

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LAISTERDYKE HIGH SCHOOL**

Bradford, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107443

Headteacher: Mrs Joan Law

Reporting inspector: Dr Kenneth C Thomas  
3390

Dates of inspection: 29 April - 3 May 2002

Inspection number: 244771

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Thornbury Road  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire

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Telephone number: 01274 401140

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Jaswinder Shergill

Date of previous inspection: 8 April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3390	Ken Thomas	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 does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9184	Geza Hanniker	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>
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art	
18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	History	
19414	Janet Flisher	Team inspector	English	
20716	Reginald Grogan	Team inspector	Religious education	
22906	Barry Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
11548	David Lee	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23308	John Morrell	Team inspector	Music	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	
24887	Yvonne Salmons	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
11300	Barry Smith	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography	

17404	Judith Tolley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	How well are pupils taught?
8682	Martin Trevor	Team inspector	Design and technology	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Laisterdyke High School is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school with 830 pupils on roll. There are a few more boys than girls. Following the re-organisation of education in the local education authority (LEA) in September 1999 the school changed from a middle school for pupils aged 8 to 13 to its current designation. As a result, the number of pupils in the school has almost doubled over the past three years and about half of the pupils presently in Year 10 were new to the school when they entered in Year 9 following the closure of other middle schools. The present Year 11 pupils will be the school's first GCSE examination entry. The school is oversubscribed and continuing to grow. In September 2002, the school will admit its first cohort of sixth form students and become an 11 to 18 school. In common with many other schools in the LEA, the school experiences significant difficulty in filling teaching posts. At the time of the inspection teachers on temporary contracts filled 6.2 teaching posts. The school serves an area of high social deprivation and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (41 per cent) is well above the national average. A high proportion of pupils (almost 80 per cent) are from ethnic minority backgrounds and almost all have English as an additional language. There are 15 pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. Most pupils come from Pakistani backgrounds with smaller numbers from Indian and Bangladeshi backgrounds. Other than English, the main languages spoken are Urdu, Punjabi, Pushto and Hindi. Overall standards of attainment on entry, although covering a wide range, are very low in comparison with schools nationally, with little or no difference in standards in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (45 per cent) has risen sharply over recent years and is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need (4 per cent).

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is striving with some success to meet the complex needs of the diverse community it serves. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, and dedicated support of other senior managers and governors, has secured a strong commitment to improvement. Although costs are above average the school provides satisfactory value for money. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with much that is good. National Curriculum test results, although well below average, represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils are in regular attendance and punctual at the start of the school day.

#### **What the school does well**

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher is promoting enthusiastic teamwork and a strong commitment to improvement and the raising of standards.
- Very good teaching in information and communication technology and the effective use of excellent resources are promoting good achievement in the subject.
- Staff know the pupils well and the school provides a caring and supportive atmosphere that fosters good attitudes and behaviour.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Very good relationships built on mutual respect and trust, together with very good provision for personal development contribute significantly to the harmonious atmosphere in the school.
- Very good financial planning and support from the governing body are ensuring that the school makes the best use of its resources and particularly effective use of new technology.
- Very good accommodation provides a stimulating environment for teaching and learning.

### **What could be improved**

- Low standards of literacy and numeracy impede pupils' learning.
- The co-ordination and implementation of strategies for improving literacy and numeracy, and of provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
- The use of assessment information to monitor and support pupils' progress and achievement and to plan teaching and learning.
- The responsibilities of some teachers with leadership roles are too wide and reduces their effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- The qualifications and experience of teachers do not match the needs of the curriculum in many subjects. This impedes pupils' progress.
- The quality of subject leadership is uneven. Subject leadership in design and technology and physical education is unsatisfactory.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Due to the change in designation of the school in September 1999 the findings of the last inspection in March 1997 do not provide a valid baseline from which to measure school improvement. Since re-organisation, the school has grown in size and increased in popularity. The transition from a middle to a secondary school has been managed smoothly and staff have embraced the challenge of this change with enthusiasm and commitment. An excellent new teaching block has been built to cater for the increased number of pupils and the school site has been made more secure. A curriculum appropriate for the 11 to 16 age range has been designed and implemented. Training has been provided for teachers with leadership responsibilities; however, leadership is not equally effective at all levels. Although the school experiences difficulty in teacher recruitment, staffing has been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy headteacher, several subject leaders and other teachers with extensive secondary school experience. Training has been provided to enable staff to develop the skills necessary to teach the extended age range. The school is establishing a secure base on which to make improvement and to raise standards.

### **STANDARDS**

The school has no GCSE results because the first cohort of pupils will not take the examination until this summer. For this reason no table showing standards at the end of Year 11 is included in the report.

The overall results in the National Curriculum tests taken in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were very low, placing the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Results in English and mathematics were slightly higher than those in science. Although girls achieve slightly higher standards than boys in English, there were no significant differences in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' entitlement to free school meals, the overall results and those in mathematics and science were well below average. This comparison shows results in English to be below average. In all other National Curriculum subjects, standards are also well below expectations. These results need to be set against pupils' very low standards of attainment on entry to the school. Comparisons of standards of attainment on entry to the school with the standards attained by the same pupils at the end of Year 9 shows achievement to be satisfactory. Very low standards of literacy and numeracy impede pupils' learning.

The first cohort of pupils will take the GCSE examinations in 2002. The indications are that the agreed target for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve five or more A\* to C grades was over ambitious. However, the A\* to G target is likely to be reached. Although in only about a quarter of lessons in Years 10 and 11 were pupils working at the level expected for their age group, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory when their standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are taken into account. Particular strengths are in information and communication technology (ICT), GNVQ, geography and religious education. More appropriate, but still challenging, targets have been set for 2003.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The school places high value on raising the aspirations of pupils and encourages them to value their education. The pupils appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from staff and they show that they want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond well to the school's efforts to establish a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Behaviour is particularly good in the lower year groups. Pupils know and understand the school rules and the majority abide by them. Only in a very few lessons was behaviour unsatisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Very good and a strength of the school. This is an harmonious community. Relationships are very good and based on mutual respect between pupils and adults. Pupils work, study and play well together and are friendly and helpful to visitors.
Attendance	The attendance rate in the last school year was above the national average with below average rates of authorised and unauthorised absence. The attendance rate has declined slightly over the last three years as the pupils' age range increased. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

Good pupil behaviour is supported through the effective implementation of the school's positive assertive discipline programme. The school's expectations with regard to appropriate behaviour are made clear together with rewards for good behaviour and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. The school works hard to support pupils whose behaviour does not meet the school's expectations. Nevertheless, the behaviour of some pupils is such that exclusion is inevitable. During the last school year the number of fixed period and permanent exclusions were above those in schools of similar size nationally.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 and learning are satisfactory overall. Examples of good teaching were seen in all subjects and of very good teaching in many, including support for pupils with special educational needs and EAL. There are significant strengths in teaching in ICT, GNVQ and in PSHCE where teaching and learning are consistently very good and in mathematics and art where they are good. Teaching in English and science is satisfactory. Two excellent lessons were observed in ICT. Teaching of this quality had a significant on pupils' learning in the particular lessons. Low standards of literacy and numeracy impede pupils' learning and reduce the impact of teaching. The result is that although there is much good teaching, achievement rises above satisfactory in only a few subjects. The school is in the early stages of developing a strategy for the development literacy and numeracy in all subjects. Pupils' learning is also affected by difficulties in teacher recruitment. This is particularly so in physical education where teaching is unsatisfactory. Almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching observed in French, music, physical education, religious education, science and design and technology involved temporary teachers or those teaching outside their specialist areas.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good, socially inclusive curriculum with good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Additional GCSE subjects, GNVQ courses, certificates of achievement and specifically tailored programmes for some pupils enhance the breadth and relevance of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Pupils have a broad and relevant curriculum that includes the opportunity to follow accredited courses. Effective arrangements are made for pupils who are having temporary learning or behaviour difficulties through the learning support unit.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers and language learning assistants work well with subject teachers to ensure that pupils with EAL have similar learning experiences to those of other pupils. Due to weaknesses in co-ordination practice is not consistent across subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for moral and social development. Good provision for cultural development and satisfactory provision for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements to ensure the welfare and protection of pupils are very good. Very good procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development but weaknesses in assessment procedures affect the monitoring of pupils' academic progress and target setting.

The school is a secure and safe place for pupils to learn. Provision for pupils' personal, social health and citizenship education, including careers education is very good. Curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is well designed to suit the needs and aspirations of pupils. Links with parents are effective; they work closely with the school in promoting good attendance. There are particularly supportive and innovative strategies for supporting good pupil behaviour. Statutory requirements are not fully met in modern foreign languages. There are weaknesses in assessment procedures in many subjects. Much assessment information is unreliable and does not provide a sound basis for monitoring pupils' progress or planning teaching and learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits considerably from the excellent leadership and clarity of vision of the headteacher. School management is good overall. Senior and middle managers have responded well to the challenge presented by the change in designation of the school and the transition has been accomplished smoothly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are effective and supportive. They have a strong commitment to the school and provide the school with a considerable amount of specialist help and advice.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Regular classroom observations by members of the senior leadership team provide them with a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. But there are inconsistencies in monitoring

	and evaluation by subject leaders and other staff with co-ordinating responsibilities.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management and planning are very good. The school has effective procedures to ensure that all additional funding received is used for the intended purposes.

There are enough teachers to cover the curriculum but owing to regional teacher recruitment problems the school has to make regular use of temporary teachers and some non-specialist teaching. Staffing difficulties have contributed to weaknesses in the co-ordination of the school literacy and numeracy strategies, and in the co-ordination of provision for pupils with EAL. The responsibilities of members of the senior leadership team and year leaders are too wide and their workloads too heavy. As a result, there is a lack of consistency in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and this slows the rate at which progress is being made. The school accommodation has many excellent features and provides a highly suitable environment for teaching and learning. The school has a good supply of resources. Particularly effective use is made of the school's excellent computer network. The school has effective systems to ensure best value in all spending.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and they are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become more responsible.</li> <li>• The good leadership and management.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and is approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence confirms the positive views of parents. Enough homework is set and generally used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Inspectors found that the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. However, the range of these activities is to some extent restricted by the short lunchtime break, difficulties in teacher recruitment and the considerable amount of additional work teachers have had to undertake following the change in designation of the school. Nevertheless, the number of extra-curricular activities the school offers is increasing.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The overall results in the National Curriculum tests taken in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were very low, placing the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Results in English and mathematics were slightly higher than those in science. Although girls achieve slightly higher standards than boys in English, there were no significant differences in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' entitlement to free school meals, the overall results and those in mathematics and science were well below average. This comparison shows results in English to be below average. In all other National Curriculum subjects, standards are also well below expectations.
2. Several factors contribute to low standards at the end of Year 9. Of greatest significance are the consistently very low standards of attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Although the attainment profile of pupils in Year 7 covers the full range, it is heavily biased towards the lower end of the attainment range. The results of the National Curriculum tests taken in the last year of primary education by pupils who entered the school in 2001, for example, show that standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science were very low. Standards of literacy and numeracy are very low and impede pupils' learning. Measures of pupils' reading levels show that over 50 per cent of pupils in Year 7 were over two years behind their chronological ages on entry to the school. In addition, almost a half of pupils have special educational needs. Nevertheless, comparisons of standards of attainment on entry to the school with the standards attained by the same pupils at the end of Year 9 show progress and achievement to be satisfactory.
3. Inspection evidence indicates that standards, although improving slightly, are well below expectations. In only about one in five lessons in Years 7 to 9 are pupils working at the level expected for their age. There were no lessons where pupils were working above this level. Nevertheless, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory and for some it is good. This is generally because there is a substantial amount of good teaching. In particular, the good classroom management skills of teachers and very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that most pupils concentrate on tasks in lessons and put effort into their work. Standards are highest in lessons with a high practical element, such as art and ICT, and in lessons where pupils are actively involved in short, stimulating tasks that match pupils' attention spans. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
4. Following the change from a middle to a secondary school, a variety of GCSE and GNVQ courses have been introduced in Years 10 and 11. The first cohort of pupils will take the examinations in 2002. The agreed target percentage of pupils expected to achieve five or more A\* to C grades is 27.5 per cent and for five or more A\* to G grades it is 97 per cent. Inspection evidence and school assessment information indicates that although the A\* to G target may be reached, the A\* to C target is over-ambitious. The main reasons why the five or more A\* to C target is unlikely to be reached are that a few of the higher attaining pupils predicted to achieve the higher grades have left the school and generally low standards of literacy that will affect pupils' performance in the written examinations. Another factor has been the adverse effects on pupils' progress of temporary teaching in several subjects. There is now greater staff stability, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and inspection evidence indicates that standards are beginning to rise. Although in only about a quarter of lessons in Years 10 and 11 were pupils working at the level expected for their age group, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory when their standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are taken into account. Standards in religious education are consistent with the expectations in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are consistent with targets set in their Individual Education Plans. It is predicted that all pupils in Year 11 who are on the special

educational needs register will achieve at least a G grade in the summer GCSE examinations. The achievement of pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) is good overall. The achievement of pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition is very good in listening and reading. Most understand the everyday English spoken by their peers and are beginning to understand the more formal language their teachers use in the classroom.

6. Pupils' standards of literacy are very low when they enter the school, although there is some evidence to suggest that reading levels are improving. However, there is a lack of a co-ordinated approach to the development of pupils' literacy skills in all subjects. Many pupils do not have a good range of reading skills because subject teachers are not teaching them the specific skills needed to read for information. Generally, writing skills are below average. Many pupils have difficulty with spelling and punctuation, and grammatical structures are often incorrectly formed and applied. This is most often the case with pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are higher than their reading and writing skills. They listen attentively to their teachers in lessons and are keen to talk. Most pupils are able to explain their ideas and discuss their work with each other in a useful manner.
7. Pupils' standards of numeracy are below national expectations in all years. Pupils enter the school with low numerical skills and the mathematics department is striving to raise standards of numeracy. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted as a key element in lesson planning in the subject. However, there is no strategy for the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. Although some subjects, such as science and geography, make a contribution to this area of pupils' learning, pupils' numeracy skills are not being developed in a systematic way in all subjects.
8. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good, even though standards are below expectations for the age group. This is because pupils benefit from very good teaching in specific ICT lessons and through many structured opportunities to apply their computing skills in other subjects. The co-ordination of the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is highly effective and makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.
9. The school identifies higher-attaining pupils and the headteacher and the deputy head monitor their progress. A range of additional activities is provided to enhance provision for these pupils. These activities provide satisfactory challenge and extension.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. The attitudes of pupils are good. The school places high value on raising the aspirations of pupils and encourages them to value their education. The pupils appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from staff and they show that they want to learn. They respond well to challenges and are keen to learn to achieve their learning goals. They sustain concentration and persevere with tasks even when these are difficult. This was evident, for example, in a Year 9 geography lesson when pupils encountered for the first time the concept of 'long drift erosion'. They applied themselves diligently and were eventually able to explain how the sea erodes the coastline in one place and deposits the material elsewhere. When given the opportunity pupils are able to work independently and in collaboration with their peers. They are keen to involve themselves in after school homework clubs and in raising funds for charities. Pupils are also keen to represent their school in challenges, such as the Young Consumers Competition, when their knowledge of the value of different foods and other consumables were tested against that of other young people. When interviewed, pupils show pride in their school. They say that they like the school and that it provides a feeling of safety and security. Their parents share these views.
11. Pupils respond well to the school's efforts to establish a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. As a result behaviour in the school is good. Behaviour is particularly good in the lower year groups. In the very few lessons where unsatisfactory behaviour was observed this was generally associated with inadequate lesson planning resulting in learning activities that did not offer pupils enough challenge. The carefully planned and effectively taught personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme makes a substantial contribution to the good

standards of behaviour in the school. The programme supports the development of pupils' self-esteem and helps them to realise their responsibilities to the maintenance of harmonious relationships in the school. Good pupil behaviour is also supported through the effective implementation of the school's positive assertive discipline programme. The school's expectations with regard to appropriate behaviour are made clear together with rewards for good behaviour and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils know and understand the school rules and the majority abide by them. For example, all pupils abide by the rule that outdoor shoes are not to be worn in the school. On entry to the school all pupils change into indoor shoes. The result is that the carpeted floors in corridors and classrooms are maintained in a high state of cleanliness, and to the benefit of all. The good standard of behaviour maintained in the school is a significant achievement and recognised as such by parents. This was made clear at a meeting of the 'Friends of Laisterdyke High School' held during the inspection where concern was expressed about the level of general anti-social behaviour in the surrounding area.

