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
6. Pupils respond very well to what the school offers them. As they get older, they show increasing confidence and maturity. Through the school council, they give their views about what happens in school. They learn that their opinion matters and is valued highly. Pupils show great responsibility by helping others such as in the 'buddy' scheme where older pupils support new starters or those with extra needs. Pupils review their personal learning plan with staff each half term and set themselves personal targets to achieve. When staff help them to evaluate how successful they have been, their self-esteem is boosted and they become far more confident at challenging themselves further. Excellent relationships underpin the school's behaviour strategies, so that, overall, pupils behave very well because they want to. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds get on extremely well.
7. Provision for pupils' personal development is an integral part of the curriculum. Through music and art, they learn to appreciate other cultures. One example is an activity in art where all pupils studied Chinese brushwork and recreated black and white watercolours of locusts and pandas. Pupils learn exceptionally well about other faiths. Poems written about this were displayed in a local civic centre as part of the Asian community celebrations. Pupils think of those less

fortunate than themselves, as in their link with a school in Zambia, which does not have a regular supply of clean water. In response, pupils plan activities to raise money to provide their 'friends' with a bore-hole. Pupils actively help within the community, such as gardening at an old people's home. They are clearly becoming very good citizens. By the time they enter the Post 16 department, students take part in a very broad range of 'citizenship' based activities. They consider and discuss current affairs, take part in residential activity holidays with other schools or work as part of the young enterprise team. In this role, they run a small business, making and selling creative art artefacts. This helps them to learn well about financial management and business expertise, whilst at the same time raise funds to enhance their community areas.

8. Attendance last year was 88 per cent, which is below average. However, three pupils accounted for much of this absence, which was primarily due to medical issues. For the rest of the school, attendance overall was 93 per cent. A quarter of all pupils in Years 7 to 11 had full attendance for the year. The school works effectively to improve pupils' attendance. There was no recorded unauthorised absence last year but this was due to the school not authorising absence correctly on a very small number of occasions.

### Attendance

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

**2002/2003**

Authorised absence	
School data:	11.9
National data:	9.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0
National data:	0.6

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

9. The learning mentor works with pupils who are at risk from exclusion and counsels them on a one-to-one basis. This is part of the school's very good range of strategies to help those pupils whose behaviour at times affects other pupils' learning opportunities. Fixed term exclusions are used appropriately when, on rare occasions, pupils' challenging behaviour becomes extreme. The number of instances is shown in the table below.

**Exclusions - There have been no permanent exclusions.**

**Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions
White – British	79	7
White – Irish	1	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	
Mixed – White and Asian	4	
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	12	
Black or Black British – African	1	
Any other ethnic group	1	
No ethnic group recorded	9	

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Partnership with parents, the community and the impact of links with other schools are **very good**. The standard of care and the support and guidance which pupils receive is **very good**. Curricular opportunities are **very good**. Because teaching and learning are **excellent**, the overall quality of education is **excellent**.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **excellent**. Assessment of pupils' work is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every minute of the day is used practically as an excellent learning situation for all pupils.
- Many lessons incorporate elements of a range of subjects, particularly literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).
- Pupils and staff have excellent relationships. This encourages pupils to work hard and concentrate very well in lessons.
- Staff set out to consistently improve their own skills so that the school provides the best it can for all pupils.
- Pupils' individual needs are met very well and challenging behaviour is effectively and consistently managed.

### Commentary

10. Teaching and learning are excellent overall. All teaching is good or better in Years 7 to 11 and Post 16. Excellent lessons were seen in all subjects and courses that are the main focus of the school's work. Teaching and learning in the subjects of English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education and PSHCE are very good overall with some excellent examples in each. The careful planning of lessons and a very interesting range of activities contribute to the strengths of teaching and learning. Lessons seen during the inspection are summarised in the table below.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (23%)	23 (52%)	11 (25%)				

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

11. From the moment pupils enter the school each morning, the whole day is a teaching and learning experience. For example, pupils with more profound learning difficulties come into school immediately they arrive on the school transport. In the school hall, they experience, with great delight and interest, the music and aroma of the day. This changes each day of the week but remains the same, for example, for every Monday. This is an excellent initiative to try to help the pupils recognise which day it is. An extra strand of the approach is that older pupils choose the music to be markedly different in pace and style each day. Pupils' personal development benefits exceptionally from this type of 'throughout-the-day' approach.