12. The school makes explicit that any form of harassment, sexism, racism or bullying will not be tolerated. In interviews with pupils they stated that if anyone is threatened, or feels threatened, help is available from adults in the school. Good teamwork is very much a feature of the school and, in addition to their teachers, pupils can talk to learning support assistants, learning mentors, the school nurse, the community development officer and members of the school administrative staff. Peer counsellors and peer mentors also play important roles in ensuring that any problems are identified and appropriate members of staff are alerted. Strenuous efforts are made to support pupils whose behaviour does not meet the school's expectations and avoid the need for exclusion. These efforts include mentoring, daily reports, withdrawal from lessons to the supervised study centre. Nevertheless, the behaviour of some pupils is such that exclusion is inevitable. During the last school year there were 91 fixed period and 6 permanent exclusions. Both of these figures are above those in schools of similar size nationally. All the permanently excluded pupils were boys and the boys excluded for fixed term periods outnumbered the girls by eight to one. As a further strategy to reduce the need to exclude pupils the headteacher, in collaboration with the LEA and the police, has made groundbreaking use of the new 'anti-social behaviour' law. Warning letters have been sent to a few parents informing them that action might be taken if their children's behaviour does not improve. The use of the law in this way has received support from the Home Office and other schools and LEAs have shown interest in the strategy. The indications are that the behaviour of pupils who have received these warnings has improved.
13. This is a harmonious community. Relationships are very good and based on mutual respect between pupils and adults. Pupils work, study and play well together and are friendly and helpful to visitors. They will often initiate conversations and offer assistance to visitors. They are also helpful to each other. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, a pupil could not at first answer a question put to him by the teacher. His neighbour phrased the question differently and the boy was then able to work out the answer by his own effort. Pupils are prepared to listen and value the views of others. They are able to discuss difficult subjects openly and show sensitivity when listening to the experiences of others. This was evident, for example, in a Year 11 PSHCE lesson where a visiting speaker explained the problems she faced as an HIV positive person. Many of the staff are bilingual and this ensures that there is good communication between all members of the school community and misunderstandings with parents are few. There have been no reportable racist incidents in recent years. Because pupils take care of their own and the school's property the fabric of the school buildings is maintained to an exceptionally high standard.
14. Although pupils have relatively few opportunities to exercise initiative and take responsibility, when these opportunities are provided they take them seriously. For example, corridor monitors ensure that all pupils change from outdoor to indoor shoes when they enter the building. Lateness monitors ensure all pupils are registered. Additional opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are being provided through the developing roles of class and school councillors, peer counsellors and peer mentors. However, there is little evidence of the pupils organising their own learning or engaging in individual research beyond the immediate requirement of the tasks set for them. Few stretch themselves or their imagination to extend their knowledge or to take their work beyond the minimum necessary for homework.

15. The attendance rate has declined slightly over the last three years as the pupils' age range has increased. Nevertheless, the attendance rate in the last school year was above the national average with below average rates of authorised and unauthorised absence. This is a notable achievement given the tendency found in some schools with similar pupil populations for parents to take children on extended visits to their country of origin. The school anticipated the possible decline in attendance following the change in designation of the school and increased its efforts to promote good attendance. A full-time attendance officer monitors attendance on a daily basis and provides weekly reviews of the attendance in tutor groups. The attendance officer also initiates a series of agreed actions. These involve contacting parents or carers on the first day of absence and working with the education welfare officer, learning mentors and the community development officer, to make home visits. The school is prepared to initiate legal action in the case of persistent non-attendeers. Nevertheless, most parents co-operate with the school and few take their children on family holidays during term time. In order to further improve attendance the school is in the process of developing an electronic attendance tracking system to ensure that any changes in attendance patterns are identified immediately. Morning and end-of-day registrations are carried out diligently, as is the taking of class registers at the start of lessons. This ensures that there is no internal truancy. Pupils are punctual for the early start to the school day, but many are unavoidably late to lessons after the lunch break, due to the large number of pupils who have to move through the dining hall in a short space of time. A few pupils take advantage of this and dawdle as they return to lessons.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In lessons seen across Years 7 to 11, teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons, good or better in 60 per cent, very good in 11 per cent and excellent in one per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in eight per cent of lessons. Learning followed a similar pattern. Examples of good teaching were seen in all subjects and of very good teaching in many, including support for pupils with special educational needs and EAL. There are significant strengths in teaching in ICT, GNVQ and in PSHCE where teaching and learning are consistently very good and in mathematics and art where they are good. However, low standards of literacy and numeracy impede pupils' learning and reduce the impact of teaching. The result is that although there is much good teaching, achievement rises above satisfactory in only a few subjects. Pupils' learning is also affected by difficulties in teacher recruitment. Almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching observed in French, music, religious education, science and design and technology involved temporary teachers or those teaching outside their specialist areas. Teaching in physical education is adversely affected by temporary teaching and is unsatisfactory overall.
17. Although the vast majority of teachers have good knowledge of their specialist subjects they lack experience in teaching to GCSE level. In several subjects, teachers are teaching out of their own specialist area. As a consequence of this, expectations are sometimes too low and the presentation and discussion of new material lacks sufficient clarity and focus to enable pupils to make appropriate progress. Where subject knowledge is good teachers use it well to present information clearly and to guide discussion so that pupils rapidly assimilate new ideas and apply them in tasks set. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson pupils were able to deepen their knowledge about the rise of Hitler because of the skilful questioning by the teacher who drew out the significant points from the material being studied. In ICT, the teachers' excellent subject knowledge results in very clear explanations and enables pupils to make significant progress in lessons. In art, teachers use their subject knowledge well to give clear explanations and to support and challenge individuals during lesson activities. In French, teachers develop pupils listening skills effectively by making extensive use of the language.
18. The English department recognises the need to lay a foundation for the development of pupils' literacy skills and is revising the Year 7 curriculum to embed the new Framework for Teaching English in its work. There are also examples of good practice in the development of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. There is a strong emphasis on the development of literacy in

geography, for example, where there are opportunities for pupils to plan, draft and rewrite their own work. However, there is a general lack of awareness of strategies that can be employed in many other subjects to raise standards of literacy. For example, subject specific key words are displayed in many classrooms but referred to in only a few and not enough attention is paid to the correction of spelling and grammatical errors in pupils' writing.

19. Mathematics teachers are paying increasing attention to the development of pupils' numerical skills, particularly in Years 7 and 8, where more activities to improve pupils' recall and mental arithmetic skills are being included in lessons. Pupils also develop their numerical skills through measuring and judging proportion in art and design and technology, and in interpreting data in geography and science. However, the school does not have a strategy for the systematic development of numeracy across the curriculum. As a result, although there are opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in many subjects, these are not at present co-ordinated in any way. Teachers promote the use of ICT in nearly all subjects. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 use word processing and desktop publishing programs for their work. In geography, spreadsheets are used to produce graphs of climate information and, by Year 9, most pupils are able to access information from the Internet.
20. The use of assessment to plan for pupils' progress is unsatisfactory overall. In the more effective lessons due account is taken of the wide range of pupils' attainment levels in the planning of learning activities so that all pupils are fully engaged and progress at an appropriate pace. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, for example, good use was made of assessment to provide an appropriate level of challenge in tasks carried out by different groups so that all pupils grasped the principles of first and second order sequences quickly. Assessment is also used effectively in ICT and in GNVQ courses to ensure that learning activities are well matched to the needs of pupils. Assessment is used effectively in the majority of lessons to cater for the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special education needs. As a result these pupils make good progress overall. However, in too many lessons this is not the case and, although the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve as well as they might. The quality of marking varies considerably within and across subjects. Where it is effective pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work but this is not always the case and some marking does not give enough guidance to pupils on how well they have achieved and how they can improve.
21. Lesson planning is satisfactory overall. In the most effective lessons steps in learning are clear and pupils are given the opportunity, through the provision of appropriate resources and well-sequenced activities, to build effectively on previous learning. For example in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to conduct a range of tests to investigate the properties of acids and alkalis and then to discuss their results at the end of the lesson. The effective planning of this lesson ensured a high level of pupil activity as learning proceeded at a good pace. Similarly in the best design and technology lessons pupils make good progress when they are given the opportunity to test out their ideas in practical tasks. For example, in a Year 9 textiles lesson pupils made very good progress in developing their skills in using computer controlled sewing machines because of the well-structured opportunities to try out a range of techniques. In a Year 10 English lesson a series of well planned and sequenced activities enabled pupils to analyse a sonnet by Simon Armitage, identify the techniques used by the writer to achieve his purpose and then to work in pairs to begin to apply those techniques in producing their own sonnets. However, in some lessons a lack of experience and appropriate subject knowledge sometimes leads to a lack of clarity in learning objectives or how those objectives are to be achieved. These were features of many of the unsatisfactory lessons.
22. Teachers control and manage pupils very well and in the majority of lessons very good relationships exist between pupils and their teachers. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond very well. They are usually very well behaved and are concerned to do well. As a result there is a calm and orderly atmosphere in lessons, which allows pupils to learn effectively. Lessons are well organised, objectives are usually shared with pupils and teachers and their pupils review the main points of the lesson at the end. This is very effective in motivating pupils, in reinforcing learning and in enabling them to evaluate their own progress.

23. Good use is made of paired work and group work to enable pupils to discuss and explore new ideas. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson pupils took part in a brainstorming session to explore the uses of mirrors and were then set the practical problem of designing and making a periscope from simple materials. As a result pupils made good progress in understanding and in applying their knowledge to solve problems. In a Year 11 English lesson pupils made good progress in identifying similarities and differences in themes and the use of language in poems from different cultures because they were given time to explore their ideas in small groups. The teacher spent time with each group and helped pupils to deepen and extend their understanding through effective questioning before exchanging their ideas with others in whole-class discussion. In a Year 8 French lesson, pupils rapidly gained in confidence in describing the weather when they were given the opportunity to practise new language informally in pairs before taking part in whole-class activities using a weather map. In religious education, pupils made particularly good progress when they were engaged in challenging small group activities in which they compared ideas about the nature of God in different religions. Games are used well in religious education and in French to consolidate learning, maintain interest and to encourage participation. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson pupils made good progress in learning about Hinduism through playing a board game. Pupils maintained a high level of interest and concentration and made good progress in learning as a result.
24. Teachers make good use of time in most lessons. In the majority of lessons activities move from a demonstration or presentation by the teacher through individual and small group work to whole-class reviews of what has been learned at the end of the lesson. In some of the less effective lessons, however, group work is not sufficiently focussed or deadlines for the completion of group work are not set and this slows the pace of learning. In a few lessons lengthy teacher led activities slow the pace of learning for higher attaining pupils in particular. In most subjects good use is made of resources to support teaching and learning. Particularly good use is made of ICT in almost all subjects. Visual aids and flashcards are used to good effect in French and in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and EAL to clarify the meaning of new language and to enable pupils to respond to questioning. This helps pupils to quickly identify and apply patterns in language. Homework is used appropriately in the majority of subjects to reinforce and extend learning but pupils are not clear about the homework timetable and this sometimes results in difficulties for them in organising themselves to meet their commitments because homework is not always set regularly.
25. The quality of teaching by special educational needs teachers is good, and most learning support assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. Subject teachers have satisfactory awareness of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) and often use them in lessons. Pupils with special needs are fully included in all lessons and their contributions are valued.
26. The teaching of pupils with EAL is satisfactory overall, and the teaching of pupils in the early stages of English acquisition is good. Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge and language support assistants have very good cultural and linguistic knowledge. As a result, pupils in the early stages of learning the language receive very good support because language assistants are able to provide explanations in the pupils' home language. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson two pupils who are at the very early stages were able to follow the teacher's overhead projector presentation on transparent and opaque materials because the assistant was able to translate the specialist vocabulary into Urdu and Punjabi. This enabled the pupils to participate fully in a group revision exercise based on reading cards. The reliance on the use of the home language diminishes as pupils gain confidence, and English is used more frequently. Good language support for pupils at the early stages of English was seen in many lessons including, for example, English, mathematics, science, history and ICT. Teachers and language learning assistants work well with subject teachers to ensure that pupils learning English have a similar learning experience to that of the other pupils.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and very good for those in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities and good opportunities for pupils' personal development. However not enough curriculum time is allocated for modern foreign languages for lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9. This does not allow full coverage of the National Curriculum and impedes their progress in learning a foreign language. This in turn restricts their opportunity of studying a foreign language to GCSE level. The time allocated to physical education is below that found in most schools.
28. The curriculum caters for the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. Pupils are provided with equal access and opportunities to learn, except in the case of modern foreign languages. The school does not comply with the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. The school is at a relatively early stage in identifying those pupils that are gifted and talented. Currently the school provides a range of revision sessions for pupils likely to achieve the higher levels and grades in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations.
29. The current length of the teaching week falls 30 minutes below the government recommended time of 25 hours. The most effective use is not made of the teaching time available due to the structure of the school timetable. Some lessons are over-long, particularly those that straddle the lunch period and it is difficult to sustain pupils' interest and concentration. The school has firm plans to restructure the teaching week to extend and make more effective use of the teaching time from September 2002. The school is making appropriate preparations for its first post-16 intake in September 2002. The curriculum will focus initially on GNVQ and Key Skills courses for all students.
30. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 builds on the very good links with the primary schools. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, together with religious education, PSHCE and ICT. These subjects provide a good range of appropriate and stimulating activities. Pupils are taught in groups according to their literacy level. This arrangement is unsatisfactory as it creates teaching groups with too wide a range of attainment levels in subjects other than English. French is the core foreign language for pupils in Years 7 to 9. There is no second modern foreign language for pupils in these years. Pupils are able to receive tuition in their home language as part of the school's extra-curricular activities. This arrangement increases the pupils' achievement opportunities as it allows them to go on to take a GCSE in their home language. The arrangements for the teaching of ICT are good. All pupils have a discrete period per week and they are provided with good opportunities to apply and develop their ICT skills in other subjects. The PSHCE programme is very well structured and taught over six whole days spaced throughout the school year. It is intended that work covered in these days is supported through the week in tutor group time. There is a need to revise schemes of work in religious education in Years 7 to 9 in the light of changes to the locally Agreed Syllabus.
31. A good range of GCSE and GNVQ courses, certificates of achievement and specifically tailored programmes for some pupils enhance the breadth and relevance of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Pupils follow a common core of subjects: English, mathematics, single science, physical education, religious education and PSHCE. The range of additional options has been designed to meet the needs of all pupils and to place an increasing emphasis on the vocational contexts of learning. To this end, all pupils in Year 10 study a GNVQ course from business, ICT, health and social care or the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award scheme. The school has effectively used the process of disapplication from modern foreign language to create different pathways for pupils to follow that more readily match and enhance their learning opportunities.
32. The school makes good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. The aim of the school is for pupils with additional needs to be taught in mainstream classes wherever possible and to have access to the full curriculum. For those who need individual or small-group

teaching in order to improve basic skills, this is organised in a way least likely to cause disruption to learning and the curriculum. Pupils have a broad and relevant curriculum that includes the opportunity to follow accredited courses, such as the Certificate of Achievement and the ASDAN scheme. The structured way in which the programme is designed allows flexibility as pupils can follow some subjects to GCSE. Effective arrangements are made for pupils who are having temporary learning or behaviour difficulties through the learning support unit. Pupils follow their normal curriculum after negotiated entry to the unit, involving year achievement leaders and parents. The aim is to gradually reintroduce pupils back into mainstream lessons after either a fixed period in the unit or a proportion of each day.

33. The school has a very well structured and taught PSHCE programme. Form tutors have been trained to teach the programme and there is flexibility to allow exchanges between tutor groups so that tutors can teach the topics where they feel they have the greatest expertise. Effective use is made of outside speakers when specialist input is needed. In this way effective use is made of the police and the health service when, for example, drugs and sex education are being covered. The PSHCE lesson is at present taught as an additional lesson to the normal six period day, on one day a week. Pupils express dissatisfaction with this arrangement. Nevertheless, the programme is effective and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. It is intended that part of the daily form tutor time should be used to follow up topics covered in the PSHCE lessons. However, few tutors use this time for this purpose.
34. The school is beginning to evolve strategies for teaching literacy across the curriculum. Within English the adoption of the Key Stage 3 framework and literacy strategy is helping to develop pupils speaking and listening skills and building on their experiences from primary schools. There is increasing awareness of the importance of developing pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. For example, subject specific key words have been identified and these are displayed in most teaching areas. However, in many subjects there is a lack of understanding of the strategies that can be employed to raise standards of literacy. There are similar weaknesses in curricular provision for pupils at the intermediate stages of English language acquisition. Although there are opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in many subjects, these are few and are not at present linked in any way. The school recognises the need to tackle this with some urgency and intends to appoint a numeracy coordinator for September 2002. Within mathematics the recommendations of the Key Stage 3 framework and numeracy strategy are being introduced in Years 7 and 8 with the intention to extend these to other years in the near future.
35. The very good quality of the school's provision for careers education and guidance ensures that pupils receive the appropriate advice needed to make choices at the end of Year 9. The changing status of the school has resulted in the need to appoint a careers education specialist to provide guidance to pupils on pathways at the end of Year 11. The careers education programme is taught from Year 7 as part of the PSHCE programme and aims to ensure that pupils are well informed about career opportunities so that they can become realistic planners for their own futures. They benefit from a programme that includes preparation for option choices and attend an information evening before making their Year 10 option choices. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are given all the essential information about options available at the age of 16. They attend open days and conventions that provide information about higher education and career opportunities. All pupils in Year 11 have two weeks work experience and are visited by staff during their work placements. In 2001, the effectiveness of this arrangement was recognised when the school received an award from Careers Bradford.
36. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, in which an increasing number of pupils participate. Extra-curricular provision and take-up are restricted by the lack of time at lunchtime and pupils' other commitments after school. However, the range of activities offered by the school is developing and not only enriches the curriculum but also extends the range of opportunities for pupils to achieve. Most subjects offer pupils the opportunity to develop their course work by attending extra sessions at the end of the school day. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to make visits both within the local area and further afield. The English department organises visits to the theatre, the history department makes study visits to the World War I battlefields in Belgium, and geography field study visits are made to the

Yorkshire Dales. Pupils following GNVQ courses visit local businesses and the Manchester United business department. Many extra-curricular activities are at a developmental stage. These include the choir and small ensemble opportunities in music. There is a satisfactory range of sporting activities with squads beginning to be developed to enable the school to engage in inter-school competitions.

37. The school is making increasing use of the community to enhance pupils' learning. Central to the aims of the school is the desire to serve the community. To this end strenuous efforts are made to emphasise the importance of education to raise the aspirations and quality of life of members of the community. As part of the post-16 provision planned for September 2002, the school intends to offer GNVQ courses to adults alongside Year 12 students. The school is actively involved with the police and other agencies in promoting drug education and members of the local community contribute to the PSHCE programme. Several local businesses make donations to the school funds for educational purposes and to such events as the Christmas Fayre Draw. The school makes good use of the opportunities offered by the community for work experience placements for its pupils.
38. The re-organization of education in the LEA and the change in designation of the school have meant that the school has had to develop new links with a range of educational institutions. Links are being forged with the primary schools from which pupils are drawn and these help to smooth pupils' transition from the primary to the secondary stage. The school is becoming a 'city learning centre' satellite and this enables primary schools to link into its excellent ICT resources. Good links with local educational and other institutions facilitate alternative curriculum provision for some pupils in Years 10 and 11. Links are also being forged with other post-16 providers to ensure that pupils have access to the full range of educational opportunities available to them when they leave school.
39. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Spiritual development is fostered well in religious education and English. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to consider and respond to questions about the meaning of life. In English, pupils are encouraged to explore their inner thoughts and feelings and to consider what is meant by the concept of identity. This has particular significance for pupils with different cultural backgrounds. However, few other subjects make any significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies take place once each week for each year group. The assemblies are strongly based on a moral or social theme for the week, but do not include a period of spiritual reflection. It is intended that tutors use the 'thought for the week' during the morning tutor group period. While some teachers develop the theme further in the tutor period, it is not common practice to start each day on a contemplative note. Nevertheless, the school does succeed in creating an environment of respect for each individual, which nourishes the life of the spirit.
40. Provision for moral development is very good. The school takes a strong stance on principles of equal opportunity for boys and girls, mutual respect, politeness and concern for others. These values are exemplified in the commitment shown by staff to pupils. The school's positive assertive discipline strategy is based on clear rules of behaviour and promotes appropriate behaviour through a system of incentives and sanctions. In most subjects, pupils have the opportunity to explore moral issues. They form the basis of religious education from Year 9 onwards and figure prominently in the study of English literature. Similarly, in geography, pupils discuss the rights and wrongs of environmental issues, and in history they study the moral consequences of the rise of fascism in Nazi Germany. The well-planned PSHCE programme also helps pupils to think through their views on relationships, health issues and care for the environment. Pupils respond well and show pride in their school by observing the rules for maintaining the fabric of the building.
41. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Citizenship is taught in PSHCE lessons and pupils have the chance to practice democracy by expressing their views on school matters in the year councils and school council that meet regularly. In addition, pupils in each year are given responsibility as monitors for supervising their peers at break times. They take it seriously and show initiative, as was evident in a meeting of Year 8 monitors to discuss

how they could improve the efficiency of their duty teams. A number of Year 10 pupils have been trained as peer counsellors to listen to any problems of fellow pupils. Pupils are able to show their concern for the wider community through supporting worthy causes. Each year group chooses a charity it will sponsor. Pupils have raised over £1000 for the local Marie Curie home. Social skills are developed in many lessons, where pupils are provided with opportunities to exchange views in small group discussions. Teamwork is fostered through physical education and when pupils are engaged in fieldwork in history and geography. The school is successful in integrating all its pupils socially and increasing their confidence, particularly that of the girls, to express their views and challenge each others' opinions.

42. Provision for cultural development is good. Through an extensive programme of out of hours classes on two days a week, pupils are able to take part in a range of cultural activities, including Italian as an extra modern foreign language. Some subjects offer opportunities for pupils to learn about their heritage culture, such as the study of Islam alongside Christianity and other major world faiths in religious education, and the choice of a module on Islamic civilisation in history. However, there is scope to make more use of the cultural backgrounds of pupils. For example, opportunities are missed to refer to Asian dishes when looking at health and diet in science, and when preparing food in technology. Conventional extra-curricular cultural opportunities in art, music and drama are developing well, with current projects including a performance of excerpts from the musical 'Grease'. There are not enough opportunities for educational visits to extend pupils' cultural horizons. The exceptions are the history visits to Belgium and the modern foreign language visits to France. However, costs limit the number of pupils who can participate in visits abroad.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

43. Overall, the school provides a very good level of care and support for the personal and educational needs of its pupils. Child protection and health and safety procedures are good. Although no formal child protection training has taken place in recent years, child protection issues are highlighted at the start of every school year. All staff new to the school are made aware of child protection issues as part of their induction programme. The school's child protection policy is available in the staff handbook and child protection information is also available to staff through the computer network. The school pays good attention to the health and safety of staff and pupils. Subject departments take their responsibilities for child protection seriously. Pupils are given clear guidance on safety procedures for using tools and lifting equipment. The recently appointed staff member responsible for the overall health and safety in the school has done a whole school survey but no governing body member actively participates in site inspections. A sufficient number of staff hold up-to-date first aid certificates.
44. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Continuity of care is provided through the school's pastoral system headed by an assistant headteacher and supported by the year achievement leaders who in turn work closely with form tutors. Form tutors develop a detailed knowledge of the pupils in their tutor groups and are central to the support the school offers its pupils. Form tutors are in daily contact with their tutor groups and in a position to ensure that any problems are picked up at an early stage. The school's learning mentors also play significant roles in the support offered to pupils. They keep in close contact with pupils and their parents, and ensure that there is a good flow of information between the school and parents. The work of the learning mentors, together with that of the community development officer, makes a significant contribution to the harmonious and supportive atmosphere in the school. Their intimate knowledge of local issues and the cultural customs and traditions of the various ethnic groups helps to ensure that there are few points of friction between home and school. Additional academic support has been provided to all pupils in Year 11 by their allocation to a particular member of staff who is available to them as they face the challenge of the forthcoming GCSE examinations.
45. The school works hard to promote regular attendance and has developed good procedures to ensure that pupils and parents appreciate the importance of regular attendance. First day contact

is made with parents in the event of any unexplained absence. In addition, the school has recently introduced a staged warning system through which parents are notified if a child's attendance falls below 90 per cent over a four-week period. If the attendance does not improve after this notification, parents are invited to meet with the year leader to discuss the problem. When appropriate the school involves the relevant external agencies. The alternative curriculum provided for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 is helping to keep them in regular attendance. About 14 pupils receive off-site tuition or employment for part of the week and then they receive coaching in the basic skills at the school for the rest of the week.

46. The starting point to the school's behaviour policy is based on a positive assertive discipline strategy. The fundamental principles are: all pupils have a right to learn, all adults have a right to be able to do their job, and every pupil can behave. Based on these principles, the school has developed very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. All staff work hard to implement the code of behaviour. The code is formulated positively so that pupils have clear guidance on how they are expected to behave. Those who follow the rules earn merits. These merits may be awarded for quality of work, effort, attitude and achievement, and the merits earn rewards. The rewards are presented in assemblies and telephone calls are made and letters sent to the pupils' homes to inform parents of their children's good behaviour. Parents are particularly appreciative that they are informed when their children are doing well, as well as when their children may have misbehaved. Merits are awarded to tutor groups and other groups who work well together and the accumulation of merits earns privileges for the pupils involved: for example extra computer time. A gradually escalating series of sanctions are invoked when pupils misbehave. The school carefully records incidents of inappropriate behaviour and an accumulation of these quickly alerts the pastoral team of impending problems so that they can intervene and provide support as necessary. The school alerts parents at the earliest signs of problems. The well-established learning support unit provides help for those pupils who have difficulty conforming to the school's expectations of behaviour. Pupils whose behaviour causes persistent disruption to teaching and learning are withdrawn from mainstream lessons to work under close supervision in the unit for varying periods of time. In a groundbreaking move the school has collaborated with the LEA and the police in issuing letters to a few particularly disruptive pupils warning them that an 'anti-social behaviour order' could be sought against them. Bullying is simply not acceptable at the school and although the school is mindful of its responsibilities for social inclusion, if all the above procedures are exhausted, or serious anti-social behaviour occurs, exclusion will follow.
47. The school is presently making radical changes in its procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Until recently, all subjects have conducted regular assessments and fed the results from these into central records. However, there has not been a consistency across subjects because they were not rigorously related to national levels and expectations of attainment. For example, teacher assessments of Year 9 pupils in 2001, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, were far lower than the pupils' test results. In other subjects, such as art, French, physical education, and design and technology, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 are unreliable. This means that it is not possible to monitor the progress of pupils effectively. No analysis has been undertaken to identify whether different groups of pupils are underachieving. Consequently, planning for curriculum development has not been able to meet the needs of individuals or groups because there has been inadequate baseline information.
48. Despite this unsatisfactory broad picture, there are examples of good practice. For instance, assessment in GNVQ is accurate and helps pupils to improve their work because it is directly related to the course criteria. This is partly because the course leader has had relevant experience in other secondary schools and in further education and has a very clear knowledge and understanding of the standards that pupils should be achieving. This is also evident in ICT, where the GNVQ ICT assessment procedures have been adopted for the GCSE course. In these two subjects assessment is closely related to national and course expectations and used effectively to guide planning. In addition, the marking of pupils' work is thorough and provides them with clear guidance on the standards they are achieving and what they have to do in order to improve.

49. The change in the school's status from a middle school to a secondary school has prompted a full review of the assessment procedures. The school is in the process of establishing a comprehensive database of pupils' attainment. This will enable each department to have access to a full range of information on the performance of both individual pupils and groups of pupils. The positive effects of this initiative are already beginning to be seen in the monitoring of pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school is about to enter its first cohort of pupils for the GCSE examinations. Good use is being made of the Year Eleven Information System (YELLIS), to provide predictions about pupils' performance in the GCSE examinations. This information has been used to set targets for individual pupils and to assist departments to set targets across the year.
50. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are good. Their progress is closely monitored, through standardised testing and through reviews of their IEPs. The school fulfils its statutory duties to monitor and review the provision for pupils with special educational needs and to plan for transition to the next stage of education. The provision described in statements of special educational needs is generally fully implemented. The special needs department has changed efficiently to the new Code of Practice, although some revised IEPs still need to be updated. Progress of pupils is carefully tracked and reviews of IEPs and statements are carried out regularly with dates clearly noted. The assessment for pupils with EAL is unsatisfactory overall; procedures for identifying the language needs of pupils when they enter the school are unsatisfactory. Although the monitoring and support of pupils at the early stages is very good, monitoring at subsequent stages of English language learning is unsatisfactory.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

51. Laisterdyke School is very popular with parents and oversubscribed. The views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and through the parents' questionnaire were very positive. Parents state that the school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become more responsible. They find the school approachable and believe that the school tries to work closely with them. They say that school management is good and their children enjoy coming to school. Only two aspects drew critical comment. Some parents feel that their children should have more homework, although some wanted less, and some felt that there could be more activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views of parents. Enough homework is set and generally used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Inspectors found that the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. However, the range of these activities is to some extent restricted by the short lunchtime break, difficulties in teacher recruitment and the considerable amount of additional work teachers have had to undertake following the change in designation of the school. Nevertheless, the number of extra-curricular activities the school offers is increasing.
52. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory. The prospectus is comprehensive and a parents' guide prepared by the Friends of Laisterdyke High School provides further useful information. Much useful information is also provided through the school website. No formal governors' report was issued to parents for the last school year, although all of the information required was transmitted through other means. Pupils are provided with pupil planners and parents feel that these provide a useful means of communication with the school. However, the use of the planners is inconsistent. Although most tutors sign the planners regularly, homework is often not recorded and the homework timetable is frequently not completed. Parents are informed about school and class activities through regular letters and their consent for their children to participate in educational visits or join clubs is sought. Individual letters inform parents of their children's achievements or if there are any concerns. Parents are appreciative of this. Three parents' evenings per year provide good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with their teachers. About 90 per cent of parents regularly attend these meetings. The school encourages parents to come to the school to collect the yearly school report so that the contents can be discussed. However, the quality of the yearly school reports is inconsistent. Although all subjects report on pupils' attitudes and effort they do not all provide clear information

on what pupils know, understand and can do. Targets are set but they are too general. A few parents commented they do not understand the meaning of attainment levels.