### Example of outstanding practice

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**Every minute of each day is taught time. The use of break times enhances pupils' personal development.**

Pupils who are mobile make their way to the playground independently, regardless of how far away their classroom is. This happens because of excellent routines known by the pupils and high expectations of pupils' independence by staff. Once on the playground, pupils have the option to buy tuck from a trolley. They queue sensibly and maturely to buy their choice, for example, of crisps, fruit or drink. Practical money handling is integral to the activity. Most items bought have waste, whether it is a packet, carton or fruit skin. At the end of break time, the playground is totally clear of litter. Pupils were observed going to the bins provided to dispose of their litter in an excellent example of collective citizenship. The school has a musical 'rap', 'Put your litter in the bin, if you don't it's a sin'.

12. Relationships with pupils are of exceptional quality. This results in pupils working very hard and learning very effectively. There is a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and pupils are very happy to learn. First thing in the morning, known routines are carried out. For example, in Years 10 and 11, pupils independently check their individual learning plans and discuss any issues with staff. Others get ready to go to their school council meeting, some take their homework to the appropriate subject teacher and on occasions, 'pen-pal' letters from Zambia have arrived. These are discussed with great interest. Staff always inform pupils what they are about to do. The important objectives for the lessons are written down clearly on white boards and discussed with pupils before they start. There are very good levels of support in lessons and these are deployed very well to ensure that each pupil gains the maximum benefit from the teaching. Teaching assistants challenge and question pupils and help them to succeed. Staff manage challenging behaviour calmly and effectively by consistently using agreed strategies.
13. All excellent and very good lessons are experiences that incorporate many strands of learning. For example:
- An ICT lesson rooted in design and technology, where a floor robot became the wolf in the 'Three Little Pigs' story, tried to blow down the houses, which had been designed by the pupils.
  - A science lesson about 'living things', incorporated appropriate music to resemble a growing plant
  - Religious education lessons that are so inter-linked with other subjects and school assemblies all become one excellent teaching and learning experience.

**Example of outstanding practice**

**Class assemblies are learning experiences for all pupils who are either directly involved or watching.**

All staff are aware of the focus of the next class assembly because it is set out clearly in a yearly planner. Whilst rooted in religious education, the assemblies are linked to themes that include strands of other subjects. Based upon the particular focus of the next assembly, workbooks are provided in advance to help teachers choose work that is appropriate for their class. This allows staff to prepare their pupils at a level appropriate to their special educational needs for understanding and contributing to the assembly far more than they would otherwise do. This was very evident in an excellent religious education lesson. Pupils' speaking and listening skills were extended very well in a superb question-and-answer session, including a PSHCE focus of 'why is it important that we share things'. This all fed into the story of why Noah built the Ark, which would feature in the next assembly taken by another class.

14. All staff know the specific special educational needs which each pupil has, the levels at which the pupils are working and, therefore, plan future learning that is just right. Targets are set for pupils to help in this process. Teachers, teaching assistants and therapists all contribute to the targets set in individual or group plans, which is a very good way of working. This is just one example of the way in which staff set out to improve their expertise relevant to these more specific special educational needs. Since the last inspection, more pupils with more challenging needs have been enrolled at the school. The school has risen to the challenge.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. Extra curricular activities and enrichment of provision are **very good**. The school accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been greatly improved since the last inspection.
- There are some shortcomings in accommodation, particularly at Post 16 although staff try very hard to overcome these.
- The school provides a wide range of innovative and purposeful curricular opportunities that cater for the needs, aptitudes and interests of the pupils.
- Extra curricular clubs, visits and a wide range of visitors contribute significantly to the many planned opportunities for learning outside the school day.

### Commentary

15. The school's imaginative curriculum covers all the requirements of the national curriculum, including provision for religious education and collective worship. It is the foundation for the provision that helps all pupils to achieve very well. Experienced and highly motivated teachers and teaching assistants contribute outstandingly to this achievement. The school has a good number of teaching assistants, some of whom are trained as high level teaching assistants and able to teach for short periods during the absence of their linked teacher. In the absence of teaching assistants through illness or staff development, the staff team is sufficient in number to ensure the continuing excellence of overall provision.
16. The previous inspection report was quite critical of several aspects of the curriculum. In particular, it criticised the shortness in taught time, absence of policies and schemes of work for some subjects, and an insufficient range of communication devices for pupils with the most complex learning needs. All of these shortcomings have been fully addressed. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 has been supported very well by the very successful introduction of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has many innovative and practical strategies in place to bring pupils' learning alive, such as a visit to a Turkish supermarket and community centre as part of their enterprise project. The very effectively structured 'Wings Award', recently introduced in the lower part of the school, will build year-on-year until it links with the Award for Excellence which already works very effectively at Post-16
17. The highly developed curriculum for Post 16 students prepares them very effectively for the future. The key skills of PSHCE, communication, application of number and ICT are taught very well. There is very good provision for work-related learning, life and leisure skills. Careers education and guidance, work experience, college links and the experiences of running their own business through Team Enterprise promote students' personal, moral and social skills exceptionally well. However, at Post 16, there are now almost three times as many students as at the last inspection. Although staff work extremely hard to overcome accommodation issues, because of high numbers, the accommodation has become unsatisfactory. There are insufficient toilets and changing facilities within the department. Moreover, groups have to double-up in circulation areas where they are in easy hearing distance of other activities. This can impinge on what would otherwise be very good learning opportunities. The school has made many adjustments to the layout of the school in order to utilise every available space. Specialist science and art and design rooms are just two examples of this. However, there is still a shortage of storage space, and corridors are very tight for the number of wheelchairs used in the school. The hydrotherapy pool condemned shortly after the last inspection was turned into medical related accommodation and not replaced. Pupils who require hydrotherapy attend another school on occasions. The school is still short of specialist design and technology facilities and an effective library.

18. Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well through a range of activities that include lunchtime clubs for computers, a steel band, choir, sing and sign and Tai Chi. In addition, pupils go on residential trips, outdoor adventure activities and curriculum based visits to places such as the Bridgewater Hall, the Jewish Museum and the Whitworth Art Gallery. These activities add richness and choice to the curriculum and make a consistent and outstanding contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is **very good**. Provision for the support, advice and guidance of pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development is **very good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance.
- A 'Buddy' system, pupil passports and lunchtime clubs are part of the excellent induction procedures for pupils.
- Very good policies and procedures, designed to care for pupils' welfare, are almost always followed thoroughly. Updates or verbal clarification of procedures occasionally miss staff who have been absent from school.
- 'Passports' are a very good way of ensuring consistent care and support for pupils for whom they are appropriate.
- Pupils are given effective opportunities to express their views, which have an impact on school life.

### Commentary

19. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Registration and tutor-time works very well to provide a calm start to the school day. There are very good links to feeder schools and excellent induction arrangements enable pupils to settle in to their new school. A well thought out system of 'buddies' and 'pupils' passports' enhance induction. Parents, staff and pupils speak highly of these systems and, together with lunchtime clubs, they help pupils settle in very quickly.
20. The school ensures that procedures for child protection follow the recommendations of the local area child protection committee. The designated teacher updates her own training as expected. She ensures regular dissemination of information to staff, although at times, staff who are absent do not catch up with this as quickly as they could.
21. The individual needs of pupils are very well provided for. All pupils have personal learning plans that are shared with all members of staff. Pupils are very aware of their targets and are mindful that they are discussed at annual educational reviews. The sharpness of targets in IEP's for those pupils with the most profound or complex learning needs have recently been improved and will be evaluated for effectiveness in due course.
22. There is very good multi-agency support from other professionals, to meet the needs of the pupils. The school has benefited from funding additional speech and language therapy support. Early indications show that pupils are making improved progress as a direct outcome of this additional support. 'Passports' for those pupils who need this provision ensure that all their essential care needs, as well as likes and dislikes, are readily available for all staff. A learning mentor, working with staff, provides very good support and guidance to help pupils understand how to overcome anger and frustration by teaching positive alternatives.

23. The school considers pupils' views in a number of formal and informal ways, including a school council and through tutorial time. Pupils have recently been involved fully in making suggestions to achieve the Gold Healthy School Award. Pupils like being involved and feel that they are valued and listened to. All of this represents a very good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's commitment to consulting parents is excellent.
- Very good information and induction procedures enable parents to be effective partners although some parents would like more information about the curriculum.
- Very good links with the community enhance the provision for pupils' learning