53. The school works hard and with some success to involve parents in the life of the school. Parents appreciate the school's open-door policy and the staff are very approachable. They feel that their views are taken seriously if they ever have need to raise any concerns with the school. The newly formed Friends of Laisterdyke High School has regular meetings. It aims to promote the education and welfare of the pupils and to foster relationships between staff, parents and others associated with the school. Guest speakers are invited to meetings to talk about topics of interest to the community. For example, recent contributions have been on the progress of the local regeneration project, the behaviour of young people in the community and how parents can help their children with their reading. The 'Friends' also raise funds to support specific educational projects. Parents support the work of the school well. They recognise the significant influence of the home on their children's attitudes and behaviour. By ensuring that their children are in regular attendance, appropriately dressed in school uniform and conform to the school rules, parents make a substantial contribution to the very good relationships in the school.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

54. Foremost amongst the many challenges the school has faced since the last inspection has been the change in September 1999 from a school for pupils aged 9 to 13 to a school for pupils aged 11 to 16. That this change has been managed smoothly owes much to the excellent leadership of the headteacher who provides a clear educational direction for the school. The headteacher provides a sense of purpose that is underpinned by a deep knowledge, understanding and commitment to the pupils and community the school serves, and reflected in the well-ordered learning environment the school provides. The high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher is recognised by staff, governors and parents as a major strength of the school. The headteacher, with good support from governors and other senior managers, has secured a strong commitment to improvement and the raising of standards in all areas. This is evident in the enthusiasm with which all staff have tackled the many challenges presented by the change from a middle to a secondary school.
55. The overall good quality of school management has facilitated the smooth transition from a middle to a secondary school. At the time of the change in designation of the school, few staff had experience of teaching the extended age range and of assessing pupils' achievement and attainment in Years 9 to 11. In order to tackle this issue, training has been provided to enable staff to develop the skills necessary to teach the extended age range. The success of this training is evident in the good teaching seen in many lessons in the upper years. However, due to a lack of experience in the assessment of pupils in the 14 to 16 age range, not enough use is being made of this information in planning teaching and learning. The school is aware of this issue and intends to tackle it as a matter of priority. Increased expertise has been provided through the appointment of a deputy headteacher, several subject leaders and other teachers with extensive secondary school experience.
56. The senior leadership team, made up of the headteacher and her deputy, together with the two assistant headteachers, work effectively as a team and share the headteacher's drive to improve the school. Each has line management responsibilities through which middle managers, such as subject and year achievement leaders are held accountable to senior management. However, because members of the senior leadership team carry substantial departmental or other responsibilities, in addition to their roles as senior managers, their workloads are too heavy. The range of their responsibilities is too wide and this is impeding the rate at which improvement is being made. Although the headteacher and other members of the team carry out regular classroom observations and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, there are weaknesses in school policy formulation and inconsistencies in policy implementation. The heavy workloads of senior managers also contribute to inconsistencies in the rigour with which they monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

57. The school's shared values and aims are reflected in its work and seen in school development planning, which is good. The school's targets and priorities for development are relevant and costed, and the school is taking action to tackle them in a methodical way. A firm pledge to provide equality of opportunity for all underpins the school's commitment to improvement and this is seen in the introduction of GNVQ courses in Years 10 and 11 and the continuing development of the curriculum to widen the choice of work-related options, particularly for those pupils for whom the traditional GCSE courses are not most appropriate.
58. In order to ensure that a sharp focus is maintained on the raising of standards, year heads have been re-designated as year achievement leaders. The intention is that the year achievement leaders and their teams of form tutors should become fully involved in the monitoring and support of pupils' academic as well as their personal development. In order to support this work the school is establishing a good assessment database and analyses of pupils' performance information are provided to year achievement leaders and to subject leaders. This information includes pupils' scores from the Middle Years (MIDYIS) and the Year Eleven (YELLIS) Information Systems, which are national data gathering and analysis systems, used to provide information on which predictions of future performance are based. This, and other, information is being used to monitor individual pupils' progress. However, there is a general lack of understanding of how this information should be used to guide curriculum and lesson planning within subjects. This is reflected in many subject development plans, which do not identify clear objectives and the action necessary to promote the raising of standards. Several of the year achievement leaders carry substantial additional responsibilities and heavy workloads. This reduces their effectiveness and slows the rate at which improvement is being made.
59. Subject leadership in ICT is exemplary and having a significant impact on pupils' achievement in the subject. Strong leadership is also a feature of GNVQ course provision. GNVQ courses are seen as central to curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11, as well as to the post-16 provision planned for September 2002. The subject leader is managing these developments very effectively and providing a very good role model in monitoring and evaluating work in the area. Subject leadership is also becoming increasingly effective in English, mathematics, science, art, geography, history, French, music and religious education. The rapid progress made in the development of new teaching and learning programmes for pupils in Years 9 to 11 owes much to the enthusiasm of staff to take on new challenges.
60. Although there are sufficient teaching staff, in common with many other schools in the LEA the school experiences difficulty in teacher recruitment. As a result the school relies heavily on temporary teachers and on permanent teachers to teach subjects other than their own specialist subjects. At the time of the inspection six vacant teaching posts were being covered in this way. These staffing difficulties have an adverse impact on standards. During the autumn term of the present school year, for example, there was only one permanent mathematics teacher and the subject was taught mainly by temporary teachers. This position was rectified in January 2002 with the appointment of a new subject leader and a full complement of specialist teachers, and rapid progress has been made since that time. Similar difficulties in staffing have been experienced in English, science and several other subjects. In English and geography, many teachers teach only very few lessons, and some teachers are working in three different departments. In English, 12 teachers are involved in the teaching of the subject, whilst in geography 10 teachers contribute to the department's work. The headteacher and governors work tirelessly and imaginatively to recruit teachers and have achieved some success. This is evident in ICT, GNVQ, mathematics, science and music, for example. However, the support that many subject leaders have to provide for temporary teachers interferes with the extent to which they are able to monitor and evaluate the work of all teachers of their subject on a regular basis. Several subject leaders are relatively new to management positions and have their own development needs. This is evident in design and technology where leadership is not providing a strategic vision for the future development of the subject. There is a need to improve the skills of subject leaders in development planning and the use of assessment information. There are also weaknesses in the co-ordination of the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Arrangements for the co-ordination of provision for pupils with EAL are unsatisfactory. The school has experienced difficulty in

recruiting a subject leader for physical education and the subject was without effective leadership at the time of the inspection.

61. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and a strength of the school. All the legal requirements are met. The governor with responsibility for the oversight of provision is very experienced and attached to the department in a support role. She is very knowledgeable of the needs of these pupils and ensures that the governing body is well informed. Governors in turn are very supportive of the department. The activities and responsibilities of the department are clearly laid out in a number of documents and the new Code of Practice is clearly explained to staff in the special needs handbook. The special needs co-ordinator is supported by a recently appointed deputy and leads a dedicated team of 21 support assistants effectively. All members of the team are provided with regular training opportunities. Effective use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning. Pupils use the Successmaker programme and this forms an important part of the department's assessment procedures. These procedures also include regular tests of reading and writing in order to provide a baseline to assist in target setting. The department has recently established a base that provides sufficient working space and a meeting room. There are effective links with appropriate outside agencies. The special educational needs department makes a significant contribution to the school's inclusion programme.
62. The governing body is very effective. It has a good committee structure and provides the school with effective support. Governors have very good working relationships with the headteacher and carefully scrutinise all school policies and plans. Governors have a clear understanding of the issues facing the school over the next few years and are in a position to set the strategic direction for its future development. With the exceptions of a daily act of collective worship and curricular provision in modern foreign languages, the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
63. The quality of financial management and planning is very good. Governors are actively involved in financial planning and monitoring and are given very good support by the school finance manager. The school development plan is carefully costed and directly linked to educational outcomes. The school has very good procedures to ensure that the principles of best value for money are applied in the use of its resources, and all additional funding received by the school is used for the intended purposes. Although a substantial budget surplus is being carried forward, most of this money is earmarked for a planned building extension to provide accommodation for the sixth form. If this money is discounted the budget surplus is within the range recommended as prudent by the LEA. No issues were raised in the most recent auditor's report. The quality of financial planning is a strength of the school.
64. The resources available for supporting teaching and learning are very good overall. The school makes particularly good use of new technology and the ICT resources are excellent. Some departments, such as science, have their own ICT areas and others, such as English and French, are equipped with interactive whiteboards. Good use is made of these resources. Resources in design and technology are excellent. However, because of weaknesses in planning, they are not always used to best effect. There are a few resource deficiencies in art and music. In art, the design equipment is inadequate for three-dimensional work and in music there are not enough percussion instruments or keyboards. It has been necessary for the school to undertake a complete review of the library in order to ensure that the resources available are appropriate for the new range of courses. The school is in the process of establishing a computer-based information retrieval system supplemented by a range of reference and fiction books. The computers have been located in a spacious area that is being developed as a learning resource centre and the book stock is in the process of being replenished. When completed it will provide a very good resource base to support teaching and learning. However, at the time of the inspection there were no library facilities available to pupils. The school has developed a very good careers library that is well managed and used effectively.
65. The school provides a good induction programme for all teachers who are new to the school, and additional support for newly qualified teachers. The school provides good support for the professional development of staff. Satisfactory procedures for performance management are in place. Much of the staff development work over the past three years has been directed towards

equipping teachers with the skills and expertise necessary to develop the 11 to 16 curriculum and to teach the extended age range. A large number of staff have benefited from courses to improve their skills in ICT and very good use has been made of the skills of the ICT subject leader in providing training opportunities. The number and quality of technical support staff are good and the team of learning support assistants provides good support for pupils with special needs. The secretarial and clerical staff contribute very effectively to the administration and organisation of the school.

66. The overall quality of the school accommodation is very good with many excellent features. It allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Subject rooms are grouped together. This helps to ensure that subject teachers are in close contact and that the most efficient use is made of time and resources. Classrooms are carpeted, well decorated and equipped with window blinds. They provide spacious, bright and uplifting teaching rooms. Corridors and other common areas are also carpeted. This contributes to the general sense of calmness and orderliness in the school both during lesson time and when pupils are moving around the school. Although examples of pupils' work are displayed in classrooms and public areas, there is scope to give more recognition to pupils' achievements through display. In a few subjects limited space in teaching areas makes it difficult for pupils to engage in group work and for teachers to circulate to support individuals. This is the case in music and art, although there are plans for improvement in both subjects. The site manager and team take pride in their work and maintain the school premises to an excellent state of cleanliness. This makes a significant contribution to the positive ethos of the school. Pupils treat their school with respect and consequently there is limited litter and no signs of damage or graffiti. The school provides an excellent community resource in an area recognised as being severely disadvantaged and in need of regeneration.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. To raise further the standards of work, attainment and progress of pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior leadership team and staff should

(1) Raise standards of literacy and numeracy by

- Ensuring that there is effective co-ordination of school strategies for raising standards of literacy and numeracy in all subjects
- Ensuring that there is effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of school strategies so that good practice is identified and shared and weaknesses tackled
- Requiring all departments to revise schemes of work to include strategies focused on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy
- Improving the standard of marking so that all teachers correct errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Developing the library as a resource for research and for reading for pleasure.  
(paragraphs: 1-4, 6-7, 16, 18-19, 34, 78-79, 84-85, 87-88, 91, 94, 97, 105, 127-128, 141-142, 163, 165, 168)

(2) Improve provision for pupils with EAL by ensuring that

- There is effective co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of EAL provision across all subjects
- That all teachers have a good understanding of the English language learning needs of pupils with EAL and know how to provide for their learning needs, including those who are competent and fluent users of English
- There are clear systems for identifying the language needs of pupils with EAL and the monitoring of their progress
- All teachers are provided with full information on the levels of English language acquisition of the pupils with EAL  
(paragraphs: 34, 50, 73-77, 122, 127)

(3) In order to improve assessment policy and practice the school should

- Develop a coherent school assessment policy, which provides departments with clear guidance on assessment practice, and ensure that all department assessment policies are consistent with the school policy.
- Ensure that there are clear expectations about how subject leaders should use assessment information with their subject teams.
- Ensure that assessment information is used by teachers to set attainment targets at the beginning of each year, and that these are shared with pupils and clearly understood by them.
- Establish procedures and timetables for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment in all subjects, and for making judgements about whether pupils are doing well enough.
- Ensure that curriculum planning takes account of assessment information so that learning activities are matched to the attainment levels of pupils.
- Use the database to identify groups of pupils who might be underachieving.  
(paragraphs: 20, 47-49, 55, 58, 81, 92, 104, 117, 132, 148-149)

(4) Improve school management by

- Reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team to ensure greater consistency in the monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
- Reviewing the roles and responsibilities of year achievement leaders to ensure that they have enough time to monitor the academic as well as the personal development of pupils  
(paragraphs: 20, 56, 58)

(5) Continue efforts to recruit specialist teachers so that there is a better match of qualifications and experience of teachers to the needs of the curriculum  
(*paragraphs: 16-17, 21, 60, 83, 86, 126, 159, 164-165*)

(6) Improve subject leadership and management by ensuring that

- All subject leaders and co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are provided with the training necessary to enable them to monitor and evaluate work in their subjects effectively.
- All school policies and plans are implemented consistently in all subjects
- All subject development plans are sharply focused on raising standards and contain clear strategies that can be implemented, monitored and the outcomes evaluated
- The quality of leadership in design and technology is improved
- Effective subject leadership is provided in physical education

(*paragraphs: 20, 60, 83, 106, 113-114, 118, 161-164*)

In addition, paragraphs 27, 150 (curriculum time for modern foreign languages), 29 (length and structure of the teaching week), 64, 66, 112, 158 (resources and accommodation for art and music), 30 (pupil grouping), 52 (use of pupil planners) include weaknesses that have not formed the basis of 'Key Issues' identified above. The school should consider including these in the governors' post-inspection action plan.

## **PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

68. The proportion of pupils with EAL (78 per cent) is very high in comparison with schools nationally. Of these, 15 pupils (two per cent) are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The school receives funding through the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Grant for one full-time and two part-time specialist teachers, and three full-time bilingual support assistants. The main languages other than English spoken by pupils are Urdu, Punjabi, Pushtu and Hindi, with small numbers speaking other languages. Pupils at the early stages learn English through a combination of small group teaching and support in mainstream lessons. Those at the intermediate stages receive small group teaching in order to improve their general standards of literacy. The attainment and progress of most pupils at the early stages of English language learning are measured using the National Curriculum levels for English.
69. The standards achieved by pupils with EAL are well below average overall. There are pupils at all stages of English language acquisition in Years 7 to 11. These range from a few pupils at the earliest stage to the majority who are confident and fluent users of the language. The achievement of pupils with EAL is good overall in all years. The achievement of pupils at the early stages of English is very good in listening and reading. Most pupils can understand the everyday English spoken by their peers and are beginning to understand the more formal language their teachers use in the classroom. This was seen in a Year 7 literacy support lesson in which most pupils at the end of the early stages of English could understand the teacher's well-illustrated explanation of a descriptive reading text about water. In reading, pupils make very good progress throughout the early stages; they progress from reading and understanding single familiar words to reading longer texts that sometimes contain unfamiliar words and structures. In speaking, pupils make good progress in the early stages using basic language confidently in brief exchanges and familiar verbs in the present and past tenses. By the end of the early stages, many can express themselves more confidently using familiar vocabulary in full sentences and are beginning to adapt their language to formal and informal situations. Pupils' accuracy and fluency in writing develop very slowly; many pupils come to the school unfamiliar with the English writing script and initially make slower progress in writing generally, but after learning the English alphabet, many learn to shape individual letters well and initially make good progress. As they approach the end of the early stages, most pupils use basic punctuation appropriately and express themselves in full sentences with a limited vocabulary; but many pupils are heavily dependent on writing frames and in many cases their spelling and punctuation are weak. By the

end of the intermediate stages of English, many pupils are beginning to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words in texts and understand teacher presentations in a range of subjects. Higher attaining pupils use some subject-specific terms with growing confidence and independence. In speaking, many use a fuller vocabulary and wider range of verb forms. In writing, many pupils continue to make basic errors in spelling, punctuation and verb forms but some higher attaining pupils write accurately and express themselves confidently in both structured and creative writing. Girls at the early and intermediate stages of English language learning make good progress in speaking in class and group situations.

70. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning English; in all of the lessons seen, the pupils co-operated very well in class with their teachers and support assistants, and showed enthusiasm for learning English. For example, a boy in Year 8 at the early stages of English eagerly responded to the inspector's questions about his favourite subjects, proud to show how much English he had learned in the few months he had been at the school.
71. The teaching and learning of pupils with EAL is satisfactory overall and, in the early stages, teaching is good. In the lessons seen, all the teaching seen of pupils at the early stages of English was at least satisfactory, with over half the lessons being good, and one being very good. All the teaching of pupils at the intermediate stages was satisfactory.
72. Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge. The language support assistants have very good cultural and linguistic knowledge. This ensures that pupils new to English feel secure in their first contact with English because of the language assistants' explanations in the pupils' home language. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, two pupils at the very early stages were able to understand the teacher's presentation about transparent and opaque materials because of the assistant's translation into Urdu and Punjabi of the specialist vocabulary. This enabled the pupils to participate in a group revision exercise based on reading cards. The use of the home language diminishes as pupils gain confidence and English is used more frequently. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, the good marks obtained by two pupils at the early stages of English language learning showed good understanding of mathematical concepts and both pupils expressed their appreciation of the explanations and guidance given mainly in English by the bilingual support assistant. Good language support for pupils at the early stages of English was seen in many lessons, for example, in science, history, ICT and English.
73. Teachers and language learning assistants work well with subject teachers to ensure that pupils learning English have similar learning experiences to those of other pupils. A very good example of team teaching was seen in a Year 7 English lesson. In this lesson, the support teacher's skilful questioning based on the subject teacher's presentation helped two girls at the early stages of learning English to understand the differences between formal and informal language. In a Year 8 science lesson the language assistant's knowledge of the lesson plan enabled the five pupils at differing levels of English acquisition to have good supporting materials, which enabled them to join in a group revision activity. Some teachers prepare high quality and effective materials, which match very well the needs of pupils who are at the early stages of English. This was seen, for example, in a Year 10 English lesson based on a poem by Robert Frost. However, this practice is not consistent across the department and there is a need to produce and share more high quality language support materials for pupils at all stages of English language learning.
74. Teachers and language support assistants generally provide good models of spoken English for pupils to replicate. However, pupils who are new to English need tapes of English speakers for systematic home study in order to develop their English intonation and pronunciation. Teachers and language support assistants do not generally support pupils' learning through marking which addresses the specific writing needs of particular pupils. More generally, subject teachers do not always correct the written work of pupils learning English according to their specific language difficulties, for example, by emphasizing punctuation, use of capital letters, the formation of handwriting and word order. For example, in the files of pupils in a Year 7 literacy group, there was little evidence of regular and supportive marking appropriate to the needs of the pupils at the early stages of learning English. The teaching of pupils at the intermediate stages of English language acquisition is satisfactory overall. Many are included in the withdrawal groups for literacy

support, which address some of the pupils' needs well, for example in reading and listening. However, there is a lack of consistency in the teaching of pupils with EAL across the school. This is because many subject teachers are not fully aware of the specific needs of individual pupils and do not have enough guidance on how they can provide for their specific language needs. This is especially so when the pupils with EAL are no longer supported in their lessons.

75. The department does not make enough use of ICT to enable pupils to develop and practice the use of English through independent learning activities. The accommodation for teaching and organizing the subject is inadequate. The department shares one room with modern foreign languages and uses other subject rooms for small group work. These rooms do not provide pupils with a stimulating English language learning environment through display and immediately available resources.
76. Assessment procedures for the initial identification of the needs of pupils with EAL are unsatisfactory. Although the initial assessment of the pupils entering the school during the school year is very good, the assessment arrangements for pupils with EAL in Year 7 are inadequate. This is because the results of the National Curriculum tests in English provided by the primary schools, on which pupils' English language needs are currently based, do not give enough information on the specific needs of these pupils. Moreover, the English National Curriculum levels, which are subsequently used by the department to describe the pupils' level of English, do not identify the specific English language needs some pupils have in listening and speaking. This is especially relevant for pupils at the early and intermediate stages of English.
77. The overall co-ordination of the monitoring and support for pupils with EAL is unsatisfactory. A part-time teacher is nominally in charge of the department and sets a good example in teaching. There are clear priorities for the development of the department and in the limited time available, provision for those pupils who are at the early stages of English language learning is being reorganised. The monitoring of pupils' progress at the early stages of learning English is very good. The department keeps detailed assessment information, sets targets for improvement for many pupils and support assistants keep clear records of the pupils' progress. However, for pupils at the intermediate stages of English, there is little detailed monitoring of the progress they are making, even though specific language learning needs remain for many pupils. Because of this, some pupils who have made rapid progress remain in teaching groups where they are not given enough challenge. This was evident in a Year 7 English lesson, for example, where one girl at the intermediate stages of English demonstrated that she was at a much higher stage of English language acquisition than other pupils in the class. She spoke very confidently and used a good vocabulary range, including terms such as 'biographical details', in her response to the teacher's questioning. There is a need for a comprehensive school strategy for the teaching and learning of pupils at all stages of English language acquisition.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	145
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	17	69	46	10	1	0
Percentage	1	12	48	32	7	1	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 - Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	830
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	316

Special educational needs	Y7 - Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	32
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	375

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	636

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	94	82	176

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	41	33
	Girls	41	33	24
	Total	81	74	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	46 (50)	42 (48)	33 (36)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	16 (16)	18 (21)	8 (12)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	35 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	10	30	15
	Girls	15	24	12
	Total	25	54	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	14 (27)	31 (68)	15 (32)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	2 (9)	7 (21)	7 (9)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	29 (29)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	67
Pakistani	563
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	0
White	180
Any other minority ethnic group	5

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	65	5
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	29	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	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)	47
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.1

#### **Education support staff: Y7 - Y11**

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	660

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.4%
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.6
Key Stage 4	22.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	2,081,258
Total expenditure	1,869,291
Expenditure per pupil	2,790
Balance brought forward from previous year	529,958
Balance carried forward to next year	741,925

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	20

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6.2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	8.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	4.0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	830
Number of questionnaires returned	353

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	41	4	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	43	44	9	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	40	8	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	37	15	9	2
The teaching is good.	53	36	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	38	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	3	1	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	24	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	52	38	4	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	63	27	3	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	37	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	37	10	7	12

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

### ENGLISH

Overall the provision for English is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- The department is well led and managed. Teaching and support staff work well as a team to promote pupils' learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards English. They work hard in lessons and want to succeed.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and the very harmonious relationships lead to a good environment for learning.
- English makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

#### Areas for improvement

- Standards of literacy, particularly writing, are very low and impede pupils' progress in all subjects.
- The marking of pupils' work does not systematically show them how to improve.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to monitor and support pupils' achievement.

78. Pupils' attainment in English is well below average on entry to the school, at the end of Year 9 and in the current Year 11. These standards are reflected in the results obtained by pupils in the national tests for Year 9 pupils in 2001, when pupils' performance was well below the national average and below the standards achieved in similar schools. Standards in these tests fell slightly from 2000 while national standards rose, but the fall was not as marked as in mathematics and science. Girls gained better results than boys but the difference between them was much less than the difference nationally. This was sometimes reflected in lessons observed during the inspection when boys were seen to take a more active part in classroom activities. When their prior attainment is taken into consideration, pupils' achievement is satisfactory at the end of Year 9. The achievement of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and the predicted GCSE grades for Year 11 pupils confirm this. Although achievement is satisfactory and similar levels of attainment in relation to their age are maintained as pupils move through the school, there needs to be a much greater rate of progress to raise attainment closer to national expectations.

79. Inspection evidence confirms these low standards of attainment but also suggests that they could be higher. There is already evidence to suggest that standards of reading on entry are rising. In many lessons where reading, speaking and listening are the main activities, achievement is good. Pupils in Year 7 can detect bias in texts and select the precise words that convey the author's views to the reader. Higher attaining and average pupils in Year 9 are able to understand the plot of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', but only the highest attaining have a sophisticated understanding of how the language tells us what characters are like. A group of lower attaining Year 9 pupils were able to use the conventions of script writing. Most pupils are able to talk about their work and their explanations of what they think about literary and non-literary texts become increasingly thoughtful and perceptive as they move through the years. During the inspection, higher and average attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 were studying the poetry of modern British, Asian and Caribbean poets. They recognised meaning and form and discussed the relationship between them. In one Year 10 lesson pupils compared a modern and a Shakespearean sonnet, and could explain how the irregularities in the modern poem affect the meaning. They also talk with ease about important and sensitive issues raised by texts, such as the impact on their lives of living with two cultures. However, many pupils, particularly those who use EAL, find it difficult to write with the same fluency. They write as they speak without really understanding the difference between the spoken and written language. This is compounded by the way that teachers mark. In order to encourage pupils' efforts they tend to praise the strengths in written work but do not always balance this by indicating errors and showing how to improve. This allows pupils to make the same mistakes over and over again and impedes progress.

80. Pupils have positive attitudes towards English. They come to lessons expecting to work hard, they settle quickly to their work, concentrate and behave well. There is very good racial harmony in classrooms, with pupils of different ethnic backgrounds collaborating well and respecting each other's values and beliefs. This is in large part due to the way in which teachers relate to all pupils, conveying a liking for their pupils and an enjoyment of their work in the classroom.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with almost two thirds of lessons having good features. Strengths of good lessons are the quality of planning, with learning developed in small steps, each building on the last so that pupils consolidate and deepen their understanding. Teachers' management of behaviour is also a strength. In the best lessons pupils are presented with work that matches their needs. It is appropriate for lower attaining pupils and challenging for the highest attainers. This leads to good intellectual and creative effort and good achievement. However, this is not consistently so and in some lessons higher attaining pupils are given too much guidance and not encouraged to experiment and work things out for themselves. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve well in lessons where the presence of a support assistant helps their learning and enables them to take a full part in the lesson. The main area for improvement is the use of day-to-day assessment. Marking and classroom interaction between teachers and pupils tend to focus on praising pupils for their efforts rather than identifying what is good but also what pupils must do to reach the next level. This lack of rigour means that pupils do not have a sufficiently clear idea about how to improve their work.
82. The English department makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own and others' inner thoughts through reading and writing poetry. They are also encouraged to consider important and serious issues in their discussion and their writing. For example, some Year 9 pupils have written movingly about the death of Damilola Taylor through the medium of ballads, and other work was seen which weighed up the rights and wrongs of eating meat.
83. The department is well led and managed considering the rapid rate of change and recent problems with staffing. The subject leader heads a small core of permanent, specialist teachers who have transformed the curriculum in the last two years to meet the needs of a changing school population and continue to refine what is offered to pupils. Currently they are revising the Year 7 curriculum to embed the teaching of literacy more securely. These changes need to be moved as rapidly as possible through Years 8 and 9 to tackle low standards of literacy throughout the school. The main area for development in the overall management of the department is the quality of assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and this links closely with the need to improve the marking of pupils' work. Current assessment procedures do not enable teachers to focus their planning on providing appropriate levels of work for all pupils. However, this is changing rapidly with the development of a central database. This database will provide teachers with a powerful tool not only for assessing pupils' attainment and progress but also for comparing the achievement of different groups of pupils. It will also allow the respective achievements of different teaching groups to be compared. The use of the database will provide a more secure basis for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning within the subject. The number of temporary and supply teachers currently teaching the subject impedes this aspect of management. The subject leader and her deputy have to spend too much time supporting them so that they have little time left to monitor the work of permanent teachers. The areas for improvement are recognised. The English department is committed to raising standards and to the development of systems of self-evaluation as means to improvement.

## **Literacy**

84. Pupils' standards of literacy are very low when they enter the school, although there is some evidence to suggest that reading levels are improving. The majority of pupils can access most of the texts that they meet in lessons although only the highest attaining pupils are able to use inference and deduction confidently to read between the lines and identify the writer's intentions. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs can often read the words but do not have a secure understanding of what the text is telling them. Many pupils do not read

willingly or widely for pleasure and this is compounded at present by the lack of a well-stocked library. Many pupils do not have a good range of reading skills because subject teachers are not teaching them the specific skills needed to read for information, such as skimming and scanning. Improving levels of reading in Year 7 are demonstrated by pupils' ability to distinguish fact and opinion and to detect and explain bias in texts. Many can reproduce forms of bias in their own writing. Generally, writing skills are weak. Only the higher attaining pupils can write fluently and accurately and transmit clearly what they mean to the reader. Many pupils have difficulty expressing themselves in writing and their spelling and punctuation are often inaccurate. Many pupils have a wide and interesting vocabulary and can use the style appropriate for the written task but the main problem is that grammatical structures are often incorrectly formed and applied. This is most often the case with pupils who speak EAL and teachers' marking of pupils' work is not as helpful as it should be in showing pupils how to improve their writing skills.

85. The strategies being developed to improve pupils' standards of literacy are at a relatively early stage. The English department is revising its curriculum for Year 7 to embed the new Framework for Teaching English in its work. As yet, a clear understanding of the strategies that can be employed for improving pupils' literacy skills is strong in only a few other subjects. For instance, key words are displayed in many classrooms but referred to in only a few lessons. Sometimes the display is in a position where pupils have difficulty seeing it while they are working. Dictionaries are not evident in some rooms. Some use is made of frames for writing but their use and design is not always well understood by teachers. In some lessons, the frame is too restrictive and is given to all pupils, including those who do not need it and whose needs would be more effectively met by an expectation that they would plan and develop their own writing. However, there are examples of good practice. There is a strong emphasis on literacy in geography lessons. Pupils are expected to use geographical terminology and to take their own notes during presentations, and frames to encourage extended writing are used effectively. This level of understanding and integration of appropriate strategies in the teaching and learning process needs to be spread across all teachers of all subjects.

## MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision for mathematics is **satisfactory** and improving.

### Strengths

- Test results are significantly below the national average.
- The highest attaining pupils in Year 8 are challenged and extended well.
- Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons seen.
- Teachers are dedicated and enthusiastic.