#### **Commentary**

24. The school consults parents about every area of its work. Parents have responded to questionnaires about healthy schools, citizenship, ICT, PSHE, parent workshops and adult education as part of the school's self review and evaluation. Staff take excellent account of parents' views to develop the curriculum. The school sets out to meet parents' needs and to provide information. For example, parents wanted to know which computer software pupils were using at school so they could purchase it to use at home. Results of questionnaires are collated and reported to parents through the school newsletter each term to keep parents very well informed on what is happening in school.
25. Parents receive very detailed information in the school brochure about policies and procedures. The governors' annual report is excellent. Alongside statutory information, it includes the school improvement plan and targets along with the termly focus for literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school offers parents adult education classes and also workshops for basic skills but the take-up is very low. The newsletter each term reports clearly on events in the school calendar and includes photographs of pupils at work in school to share their experiences with parents. Written annual reports on pupils' progress are informative and include targets for development. However, reports in some subjects just tell parents what has been covered in class rather than what knowledge or skill their child has achieved. Through the parents' questionnaires for the inspection, some parents indicated they would like more information about the curriculum pupils are experiencing each week through more consistent use of the home-school diaries. Inspectors agree that this would be helpful for some parents.
26. During the 'world of work' week each year, all pupils benefit from local community members coming into school to give pupils experience of different trades and employment. Work placements and college courses enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Sporting links enable pupils to experience rugby, netball, badminton and swimming. Pupils are very successful at community swimming galas and won fourteen medals last year. The tombola stall run at the local supermarket provided funds to purchase equipment for the sensory room.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **excellent**. Governance of the school is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's strategies for self-evaluation are just one example of the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher.
- The headteacher has created a very effective senior management team with fully devolved responsibilities.
- The governors make an extremely significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school.
- The very well focused school improvement plan is linked clearly to prudent financial planning. Day-to-day finances and administration are very good.

### Commentary

27. Overall, the high quality of leadership praised in the last report has been significantly improved. The headteacher's leadership and management are excellent. She is totally committed to moving the school forward to achieve higher standards. She is an inspiration to staff. She has established a very able and supportive senior management team. They share the vision and determination that all pupils and students will make as much progress as they can, both academically and in broader areas of their personal development. Parents attending the meeting with inspectors whole-heartedly agreed that no limit is placed upon pupils' achievement. The school consistently aims high for each pupil. Parents' questionnaires show that they are very satisfied with the school's leadership and management. Discussion with pupils during the inspection supported their parents' views, that they too are extremely happy with the school.
28. The headteacher delegates responsibilities very effectively. Staff appreciate this and take their responsibilities seriously. As a result, all staff work extremely hard to raise pupils' standards.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **The school's strategies for self-evaluation permeate the whole school and all activities.**

Crucial to school improvement is the School Improvement Group, made up of elected representatives of the whole school community, including parents and governors. This group ensures that everyone plays a positive role in contributing to the emerging priorities for development. These priorities stem from continuous self-evaluation. For example, checks on the quality of pupils' achievement or effectiveness of teaching and learning all feed into teachers' and teaching assistants' performance targets for improvement. This frequently leads to professional development for staff, including links with other similar schools. At the same time, local, national and international initiatives are considered and decisions taken on their merits. This establishes the School Improvement Plan. Also embedded within this process are whole school agreed foci, which change each term. Examples of these are pupils' target setting, cross-curricular ICT and managing challenging behaviour. The School Improvement Group evaluates success termly with supporting evidence provided for each target. The process is seamless and continuous.

Subject co-ordination is very good. Subject leaders are very effective in promoting learning and higher standards in their subjects through formal and informal meetings and increasingly through scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' progress.

29. Governance is excellent and complies fully with statutory requirements. Governors bring with them very broad experience and expertise from different backgrounds. Because of this, they make a highly effective contribution to the direction of the school and have a first-class understanding of its work. The school is far-sighted and is working closely with the local education authority in planning to co-locate to a site with a high school and to involve other community facilities. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and are linked to areas of its work. Their committees monitor the effectiveness of the school closely, such as the careful consideration given to the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions or the continuing

impact of staff absences, which has been high with some learning support assistants. The school is fortunate in that the chair-person spends a good amount of time in the school and displays a very good understanding of pupils' individual needs and the school's changing population. Governors challenge the management when necessary, but are extremely supportive and helpful in giving advice and direction. They are very well organised as a body and use their expertise on committees to monitor and manage the school.

30. School administration staff keep all accounts well and provide high quality support and information for the headteacher and governing body. The outcome of this work is that the school currently carries over less than one per cent of its annual budget. This indicates very prudent financial management. Taking into account the outstanding effectiveness of the school and the reasonableness of expenditure, the school gives excellent value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£1,377,609	Balance from previous year	£37,376
Total expenditure	£1,398,192	Balance carried forward to the next	£16,793
Expenditure per pupil	£12,158		

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

*Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and any other significant aspects that reflect the standards achieved by pupils.*

### SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3, 4 and Post 16.

#### ENGLISH

*Eight lessons in English were seen in all year groups, together with a range of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement.*

The overall quality of provision for English, including literacy is **very good** for all pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school evaluates how well pupils are progressing and what else needs to be done.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well from their different starting points.
- Teaching and learning seen during the inspection were very good with some excellent features.
- Literacy skills are promoted very well through other subjects.
- The contribution made by the speech therapists and support staff from the multi-sensory service is very good.