### Areas for improvement

- There is not enough monitoring of the work of the department to identify and share good practice and to improve teaching and learning.
- Assessment information is not used to monitor achievement of different groups of pupils.
- There is not enough support from other subjects to develop pupils' numeracy skills.
- The number of specialist teachers of mathematics.

86. As a result of the changing status of the school it is not possible to compare standards in mathematics with those reported in the last inspection in 1997. Difficulties in staffing of the department prior to January 2002 have had a serious impact on the standards achieved by pupils and their overall progress. The school found it impossible to recruit a team of permanent mathematics teachers for the start of the school year. Because of this the department was staffed entirely by temporary teachers during the autumn term. This had an adverse effect on standards. The situation was rectified with the appointment of a new subject leader and a team of permanent teachers in January 2000 and there has been considerable improvement since that time. Nevertheless, standards are also affected by the current arrangement for the grouping of pupils.

87. The Year 9 National Curriculum test results in 2001 were well below the national average and results in similar schools. However, the 2001 results represented good overall progress for the pupils from their earlier test results in Year 6. One feature of these results is that boys do significantly better than girls at the expected Level 5 and above. The results for mathematics were below those in English but better than those in science.
88. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11 is well below average but improvement is underway, particularly in Years 7 and 8. The expectation for Year 9 pupils in 2002 is that results will remain well below national averages. The most likely outcome from Year 11 GCSE mock examinations is that the proportion of pupils gaining the higher A\* to C grades in the 2002 examination will be well below average.
89. Teaching across Years 7 to 11 is never less than satisfactory. In the majority of lessons it is good or better. The higher proportion of the very good teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9. In these years achievement is satisfactory and pupils, including pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils at an early stage of language acquisition make satisfactory progress with their learning. When these pupils are supported in lessons their concentration and interest improves and progress is good. Teaching and learning are less effective in Years 10 and 11 because pupils have not had consistently good teaching prior to January 2002. Since then teaching and learning have gradually improved and in particular the highest attaining pupils in Year 11 have made good progress towards their GCSE targets.
90. When taught well most pupils learn new ideas and skills quite quickly, gain a good understanding of the subject, achieve well and make satisfactory progress. A strong feature of many lessons is the effective use by teachers of mental and oral starters to engage and motivate pupils to learn. These not only develop their numeracy skills but also establish good building blocks for tackling other work in the subject. As a result, pupils' use and application of their mathematical skills are improving. For example, during the week of the inspection, Year 10 pupils were determining the pattern of a sequence of numbers by using an algebraic method. Several of these pupils were able to extend their knowledge by considering more complex sequences that involved higher order equations. Year 8 pupils use 'LOGO' to develop their understanding of the properties of shapes. In a very good Year 8 lesson, the teacher used a range of visual aids effectively to develop pupils' confidence with counting in 9s and 10s and also to demonstrate place value through the multiplication of single and two digit numbers by 10. Year 9 pupils were observed extending their knowledge of the relationship between the sides and angles of a right-angled triangle and using Pythagoras' theorem correctly. All pupils in this group coped well with a range of questions from previous Year 9 National Curriculum test papers.
91. A good level of challenge is offered to the highest attaining pupils, particularly in Years 9 and 11. This is partly because these teaching groups are comparatively small and often have a support teacher working alongside the class teacher. The cumulative affect of this is some very good teaching that extends pupils' mathematical knowledge and thinking. Questioning here is often probing, teaching brisk and expectations high. Teachers usually refer to the work in previous lessons to focus minds on new learning and build skills systematically. One shortcoming in teaching is that activities are not sufficiently modified or planned to meet the range of attainment levels that exist in most groups. This also restricts the development of greater independence in pupils' learning. The identification of key words that pupils need to be familiar with ensures that pupils continue to develop their literacy skills within mathematics. Teachers make regular reference to these words throughout the lesson encouraging pupils to use the correct language when answering questions. The use of dictionaries would enhance further pupils' language development and, as a consequence, their mathematical understanding.
92. Teachers assess pupil performance largely through homework and the regular testing of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Assessment records provide valuable information for target setting. The inclusion of a pupil self-assessment task for each taught module ensures that pupils are fully involved in the assessment process. As a result of this information, pupils are set realistic targets for improvement. However, currently the department does not make enough use of

assessment information to guide curriculum planning or to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils.

93. The adoption of the National Strategy for Numeracy is benefiting pupils in Years 7 and 8. Many lessons start with an activity designed to sharpen skills and focus minds on the lesson ahead. For example, in one Year 8 lesson pupils developed their confidence in the manipulation of number by first practicing the addition and multiplication of numbers before moving onto finding factors and multiples. These pupils were then able to search and find prime numbers under 100. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were challenged to match percentages to a proportion of £60, to mark these on a grid and to explain why they had chosen a particular pair. Both of these activities were very effective and formed very good introductions to the lessons. However, because all teachers do not review the learning objectives at the end of lessons, learning is not always consolidated and pupils are not aware of the progress they have made. These reviews would also be helpful to teachers in the planning of the next lesson and help to ensure greater continuity in pupils' learning.
94. For teaching to improve further teachers need to build on the success of the recent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and extend the ideas to other years and aspects of the mathematics curriculum. In some situations, teachers need to give more consideration to the skills pupils will need to use in the planning the lesson, linking the starter activity with the main focus of the lesson. By doing so pupils will then be able to proceed at the pace expected and make greater progress. There is a need for a more consistent approach within the teaching of mathematics to the way pupils present their work and the conventions used in mathematics.
95. Very good relationships provide the foundation for the development of good learning habits. Pupils display positive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons. Pupils behave very well in lessons, because teachers control their groups well and their enthusiasm for the subject helps to make lessons interesting. This in turn generates positive attitudes towards the subject. A particular feature of many successful lessons is that pupils work collaboratively and as a result their learning is enhanced. This was seen to good effect in a lower attaining Year 9 class where the pupils practised pairing equivalent algebraic expressions. The pupils worked well on this activity with good support from the teacher and support assistants.
96. The appointment of a subject leader and three other well-qualified mathematics teachers in January 2002 has stabilised the department. A strong team of dedicated and enthusiastic teachers is now being assembled. The department has tackled with urgency the need to arrest the very low standards pupils were achieving particularly in Years 9 and 11. These pupils are being prepared as a matter of priority for the forthcoming examinations. Learning programmes have been rewritten and the teaching of numeracy skills as prescribed by the National Numeracy Strategy, have established a firm foundation for the raising of standards. Excellent accommodation and a high level of resource provision also support the drive for improvement. However, teacher recruitment difficulties remain and additional specialist teachers are still needed. The new subject leader has set the department challenging targets for the next few years. The leadership and management of the subject are now in very competent hands. The subject leader and the assistant subject leader provide very good role models, particularly for girls. The department is well placed to secure the changes necessary to continue its improvement and to standards.

## **Numeracy**

97. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced in Years 7 and 8 and this is having an effect on improving standards of numeracy in mathematics. In other years, pupils are encouraged to develop their mental recall of number facts as part of preparation for the non-calculator paper in the National Curriculum tests and the GCSE examination. Pupils are encouraged to use their number skills in other aspects of the subject; for example, pupils measure accurately when working with shapes, and calculate averages for a set of figures from a survey. However, there is no school policy for numeracy and the school has not established where and how other subjects support the promotion of numeracy or where pupils need to apply specific skills that they have learnt. Because of this not enough attention is given to supporting the development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects.



## SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths.

- Excellent accommodation and very good resources.
- Good pupil management.
- Enthusiasm for the subject and the capacity to improve.

### Areas for improvement.

- The use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress and guide the planning of teaching and learning and the marking of pupils' work.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Medium and long term development planning.

98. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below that seen nationally for all schools and for schools in a similar context. The attainment of pupils in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 remains well below national figures for all schools and that of similar schools. This year science results are just below those of last year. Pupil's attainment in science is below that in both English and mathematics. Girls' attainment is below that of boys. Nevertheless, comparison of standards of attainment on entry with those attained at the end of Year 9 show achievement to be satisfactory.
99. The school has yet to enter pupils for the GCSE examination. The schools prediction is that the proportion of pupils in Years 10 and 11 who will obtain A\* to C grades will be about half the national figure. The GCSE module test marks and other inspection evidence suggest that the school predictions may be over optimistic and that fewer pupils will gain the higher grades.
100. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is well below national expectations. Pupils in a Year 7 lesson could explain colour changes in litmus paper in acid and alkaline conditions and had an understanding of how animals were adapted to particular environments. Year 8 pupils showed an understanding of angles of incidence and reflection but some girls were not clearly able to relate these to the design of the periscope they were making and confused angular measurement with units for temperature. Higher attaining boys could explain periscope design in principle but not with great clarity. In Year 9, higher attaining boys and girls were able to explain the terms soluble, insoluble, solute and solvent and the means for separating mixtures. However, the principles of distillation were not understood. Lower attaining pupils showed an understanding of the term biomass but were unsure of aspects of photosynthesis at the level normally expected for Year 9. Although Year 9 pupils' work was well presented, there were many errors in the spelling of scientific and other terms. Pupils are able to make simple numerical calculations and to construct graphs. Some Year 9 work showed the effective use of ICT to produce information sheets and posters. However, there was no evidence of use of ICT in lessons observed during the inspection.
101. Inspection evidence shows attainment in Year 11 to be well below national expectations. Pupils in a Year 10 lesson showed a weak understanding of rock formation and superficial knowledge of the link between volcanoes, earthquakes and earth movements. Lower attaining pupils showed limited understanding of atomic structure and a poor understanding of the pathway of electricity through a 13amp plug, although its safety features were well understood. Higher attaining pupils had a good understanding of both these areas. Pupils in a Year 11 lesson about genetics showed a range of levels of understanding; some could explain the outcome of straightforward genetic crosses and understood the link between DNA and chromosomes. Others could not explain aspects of sickle cell anaemia or where they would find DNA in their bodies. They showed a poor grasp of the implications of the science they were learning. Although lower attaining pupils are able to apply the formula to find the average speed of objects their numerical skills are limited and they are unable to follow simple mathematical logic slightly outside the formula. More attention needs to be given to ensuring pupils clearly understand the use of units of

measurement. Effective use is made of simple graph work to present information. Effective use is made of ICT for word processing and to produce information sheets and posters. There was no evidence of other use of ICT during the inspection.

102. Pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL make satisfactory progress up to the end of Years 9 and 11. There was evidence in some lessons that the speaking skills of boys were better than those of girls.
103. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. There were no instances of inappropriate behaviour in any of the lessons observed during the inspection. Relationships are good and pupils work well together when engaged in group learning activities. Pupils are punctual at the start of lessons and settle to work quickly with little teacher intervention. However, the timetable does not offer the best distribution of time. Lessons are of unequal length, some are very long and some are also split over lunch times. This increases the demands on teachers and makes the planning of lessons more difficult. Where lessons are over-long teachers have to include an extensive range of activities to avoid pupils losing interest and behaviour deteriorating.
104. Overall teaching in science is satisfactory. Where teaching shows strengths, as in a Year 7 lesson about acids and alkalis, pupils are well managed and demonstrations are used effectively to review previous learning and introduce new topics. In this lesson a good contribution was made to the development of pupils' literacy skills as key words were built up on the board and discussed with pupils. Careful planning ensured that the most effective use was made of the time available and a review of the learning objectives helped to consolidate pupils' learning at the end of the lesson. In a Year 8 lesson, were set a problem-solving activity that drew on their knowledge of reflection of light to build a working periscope. This provided an enjoyable activity that challenged their understanding of science, allowed them to work with others in a group and experience some of the 'awe and wonder' of science when they made a periscope that worked. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils learning about static electric charges started with a simple class experiment using polythene sheets which lead, by means of a logical and challenging discussion with pupils, to an understanding of electrostatic phenomena. This was followed with an enjoyable demonstration with the Van De Graff generator. Where teaching showed weaknesses as in a Year 7 lesson on environments and adaptation, the pace of the lesson was too slow, there was a lack of stimulus material, the approach was uninspiring and little recognition was given to pupils' prior learning. Too much time was spent on very similar activities that pupils already understood.
105. There are weaknesses in the marking of pupils' work. Some errors in scientific facts, poor answers to questions and incorrect spelling of technical words are unchecked or even marked as correct in some instances. Requests to complete work or to make corrections are not always followed-up. Marking generally encourages neat presentation but does not convey to pupils what it is they should do in order to raise the standard of their work. Annual reports provide information about the science curriculum, comment on pupil attitudes and effort and set targets that encourage greater effort. There is little information about pupil's scientific knowledge or what it is they should do to improve.
106. The attention paid to the development of literacy skills is inconsistent across the department. There is evidence of numerical and graphical skills but this is insufficiently rigorous. Despite the computer suite, the possession of sensors and ICT being identified in schemes of work, there was only limited evidence of the use of ICT in lessons or in books seen during the inspection.
107. Departmental management is satisfactory and the department has moved a long way in a short space of time in moving from middle to secondary school status. Schemes of work have been written which cover both National Curriculum and GCSE course requirements. Recently, effort has been targeted towards the establishment and organization of new laboratories and computer suite, which provide excellent facilities for teaching and learning. However, there is a need to do further work on the provision of materials and a suitable course for lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. Members of the senior leadership team have monitored teaching and learning in the subject. However the subject leader does not do this regularly. Although the department is beginning to collect and analyse pupil assessment information, not enough use is made of this

information to monitor pupils' progress and to guide the planning of teaching and learning. There are weaknesses in subject development planning. The present development plan does not identify clear objectives and the action necessary to promote the raising of standards. The department provides revision programmes for pupils in Years 9 and 11 and a photographic club as part of the school's provision for higher attaining pupils.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Standards are improving and pupils achieve well.
- Relationships and behaviour are very good and the staff and pupils work very well together.
- Teaching is consistently good. Learning tasks are challenging, stimulating and relevant to a balanced art and design curriculum.
- Subject leadership is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment.
- The provision of resources and accommodation for three-dimensional work.
- The use of ICT for image control, development and modification.

108. Due to the recent appointment of suitably qualified art and design teachers, standards are starting to rise across the school. On entry to the school many pupils have limited experiences of the subject and standards are well below average. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils, boys and girls, are achieving below the national expectation. Pupils in Year 11 will be taking the GCSE examination for the first time this year. Due to the good quality of the teaching they now receive the standard of many pupils' work has risen from very low, to just below the national expectation. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
109. The improving standards across the school are supported by a good scheme of work and good planning. Pupils are confident in the use of a range of media and materials, covering two and, to a lesser degree, three-dimensions. They demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of how artists use colour, line and shape. The work of a wide range of artists as is used as a stimulus or starting point for pupils work and they usually show a good interpretation of the artists' work. For example, pupils in Year 8 use their developing awareness of the work and style of Henri Rousseau to develop their awareness of how he developed and composed shapes in his jungle scenes with an emphasis on the use of different shades of green. Pupils' literacy standards are well supported by the use of poetry as a stimulus for their pictures with pupils writing evaluations of their work as they progress, finding the meaning of key words with the use of dictionaries. For example, pupils in Year 9 have successfully written about the emotions developed in their pictures through the application of colour, shape and texture. Pupils, in Year 7, have completed a good range of pen and ink pictures influenced by the poem, 'The Uneasy Sky' by John Mansfield. Numeracy is successfully applied with pupils using grids to analyse and enlarge pictures.
110. There is a good progression of standards across the school. On entry in Year 7, pupils have a varied experience of art and design, from their previous primary schools and standards are in most cases very low. Supported by good teaching, pupils soon develop an awareness of primary, secondary and tertiary colours and colour mixing. By the time they enter Year 8, standards are already improving from well below average to at least below average. In Years 9 and 10 pupils build upon the rich experiences gained in Years 7 and 8. They start to achieve well, making good progress and are able to sustain themes and develop ideas. Many use colour and line with skill and imagination. This is seen in the good displays of artwork around the school. A display of pupils' work from Year 9 shows a good understanding of the Fauvist style of painting. Here the pupils show a good application of colour and the use of marks for emotional and decorative effect.