#### Commentary

31. The school has made very good progress in developing its provision for English since the previous inspection. All pupils achieve very well. Pupils are taught in groups of similar ability in Years 7 to 11 and this is very effective. Pupils' achievement in lessons can be accounted for by the very good support that they receive from their teachers, support staff and classmates, which enables them to participate fully in all activities. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, those of differing special educational needs or pupils with English as an additional language.
32. English, literacy and communication are a constant focus for development. Staff take every opportunity to promote these skills. Staff in Years 7 to 9 are especially effective in developing pupils' pre-reading and early reading skills. They develop a love of books within the pupils. This could be seen following the reading of the story 'Fruit Salad'. The pupils were given the opportunity to handle fruit and match it to the pictures in the book, which they did very carefully. They communicated their pleasure in a variety of ways, for example, through signing, facial expression and gestures. Other pupils achieve very well in identifying the initial sounds of their own names and that of their classmates. They show good recall of more familiar signing, such as 'Drink?', 'School?' and 'Book?'. Higher attaining pupils make good attempts to write their own sentences. They know that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. They have a good understanding of the need for a question mark at the end of sentences. Teaching and learning are very good overall with examples of excellence, because the opportunities to communicate and the activities provided are of a very high quality, enjoyable, relevant and motivating.
33. Staff in Years 10 and 11 very successfully used the story of *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* to excite and interest the pupils in their learning. As a result, all pupils were engrossed in their work and tried very hard to recall and discuss the characters of the story, such as Harry and Hermione. Targets in written work are very specific, for example, finding five words beginning with 'a'. Staff plan work very carefully to enable pupils to reach these targets. Whilst some pupils produce recognisable letters when copy writing, higher attaining pupils, working

independently, leave spaces accurately between their words when writing. They are beginning to set out their own ideas into sentences and to apply a clear structure when organising their writing. An excellent example of this was a letter written by one pupil about his experiences at Hogwarts School. This was a well set-out letter with only one spelling mistake, 'alwrite'.

34. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teaching methods are well selected and time is very well used so that all pupils benefit. Teachers have highly effective subject knowledge and plan and prepare very well for lessons with effective use of the appropriately modified National Literacy Strategy. Teachers are very effective in ensuring that pupils' individual needs are provided for. Older and more able pupils work very well independently. They record their work, unaided, on the computer. Throughout the school, the team teaching taking place between teachers, teaching assistants and multi-sensory service and speech therapy staff is very good and is reflected in the very good achievement made by the pupils.
35. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She has high aspirations for the subject, and planning reflects the school's ambitions and goals. There is very effective team planning and teaching with a total commitment to inclusion and very good knowledge and understanding of how to develop English further. The school's evaluation and review procedures are rigorous. Subject audits and lesson observations support the school action plan very well. Self-evaluation is a strength of the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

36. Teachers are very effective in the way in which they promote pupils' communication, language and literacy skills in other subjects. For example, one boy with no verbal language used signs and name cards to aid recognition of the vocabulary in his science lesson. Older pupils are encouraged to read from the screen in ICT lessons. The school uses termly foci to promote literacy across the curriculum. A very good example of this was the use of 'questioning' as the vehicle to promote the use of literacy skills. All departments were involved in planning for and raising pupils' awareness of the importance of questioning and the difference between open and closed questions. This very successfully linked literacy across all areas of the curriculum, including ICT and mathematics.

### **MATHEMATICS**

*Seven lessons in mathematics were seen in Years 7 to 11 together with a range of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement. No mathematics lesson was seen at Post 16.*

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effectively planned teaching strategies support the teaching and learning of mathematics through very good pace and high expectations within all lessons.
- All staff work very well together. Teaching assistants enhance and support the teaching and learning of mathematics.
- Numeracy skills are very well developed and planned for across the curriculum.
- Systems of accreditation do not yet celebrate pupils' achievement.

#### **Commentary**

37. Mathematics is well organised and planned. Pupils achieve very well overall. Pupils are taught in ability sets in Years 7 to 11, which have a very positive effect on their rate of progress. The school has highlighted problem solving as an area of focus within mathematics because pupils are generally achieving at a higher level in number and shape, space and measure. This is a practical example of the school's very effective self-evaluation. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 worked

enthusiastically at constructing an overhead projector trolley, demonstrating practical application of their number and problem solving skills. Within an algebra lesson, higher attaining pupils in Year 11 developed linear equations and then responded well to a challenge to test their formula. Accreditation to allow pupils' work to be assessed in comparison with similar pupils' work elsewhere has not yet been developed at Key Stage 4. This would acknowledge and celebrate pupils' achievements.

38. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. It is characterised by good pace and very good subject knowledge. Teaching is always at least good, usually very good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are taught with high expectations, including expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is supported by the excellent relationships, which come about in part because staff know pupils' need so very well. Teachers' and teaching assistants' collaboration ensures high quality teaching and learning opportunities. Overall, individual and group education plans are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Improvements in IEPs for pupils with more complex needs have been introduced recently. The next round of evaluations will show just how effective this has been.
39. Leadership and management in mathematics are very good. A team of staff who teach mathematics across the school, work constructively and effectively together. There are detailed action plans for mathematics and numeracy. Monitoring of mathematics includes observing and analysing teaching through the use of videos. This leads to the sharing of good practice and development within the subject. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' progress was good overall.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

40. Mathematics is very well used across the curriculum. This was evident in most of the other subjects. Teachers plan for tasks, which support and develop numeracy, for example, measurement in science and ICT, shape and size recognition in ICT, practical money issues in PSHCE and problem solving in design and technology. Following a check on numeracy across the curriculum, termly cross-curricular foci are negotiated and identified with staff. Exceptionally effective self-evaluation is at the heart of the school's success.

### **SCIENCE**

*Six lessons in science were seen in all year groups together with a range of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement.*

Provision for science is **very good** with some excellent aspects.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are given activities that are challenging, relevant and very well matched to their learning needs. Their work is accredited very well and celebrates their successes.
- Pupils enjoy science and are very well motivated and interested.
- The subject co-ordinator ensures that the school is up to date in its thinking.
- Learning resources are well organised in advance of lessons and matched very well to the needs and abilities of the pupils.
- Pupils' progress reports for parents are not yet fully personalised.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching and learning across the school are very good and occasionally excellent. As a result, pupils achieve very well. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with clear learning objectives. Planning, support and resources take account of the diverse and challenging needs so that every pupil is fully

included, including those with additional special needs and those for whom English is not their first language. Pupils are set by ability, which helps to challenge them at just the right level. Through effective questioning, teachers and support staff successfully encourage pupils to think of ways they could carry out their work differently, for example, to improve their investigative techniques. Pupils assess the quality of their own work, which is a very good technique for helping pupils to understand how well they are doing. The teacher always has the highest of expectations of the pupils. Consequently, pupils rise to the occasion and increase their achievements. Literacy, communication and numeracy skills are regularly reinforced in science lessons.

42. Because lessons are so interesting and motivating, pupils enjoy their science. Pupils show great interest in their work. Consequently, they behave very well in lessons because they want to learn more. It is an extra bonus that all pupils achieve external accreditation for their work. They achieve units of the Award Scheme, Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) for science. This is a very good way of recognising the achievement of all pupils. Pupils appreciate this and work hard to complete their tasks. The science teacher has been recognised for the high standard of his work in the local education authority by becoming a 'leading science teacher'. The work seen during this inspection confirms this recognised status as being well deserved.
43. The science co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. He has made considerable improvement since his appointment only two years ago. Science is a strength of the school. Learning resources are matched well to the needs of pupils. They are always very well organised in advance of lessons and easily accessible during lessons. There is still a weakness in the otherwise well developed science room, with a lack of up to date ICT equipment. Reports to parents about pupils' progress do not fully explain what individual pupils know, do and understand. The co-ordinator recognises this and has plans to revise the way reports are written when they next go to parents.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

*Five lessons were seen in all age groups and in several classes where ICT was used in other subjects.*

Provision is **very good**, with some excellent aspects.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for ICT has been developed very well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Very good teaching is well supported by high quality planning and assessment, with clear objectives for pupils to achieve.
- ICT is used well across the curriculum in its various forms.
- There is a very strong commitment to professional development in ICT by all staff.

### **Commentary**

44. The subject has been developed very well since the last inspection. All issues raised in the last inspection have been fully addressed. Teaching staff have all had expert training and all support assistants have had the opportunity to participate in such courses. The ICT suite has been developed very well to meet the needs of the wide diversity of pupils. There is also a sensory room and one inter-active whiteboard based in the mathematics room. Internet is available with appropriate protection for pupils when accessing the World Wide Web. Due to technical difficulties, the Internet has not yet been networked across the school into all classrooms. The school is close to resolving this problem. Resources in Post 16 are only satisfactory although the resources available are used very well.

45. Pupils are particularly confident using all ICT equipment in the ICT suite. They use a mouse and touch-sensitive screens equally well. They carry out these operations confidently and develop their skills very well. They show great enjoyment and satisfaction in their work. Many log on to their work and find the correct programs independently. At the end of their session they save their work and log off correctly. Because relationships are excellent and pupils are extremely motivated, they behave very well and are reluctant to leave the suite when their time is up.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. All work is very carefully planned to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Lessons are stimulating and challenging. Each lesson builds on the previous one, ensuring that pupils' learning is systematic. This is evidenced in the growing complexity of software applications and technical language which pupils freely use and understand. For example, pupils use 'control language' when programming a 'roamer'. As a result, achievement is very good.
47. Information and communication technology is very well led and managed. Pupils' work is rigorously assessed and recorded and very good use is made of analysing the data in order to inform future planning. This works well and enhances pupils' achievement. It adds to the school's strengths of self-evaluation. However, at the moment, there is no external accreditation to reward the pupils for their hard work and high achievement. The co-ordinator is at present investigating the possibility of such awards and this is a high priority in his subject action plan. Pupils' progress reports are general and not sufficiently focused on individual achievement.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

48. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum. Much ICT taught in the ICT suite covers many subjects of the curriculum. Literacy skills are taught well and pupils read well from the board and computer screens. Numeracy skills are enhanced as pupils prepare programmes and use units of measurement. The Internet is used to research topics from other subjects, such as history and geography. Word processing is used to develop pupils' writing and enhance presentation of their work. Pupils gain an understanding of the power of ICT in many aspects of life. They are given very effective opportunities to use ICT in other lessons, such as microwave cookers in preparing food or a 'roamer' in a design technology lesson. However, overall, there is barely sufficient software and hardware across the school. For example, there is only one interactive whiteboard.

### **HUMANITIES**

*No judgements were made in geography and history because they were not part of the focus of the inspection. One lesson seen in geography was taught very well. Six lessons were seen in religious education in all year groups including Post 16. Sufficient evidence of pupils' prior work was scrutinised and other evidence of pupils' achievement.*

### **Religious Education**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Planning for how the subject is taught and evaluated is excellent.
- There are very good links between religious education, assemblies and daily acts of worship.
- Teaching and learning are exceptionally supportive of pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are developing a very good understanding of the basic themes of religious education.

### **Commentary**

49. Pupils achieve very well. For example, within a Year 9 tutor group session about the 'Creation', pupils recalled how God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. They discussed the differences in 'the day of rest' for Christians, Jews and Hindus. Within a lesson in Post 16 on the Muslim religion, students showed an understanding of mosques, minarets and a muezzin. They acquired new knowledge and understanding about prayer.
50. There are very good links between religious education lessons and weekly assemblies, which help pupils to get far more out of the assemblies than would otherwise be the case. There are also very good links between lessons and those daily acts of worship, which take place at the end of tutorial time. This results in pupils being introduced to the school day in a quiet and meaningful way. This was particularly evident in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning are very good, with excellent features in some lessons. Lessons are very well prepared and appropriate to the level of ability of the pupils, which means all pupils join in positively.
51. Leadership and management are excellent. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for this subject for one year. In that time she has developed a new policy and new plans for how the subject should be taught, based on the locally agreed syllabus. Other teachers' lesson plans are checked and evaluated. Resource packs have been prepared for each topic area to support teaching and learning. There is good use of resources, especially artefacts and visits to places of significance to different major faiths. The co-ordinator has identified further monitoring of lessons as a development area, as well as plans to further develop systems of assessment and recording to monitor and measure pupil achievement more effectively.
52. Improvement in provision since the last inspection is excellent. The school has addressed the issue highlighted in the last inspection and there is now a clear policy, scheme of work and all pupils receive very good teaching. The school prospectus includes a statement on the rights of parents to withdraw their children from religious education.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*Art and design, music and design and technology were not part of the inspection focus. Only one lesson was seen in art and design, which was taught very well. The quality of artwork exhibited throughout the school is very good. Overall, no judgements were made about these subjects. Three lessons were seen in physical education together with other evidence of achievement.*

### **Physical Education**

Provision for physical education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is consistently very good. Teachers offer a range of alternative activities to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work.
- The school has done its utmost to ensure that the lack of a gymnasium, changing rooms, showers and hydrotherapy pool does not detract from the pupils' opportunities to take part in all aspects of physical education.
- Pupils are very clear about how and why they need to warm up at the beginning of a physical education lesson and to cool down at the end.

### **Commentary**

53. Staff expertise is significant in the very good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11. Exciting lessons keep pupils interested throughout. Skills build up step by step and these are recorded and evaluated in a very effective way. As a result of this, lessons meet the exact needs of the pupils. Teachers act as very good role models both from the relationships they build with pupils and from the demonstrations they give to pupils in their activities. Pupils achieve very well.

54. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils took part in training for outdoor pursuits. All knew exactly what equipment they needed for 'rock climbing' in the school hall and the correct method of wearing it. They knew, for example, how to wear their safety harness. Some required a great deal of support to put the equipment on, but knew and understood the need for safety and the reasons for wearing the equipment. The pupils are becoming very confident and, as a result, they are becoming more co-ordinated in their ability to move and produce actions that link together. They listen very carefully and have firm ideas of which activities they want to take part in. For example, some want to twirl on the rope, others to swing. This lesson was very much a team event, including staff and pupils equally.
55. In another lesson, pupils travelled by minibus to a local sports hall for 'kwik' cricket and hockey. The school is lacking these facilities in their own accommodation. In this very well planned lesson, which provided challenge and interest, pupils understood the need for a warm-up at the beginning of the session. There was very good teaching of skills and practice in small-group activity games. The very good use of a 'parachute' activity to cool down at the end of the lesson strengthened the emphasis on the need for teamwork. In these lessons there is very good inclusion. Teams are comprised of boys and girls of mixed age ranges and ethnicity.
56. Physical education is very well led and managed. The planning of the curriculum points to very good development over the past two years. Every effort has been made to overcome the limited accommodation for physical education and sport. There are links with the local secondary and primary schools so pupils can use their facilities. Pupils receive recognised certificates and awards in swimming, along with certificates for sports day, inter-school games and athletic events, which celebrate their achievements very well.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)**

*Seven lessons in PSHCE were seen in all year groups. Because the subject permeates the whole of the school day, a variety of other activities was observed and contributed to the judgement made.*

Provision is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of initiatives, such as the school council, Healthy School award scheme, the Wings and Award for Excellence schemes and a business enterprise support pupils' and students' development exceptionally well.
- A very good quality programme of work for PSHE and citizenship, and day-to-day activities, permeate the whole school.
- There has been excellent improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Commentary**

57. All staff are very aware of the importance of promoting pupils' and students' personal development. Because they understand the pupils and students very well, they are very good at doing this, in lessons and in other activities. Very good and at times excellent teaching and support promote excellent achievement in social and self-help skills.

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### **Example of outstanding practice**

**How the Post 16 provision is focused exceptionally well on active citizenship and vocational learning.**

Examples of very effective provision in school are initiatives such as peer mentoring, where older pupils become involved in the education and support of younger ones, the Melland Craft Company business enterprise, lunchtime clubs and work-related learning. All of these activities require pupils and students to build naturally their skills in communication, ICT, applying number, working with others, taking more knowledge of their own learning and solving problems. At first glance, these initiatives, whilst very worthwhile in themselves, could be thought to be separate. However, in Post 16, the Award for Excellence, which has active citizenship as a main strand, ties them all together. For example, pupils are challenged to:

- attend school and be punctual to very high standards
- show commitment to attending a club, contributing to the community over a significant period of time and supporting other pupils through actively mentoring them
- undertake work placements or other vocational training, which are assessed by all of the adults with whom the students come into contact.

In how it is operated in the school, the Award for Excellence is an extremely effective initiative, demanding high pupil and staff commitment, full of practical opportunities, which are the central focus of the curriculum.

58. The school runs a very successful school council. Pupils' and students' views are taken very seriously and acted upon. Pupils and students themselves are very proud of their work in the council. The school is rightly proud of its Healthy School Award and is now working relentlessly to the Gold standard. One group during the inspection worked well on exploring the textures and tastes of a range of fruit before making a healthy meal. The business enterprise is very good. Regular business meetings help decide the focus of future activities and how the profits will be reinvested, whilst not forgetting the company's share holders. However, meetings frequently have to take place in the busy central circulation area of the Post 16 accommodation, which is not ideal and impinges on the effectiveness of meetings as true company board meetings.
59. A very good example of the success of the school citizenship programme is illustrated by several pupils each Thursday, providing the famous 'Melland Hot Pot' lunches for adults who have placed their orders in advance. Another example is how well pupils look after the school environment and ensure playgrounds are free from litter. A third and very important example is the pupils' support for another school in Zambia, which is in far less advantageous circumstances than their own. A pen-pal system adds individuality to the care and support for pupils thousand of miles away.
60. There has been excellent improvement since the previous inspection. PSHCE is now very well established on the timetable and very well led and managed with clear assessment of pupils' progress. The school's aims for pupils have been amply fulfilled. These are:
- confidence, responsibility and self-knowledge;
  - effective ways of being active citizens;
  - understanding how to follow a healthy lifestyle;
  - respect for others, leading to friendship and positive relationships.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

**Inspection judgement****Grade**

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	1

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2*</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality of teaching	1
How well pupils learn	1
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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

\* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.