As part of their three-dimensional work, pupils in Year 10 have developed large fantasy heads in plaster. Pupils in all years are now starting to successfully sustain themes and develop ideas with skill and imagination. They discuss their work with knowledge and confidence, giving reasons for their decisions and how their work is going to develop. Older pupils, in particular in Year 10, are starting to make satisfactory use of their sketch and notebooks, with some carefully presenting and developing their work. However, in Year 11, many pupils' sketchbooks do not show enough self-evaluation and comment to explain and analyse their work. The majority of pupils show high levels of enthusiasm, motivation and interest in their work. They readily apply themselves, work at a good rate and show satisfactory levels of understanding.

111. The overall quality of teaching is good in all years. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, attitudes and achievement. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and expertise. Lessons are carefully planned, according to a well-designed scheme of work. This helps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and EAL, are fully involved in all activities. Good use is made of visual support material, discussion, directed questioning and encouragement to extend pupils' learning. Good attention is paid to the needs of individual pupils and there is excellent inclusion of all pupils in all lessons.
112. Visits to museums, galleries, exhibitions and contacts with artists are beginning to be developed and there is an art club that meets once a week. There is room for the further development of links with centres for art and design outside the school. Assessment procedures are satisfactory although not enough use is made of assessment information to guide the curriculum. This is seen in the pupils' sketchbooks and notebooks where teachers provide comments for pupils to improve their work, but these not always followed-up. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to access the Internet but not enough use is made of it for control and image development.
113. The leadership and management of art and design are good. The subject leader and the other two teachers in the department work well together. The range of displays in and around the art room and around the school support pupils' work and values their achievements. Good use is made of funds available to the subject. A satisfactory range of resources are purchased and used effectively to enhance pupils' learning. There is a need for a suitable room to be provided for three-dimensional work with a greater range of resources to support this work and for image development with the use of computers.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision for design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths:

- The quality of work being produced in textiles.
- The developing strength in the use of ICT for design development and manufacture in all areas of the department.
- The excellent accommodation for teaching design and technology.

### Areas for improvement:

- Subject leadership and management.
- Clear strategies for raising standards.
- Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information.
- The structure of the timetable.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 to reinforce basic designing and making skills.

114. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are very low in comparison with the national average and schools in similar circumstances. The 2001 teacher assessments show that very few pupils achieved the expected Level 5. The school has not yet had a group of pupils take courses through to the GCSE examination. The evidence of work seen during the inspection suggests that the results of the first GCSE cohort who will take the examinations in 2002 are likely to be well below

average. There are indications that standards are improving from this quite lowly position. The broader range of curriculum opportunities made available by the new facilities and the stimulus offered by the significant increase in specialist teachers in the area are having a positive impact on standards. The low attainment of many pupils is due to the inadequate teaching of basic subject-specific skills. This has now been recognised and the problem is being tackled as a matter of urgency.

115. In work seen during the inspection, attainment in lessons is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Although still some way below the national expectation, the indications are that standards are improving. Pupils enter the school with little background in the subject and a more structured approach to the work in Years 7 to 9 is necessary in order to develop basic skills and competencies. Attention is being paid to the development of these skills, but practice is not yet uniform throughout the department. Pupils generally do not have a full grasp on what a design process is and how they may be varied: for example, between food technology and resistant materials, where pupils are working with plastics and timber. A group of pupils in Year 9 were seen working in textiles and demonstrated great enthusiasm for their work. They knew and understood how this particular design process related to the task in hand. A good standard of both hand and machine processes was evident. In this particular lesson, pupils' individual standards were close to expectations and for some they were above. By comparison, the learning of pupils in Year 10 lesson was impeded by their not having been taught the basic skills for the task and so were having difficulty in making progress in their project work. Attainment is generally better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. The use of ICT is helping pupils in the application to designing and manufacturing in various materials.
116. Pupils display good attitudes towards learning, particularly in situations where they are able to make their own decisions about their designs and the techniques to be used. This was seen in food technology, for example, where pupils bring their own materials to lessons. In the samples of work and corridor displays seen during the inspection, pupils show that they value their work and take pride in completing their products with a good fit and finish. Pupils are responsive and use a wide range of tools and equipment safely. The department is characterised by good relationships. Pupils are treated with respect and respond in an appropriate and courteous manner.
117. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, it varies with the age range being taught. There is more good teaching in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. In only one lesson was teaching judged to be unsatisfactory. Good teaching is characterised by careful preparation, which ensures that the lesson moves at a good pace with all pupils fully involved in the learning activities. Lessons with these features were observed in each of the design and technology areas during the inspection. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils made little progress in the lesson because the basic skills and processes were not covered effectively. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons, teachers showed a lack of understanding of GCSE course requirements or the standards that pupils have to reach in order to achieve the higher grades in the subject. For example, pupils did not link evaluative thinking to their original intentions and their drawing and designing skills were well below expected standards. Overall expectations of pupils are too low throughout the department and this is particularly true of higher attaining pupils. Pupils should be presented with greater challenges, particularly in the resistant materials areas.
118. As with teaching, the overall quality of learning is better in the lower years. Where teaching meets the needs of pupils, learning is good. In a Year 9 food technology lesson, for example, the learning activities were closely matched to pupils' attainment levels and this ensured that that all pupils were fully extended. However, this close matching of learning activities to pupils' attainment levels is not a feature of all lessons. The main reason for this is that pupils are not at present accurately assessed, so pupils do not know how well they are doing and teachers do not really know the level at which work should be pitched. There is a need for accurate assessments in order that this information can be used to guide the planning of teaching and learning. At the present time assessment procedures are rudimentary. This impedes pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject.
119. The number of teachers in the department has almost tripled within a year and the new teachers have increased the amount of specialist teaching in the subject. The high quality new

accommodation and resources available within the teaching rooms have facilitated the expansion of the department. Collectively, this is having a positive effect on the opportunities available to the pupils. Some of the rooms are as yet incomplete but the plans for their use indicate that there will be full coverage of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. However, there are at present omissions in some aspects of systems and control. The development of schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 and appropriate examination courses in Years 10 and 11, depends on a clear strategic vision for the future development of the subject. The subject leader is not offering this vision and, as a result, subject leadership is unsatisfactory overall. The future development of the department is ill defined and does not encompass all of the design and technology areas. There are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning: strengths are not being identified and shared and weaknesses tackled. Due to the weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation, the department does not identify clear planning objectives and the action necessary to promote the raising of standards.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching.
- Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs.

### Areas for improvement

- The attainment of boys.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- The amount of non-specialist teaching.

120. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national average and in Year 11 they are below the national expectations. The 2001 teachers' assessments show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 5 was well below average for boys and below average for girls.
121. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment of pupils in the top sets in the current Year 9 is consistent with the national expectation. The overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 represent good achievement when the well below average standards on entry into the school are taken into account. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in Year 7 and 8 are above those in Year 9. This is partly due to the substantial effort made by teachers to raise pupils' literacy skills in geography.
122. Standards in the current Year 11, the first to be taught in the school, are below the national average. Original predictions suggested that only a small proportion of those entered would gain the higher A\* to C GCSE grades. However, the mock examinations have shown an improvement with slightly more pupils predicted to gain higher grades, although the overall results are still likely to be below average. The proportion of pupils gaining A\* to G grades may be close to the national expectation. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are affected by poor literacy skills and the recruitment of many of the lowest attaining pupils to the GCSE course. When standards on entry to the course are taken into account, achievement is satisfactory.
123. In Years 7 to 9 pupils gain a secure knowledge of basic geographical skills and are able to apply their numerical skills. They are able to measure line and angle, use co-ordinates, use latitude and longitude to locate places and use mapping techniques effectively. Writing skills are variable but the majority are able to make simple notes and complete worksheets competently. A variety of written styles are developed in the lower school. In Year 7, pupils learning to write letters about conservation issues in farming. In Years 8 and 9, writing develops into more imaginative work, such as the creation of brochures following comparative studies of Bangladesh and Kenya. In

Years 10 and 11, many pupils develop the ability to hypothesise, gather and analyse data and then draw useful conclusions. This is seen, for example, in Year 11 coursework on the different urban zones of the Bradford area. Many pupils have relatively poor literacy skills throughout their time in the school, but those in lower attaining sets work hard, and with good support they make very satisfactory efforts to improve their writing through use of writing frames and redrafting. In a Year 8 lesson, lower attaining pupils were able to write newly learned words on the whiteboard and make good copies of notes in their books. This group together with all other groups is making good progress in developing an understanding of subject specific key words. The attainment and progress of pupils with EAL is consistent with that of their peers, although no special provision is made for them.

124. By Year 11 many demonstrate an increasing understanding of geographical processes and patterns. This is seen in studies of geological structures and the careful preparation and presentation of case studies. In lessons there is little difference in the progress being made by boys and girls, although there is a large difference in levels of attainment between boys and girls overall. This is largely due to weaker literacy skills of boys. The department is aware that in addition to raising the standards of all pupils, particular attention needs to be paid to raising the standards of boys.
125. Increasingly effective use is being made of ICT to support teaching and learning. In one Year 7 lesson, particularly effective use was made of an interactive whiteboard to draft letters about farming. The interactive whiteboard was also used well in a Year 10 lesson to enable pupils to prepare Power Point presentations on river features. Not enough use is made of ICT to improve the quality of presentation of everyday work, although some Year 8 and 9 investigations and Year 11 coursework do feature some aspects of ICT. There is a need for greater access to the networked computer rooms. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from support assistants. Through appropriate and well-prepared teaching and learning materials they are fully involved in all learning activities. As a result they make good progress in the majority of lessons. Provision for higher attaining pupils is in the early stage of development and although extension work is set these pupils, provision is not at the level provided for pupils with special needs.
126. The overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils find lessons enjoyable and good relationships are evident. Good pupil management and well-planned lessons help to ensure high levels of concentration. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and learning. These contribute to pupils' achievement as does pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils respond well to the patience and humour of teachers. They stay on task and lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers constantly reinforce pupils' learning and check progress through regular assessments. Homework is regularly set and reviewed.
127. In the last two years there has been steady and satisfactory improvement in the department. Teaching and learning are good in three out of four lessons and at least satisfactory in others. There is an increasing use of ICT in the department's work and in Years 7 to 9 the use of National Curriculum levels has improved the assessment and monitoring of pupils. The department is also steadily developing the techniques and practices needed to teach the extended age range. Teaching is currently spread over too many non-specialist teachers and although this is not having an adverse effect on learning it is making administration and management much more difficult, in terms of co-ordinating efforts and monitoring the progress of teaching and learning. However the department is well led and is developing the knowledge to provide for present and future needs. The members of the department have the energy, enthusiasm and capacity to succeed.

## HISTORY

Overall, provision for history is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- Improving standards.
- Effective, committed and dedicated head of department.
- Good teaching in challenging circumstances.
- Very good use of information and communications technology to enhance learning.

#### Areas for improvement

- Pupils' literacy skills.
- Assessment policy and practice.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL.

128. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below the national average. The 2001 teachers' assessments show that only 35 per cent of pupils attained the expected Level 5 or above. In work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment were well below national expectations. However, in some lessons pupils attain standards that are closer to expectations for the particular age group. They handle facts well and they increase their short-term knowledge. However, many pupils experience difficulty in the recall of knowledge in the longer term. Their revision skills are weak and they are not able to link historical events. For example, in the study of the rise of the Nazi party in Germany, Year 9 pupils were able to put a series of facts on cards in order of their importance the rise of the Nazis, but were unable to recall either the date of the ending of the First World War or the date of Hitler's accession to the position of Chancellor. Thus, they do not have meaningful reference points for revision or for deepening understanding. Few pupils have developed independent enquiry skills. The school has a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and a number of pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The low level of literacy of many of these pupils impedes their progress. Progress is also impeded by poor knowledge retention.
129. Standards of attainment in Year 11, the first cohort to take the GCSE examination, are well below national expectations. However, as in Year 9, attainment in lessons is often closer to expectations. Many pupils are able to link several facts together to make a comprehensive and cohesive historical picture. For example, Year 11 pupils are able to link a range of factors, such as the inequities of the imposed conditions of the Treaty of Versailles and the Wall Street crash, to the damaging effects on the German economy in the early 1930's. However, they lack the analytical and writing skills necessary to acquire higher grades in the GCSE examination. The irregular patterns of attendance of some pupils have an adverse effect on their attainment. However, there are more general reasons for the below average attainment of pupils in regular attendance. These are, mainly, the low levels of literacy and the lack of strategies for helping pupils to retain information. The lack of these skills becomes particularly apparent when pupils are dealing with the complexities of analysis and evaluation in tests and examinations. The department is aware of the improvement needed in these areas.
130. Pupils' are making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils enter the school with a very low base line of skills, knowledge and linguistic ability. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good knowledge of the periods they are studying and are able to 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 10 class, for example, was clearly moved at the accounts of the suffering of people who were persecuted by the Nazis as they sought to establish an Aryan nation, free of the alleged 'tainting' of other races. Many of the pupils identified with the victims. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom EAL is also satisfactory. This reflects the particularly good teaching, which often has to compensate for the lack of appropriate in-class specialist support.
131. The response of pupils is good overall. With the exception of a small but significant group of very low attaining pupils, who display unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour, the majority of pupils apply themselves to their work well. They respond diligently, settle to the lesson tasks and sustain concentration. Pupils' oral contributions are often better than their written work. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour are often a direct result of good teaching and good classroom

management. However, too many pupils are content to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning.

132. Teaching is good overall. In several of the lessons observed it was very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned to extend pupils' learning. Teachers are particularly adept at drawing out significant points from materials in a challenging and exciting way. This is particularly so with the use of ICT. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils made very good use of the Internet for historical research and used a range of software to make sophisticated presentations of their findings. Pupils were stimulated by the challenge of the activity and applied their best intellectual and creative efforts to complete the tasks successfully. Although there is a lack of in-class support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils with EAL, the good quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to these pupils' achievement and progress. A characteristic of the department's 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 use of audio-visual and computer material, has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
133. The subject leader, who provides a good role model for a department team committed to raising standards, leads the department effectively. This commitment is evidenced in the wide range of after school, weekend and holiday classes which teachers voluntarily provide to help raise achievement. The department has produced a range of policies, which are being successfully implemented, and beginning to impact positively on pupils' learning. There are some areas, however, where further progress is needed. The assessment policy requires sharper focussing to provide more guidance on the assessment of pupils at different levels of attainment, particularly on pupils in the early years. This is necessary in order to make more effective use of assessment information to guide the planning of teaching and learning. There is also a need to introduce more rigorous strategies to raise standards of literacy.
134. The teaching rooms have good displays of pupils' work and provide a positive atmosphere for learning. Resources are satisfactory overall. There are particularly good ICT resources including interactive whiteboards, which are used well to support teaching and learning. These resources are augmented by visits to places of historic interest such as Skipton Castle. However, the department lacks historical artefacts, which could be used to stimulate interest and motivation.
135. This is an improving area of the curriculum and standards are rising. The department has a dedicated team of specialist teachers and a clear vision of how to take the department forward.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Excellent subject leadership.
- Very good teaching.
- Pupils are achieving well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in the GNVQ ICT course.
- Very good relationships. Pupils are interested in the subject and behave well in lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment.
- The extension of the cross-curricula use of ICT.

136. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show standards to be below the national average. However, standards are improving as pupils in Year 9 now have more curriculum time for the subject. The first cohort of pupils will take the GCSE examination this year. The department has decided that this course is unsuited to pupils in the school and more appropriate GNVQ course has been introduced for pupils in Year 10.

137. Inspection evidence shows standards of work to be below expectations at the end of Year 9 and in Year 11. In Year 7, pupils can log on to the network and know the importance of the confidentiality of their password. They have basic word processing skills and a satisfactory understanding of spreadsheets. There is a wide range of attainment in Year 8. Some pupils lack confidence in using Internet search engines, although they have satisfactory understanding of the use of fonts in word processing. Some higher attaining pupils have good skills in the use of desktop publishing software and can evaluate websites. In Year 9, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of databases. They know about different types of fields such as numeric, text and date, and are confident in their use of this software. However, some lower attaining pupils in this year have only limited skills in using desktop publishing, with work well below the level expected for their age. Pupils in Year 10, following the GNVQ foundation course are working on a module about spreadsheets. They understand how to use simple formula and replicate this, however, standards are low when compared to national levels. Pupils following the GNVQ intermediate and full courses are reaching national expected levels in the quality of their work. They make good use of desktop publishing to produce units of course work. In Year 11, pupils following the GCSE course made effective use of a number of previously learned skills, such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets and graphics to complete their course work on 'Helmcroft Hall'. Pupils taking the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) course have completed much of their course work and are learning how to create a power point presentation.
138. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about the subject. They stay focussed on their learning tasks and are able to work independently when given the opportunity. They also co-operate well when working in pairs. In question and answer sessions pupils are responsive. Relationships are good and pupils respond well to their teachers. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute well to the quality of their learning and the progress they are making in the subject.
139. Teaching is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to give clear explanations, which helps pupils learn. Pupils listen intently to their teachers and follow instructions closely. This again contributes to their learning. Lessons are well planned and the learning activities are closely matched to pupils' attainment levels. Teachers have high expectations of pupils being able to work independently. Objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons. This helps them understand what is expected of them. End of lesson reviews help to consolidate pupils' learning. Two excellent lessons were observed. These lessons proceeded at a rapid pace. Sharply focused questioning challenged pupils' thinking. Clear explanations ensured that pupils fully understood what was required of them and highly effective use was made of the teaching resources. As a result pupils made excellent progress in the lesson. In all lessons pupils are set challenging targets and are left in no doubt what is expected of them.
140. Subject leadership is excellent. The subject leader provides a clear vision for the development of the subject and a strong commitment to raising standards. Staff and resources are very well deployed. Non-specialist teachers make a significant contribution to the teaching of the subject because they receive very good support from the subject leader. The curriculum is well planned and all pupils in Year 7 to 9 now have two lessons of ICT each week. GNVQ (ICT), Foundation, Intermediate and Full courses have been successfully introduced in Year 10 and this type of course is more appropriate for pupils than GCSE ICT, which is being taken by the present Year 11 pupils.
141. The subject leader has done much to develop the cross-curricular use of ICT. She has directed the New Opportunities Funded (NOF) training for teachers and by providing school-based training during staff training days. The increased number of computers in the school, as well as the additional teaching rooms, has helped other departments to make good progress in the use of ICT in teaching of their subjects. There are particular strengths in design and technology, mathematics and English.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Overall provision for French is **unsatisfactory** because all pupils do not receive their full entitlement to study a modern foreign language.

**Strengths:**

- Very good classroom management ensures a calm and orderly learning environment.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are good and they are keen to do well.
- Behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Resources and accommodation are very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

**Areas for improvement**

- Standards of attainment, particularly in speaking and responding.
- Timetable provision for the subject slows progress over time.
- The use of assessment and the allocation of pupils to teaching groups.
- Not all pupils receive their entitlement to study a modern language.
- Opportunities for pupils to use the language independently to gather and give information.

142. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are well below average. Nevertheless, this represents satisfactory achievement when standards of attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 are taken into account. Standards achieved by higher and average attaining pupils are below average but a large proportion of pupils receive only one lesson of French a week. This contributes to the very low standards because they are not able to build effectively on previous learning. Higher and average attaining pupils write fairly accurately to describe their home, family and leisure activities mainly in the present and express simple opinions however the majority are unduly dependent upon models or guidance to do this. Pupils participate in simple dialogues consisting of one or two exchanges following a model, using set phrases and substituting words to change meaning. However the majority lack confidence in doing this spontaneously or in manipulating the language for themselves. Lower attaining pupils and some average attaining pupils who only have one lesson a week find difficulty in recalling previously learned language so that their progress over time is very slow, they use set phrases and single words but they fail to build effectively on previous learning. Listening skills are relatively well developed; the majority of pupils succeed in recognising key words and phrases from extracts of recorded speech and respond appropriately to instructions in the language in lessons. Higher attaining pupils succeed in interpreting instructions for others when they are given the opportunity. Most pupils match print with meaning and label correctly. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to recognise and apply patterns in the language by the end of Year 9.
143. Inspection evidence shows standards of attainment in Year 11 to be well below national expectations. Again, when standards on entry to the course in Year 10 are taken into account, achievement is satisfactory. Standards of writing in GCSE coursework assignments and in work seen in lessons are below average overall. Average and higher attaining pupils write fairly accurately using a good range of vocabulary and structures to describe work experience, their home town and their leisure activities as well as to write formal letters, brochures about their home town and produce curriculum vitae. They describe events in the past, present and future but the majority are dependent upon models and written notes to achieve this. There is little evidence of pupils writing independently or creatively in the language. Pupils participate in dialogues to describe events in the past, present and future and to express their opinions but the majority follow model dialogues closely and are not confident in manipulating the language for themselves. Pronunciation is adversely affected by pupils' reliance upon written notes and prompts and they lack confidence in responding to questions spontaneously. Reading and listening skills are relatively well developed, most are able to identify the main points and specific detail from a variety of texts and from short extracts of speech containing familiar language.
144. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are positive and they are concerned to do well. They settle quickly take their work seriously, listen attentively and concentrate on tasks set. Behaviour is very good and they have very good relationships with their teachers. They respond particularly well when engaged in games and in collaborative activities.
145. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. In nine out of every ten lessons seen teaching and learning were satisfactory or better and in two out of every ten lessons they were good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen in Year 8. There are significant strengths in the quality of teaching. The very good control and management of pupils coupled with very good relationships between pupils and their teachers are major factors in enabling pupils to learn effectively. Lessons are conducted in a calm and orderly manner, objectives are usually clear and shared with pupils and the review at the end of lessons is effective in reinforcing learning and in enabling pupils to measure their own progress.
146. Teachers make good use of the resources available such as the overhead projector and flashcards to make the meaning of new language clear and enable pupils to respond successfully to questioning in lessons. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils rapidly gained in confidence in using new language for themselves by practising first with flashcards and then with visual prompts in pairs before going on to develop their skills further by describing the weather in different towns in France on a weather map. When new language is introduced in the written form or when pupils are given insufficient opportunity to practise pronunciation progress slows, they lack confidence in using the language and pronunciation is adversely affected.

147. Teachers' knowledge of their subject is good and this is usually used effectively to conduct activities in French. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' listening skills and to challenge higher attaining pupils to interpret for others and on occasions teachers give English translations too readily, eliminating pupils' need to listen to the original. Activities are usually well planned and sequenced to enable pupils to build effectively on previous learning. For example, pupils in a Year 10 lesson moved from the introduction of the language needed to book hotel rooms to participating in dialogues describing the kind of facilities they required and then reinforced this learning and developed writing skills by writing a letter to the hotel confirming their booking. They made good progress because language was presented clearly; they were given the opportunity to practise and then given appropriate support materials to compose their letters.
148. Opportunities are taken to develop pupils' awareness of differences and similarities in French and their own cultures. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils explored festivals in France and compared them to their own and used a calendar of Saints' Days to practise asking for and saying the date in French to find out when particular Saint's Days were. Teachers use a variety of strategies to interest and motivate pupils, for example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils displayed enjoyment in participating in a French song about where people live and went on to describe their own homes.
149. The quality of marking is satisfactory and pupils are usually given appropriate guidance on how to improve. Assessment, however, is not used effectively to plan for the progress of groups of differing ability within lessons. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are usually well supported in lessons but higher attaining pupils are not always effectively challenged to achieve as well as they might. In the more effective lessons activities are well sequenced with appropriate tasks to enable pupils to increase their knowledge and develop their skills but in some lessons too much information is given too rapidly and pupils are given insufficient opportunity to use it for themselves and absorb it and in these situations their progress slows.
150. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The Head of Department has a clear idea of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. Assessment procedures have been developed to enable pupils' progress to be tracked effectively but there is still scope for the development of the use of assessment to more effectively meet pupils' needs in lessons. Development planning identifies priorities but is not sufficiently focussed on how standards are to be raised. Systems have been set up to monitor, evaluate and develop teaching and learning strategies and a considerable degree of consistency has been achieved across the department. The department works well as a team, planning together and sharing ideas.
151. The resources and accommodation available to the department are very good. Teachers use accommodation well to reinforce and support learning through the display of key words and phrases. Teachers have undergone appropriate training for GCSE and the use of information communication technology to support and extend learning. They are now well placed to meet the challenge presented by the transition from middle to high school. However statutory requirements are not met in Years 7 to 9 because the amount of time allocated for a large proportion of pupils to study French is not sufficient for the National Curriculum Programmes of Study to be adequately covered. As a result these pupils do not have equal access to French in Years 10 and 11. The assessment procedures used to place pupils in teaching groups upon entry to the school are flawed. Pupils are placed in teaching groups according to their attainment in English, and this is not an accurate indicator of their linguistic ability. Since the majority of pupils have significant experience in operating in at least one other language in addition to English they have already well developed skills in listening and speaking and are therefore well equipped to study another language. This is not taken sufficiently into account in placing pupils into teaching groups and as a result some able linguists miss the opportunity to develop their skills fully.

## MUSIC

Overall the quality of provision for music is **satisfactory** due to the good management of the department since the new subject leader joined the staff in September 2001.

### Strengths

- Arrangements for gifted and talented pupils.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Management of the department.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular activities and music workshops.

### Areas for improvement

- The amount of curriculum time allocated to music and the length of lessons.
- ICT resources to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.
- The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning.

152. Teacher assessments in the summer of 2001 show that at the end of Year 9 the attainment of the majority of pupils was well below national expectations. There are no GCSE candidates in either the present Year 10 or Year 11. The department is offering a GCSE examination course for Year 10 pupils from September 2002.
153. Inspection evidence shows standards at the end of Year 9 to be overall below national expectations. No significant difference was noted between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Standards were close to national expectations for the age group in one Year 8 class and one Year 9 class. The main reason for the low standards in the present Year 9 is the lack of continuity caused by the frequent changes in music teachers over the past three years.
154. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is based on practical work so that all pupils, whatever their attainment levels, can join in enjoyable musical activities and achieve a reasonable standard. In Year 7, pupils discover the elements of music through listening and performing, and compose music to depict an external stimulus, for example a picture. They experience the importance of ostinati, repeating rhythmic patterns, in gamelan music and are at present learning about the structure of melodies through playing and discussing a popular song. Pupils in Year 8 learn about the importance of scales in composition and appreciate the influence of the chromatic scale in Debussy's 'L'après midi d'un faun'. Further listening reveals the need for structural devices in music and the use composers have made of 'rondo' form. Investigations into other structural devices include pieces written over a phrase in the bass, which is continually repeated throughout the piece (ground bass). In lessons observed, pupils were composing different melodies or variations to fit the harmonies implied by ground bass.
155. In Year 9, pupils write the lyrics and compose the music for a popular song, which they then perform to the rest of the class and record on video. Scrutiny of the video performances revealed some good compositions, which were not only based on western popular music but also that of Asian origin. Owing to a lack of ready access to ICT resources it is not possible to cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are unable to gain access to a means of composition and performance, which does not require technical ability on an instrument. An extra-curricular ICT club meets regularly, but attendance is limited owing to a lack of computers.
156. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Activities are designed to be accessible to all pupils and this enables these pupils to produce good results, thus boosting their self-esteem. Resources are also tailored to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by any disability. Enlarged copies of the melody being learnt were made for pupils in a Year 7 class who experience difficulty in reading. Provision for higher attaining pupils is good. All practical activities have several parts of varying difficulty and pupils are directed as to the parts they will play, as part of their individual targets. In a Year 8 lesson, in which pupils were required to prepare and perform a version of Pachelbel's canon, the more musically talented pupils were able to extend the printed version by adding improvised parts, and varying the position in the

performance when each part should enter. Higher attaining pupils also receive extra challenge from the growing number of instrumental lessons that are now available and the increasing number of extra-curricular activities.

157. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. They are good in a few lessons where the pace and content continually challenge the pupils. In the few lessons where attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory, there was either too much direction from the teacher or behaviour expectations were not established quickly and sustained. In these circumstances the teacher was unable to give clear instructions because of continuous interruption by pupils talking to each other. In the best lessons pupils listen carefully to instructions, move quickly to the rehearsal area and settle to the set task. Time is usually provided for some of the pupils to perform to the remainder of the class. When this happens, as in one Year 8 and one Year 9 lesson, the non-performing pupils showed their appreciation by listening intently and spontaneously applauding at the end. In all lessons pupils are divided into small groups, usually pairs, to rehearse individual performances. Pupils work well when engaged in this small group work, and behaviour, which had sometimes been unsatisfactory in the earlier part of the lesson, usually improves.
158. The standard of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good in one Year 8 lesson and one Year 9 lesson, but unsatisfactory in two others. Both teachers have an adequate knowledge of the subject, but in some lessons the level of presentation is too basic for the age of the pupils. In classes which contain pupils with special educational needs, the names of the notes are read out by the pupils to enable them to make a positive start to their practice by knowing what they are expected to play. Pupils make best progress in those lessons which are well planned with realistic use of the short time available, are suitably paced, and designed to enable the pupils to engage in independent learning activities. This eliminates the need for lengthy explanations, which cause some pupils to lose interest. In the most successful lessons, the effective use of questioning helps pupils to recall previous learning and to understand how it relates to new concepts. In the less successful lessons, time was wasted waiting for pupils to stop talking. This caused disruption to the flow of the lesson and distracted other pupils. Teachers use assessment effectively to ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of the progress they are making. Teachers monitor pupils' progress when they are engaged in group work and intervene as necessary. Occasionally time is allowed in lessons for the more formal assessment of understanding and performance. Not enough use is made of technical vocabulary, even though a range of subject specific key words is displayed on the classroom walls. More opportunities are needed for pupils to write short sentences for homework about their performances in class, the music heard, and to research new topics.
159. The department accommodation is unsatisfactory. The one specialist music room is too small for the practical nature of the subject, especially with some of the larger classes. One of the practice rooms cannot be used during school time as the noise causes disturbance in surrounding classrooms. There are insufficient practice areas, especially when the instrumental teachers are present, resulting in pupils having to practise in groups in the main classroom. Resources are also unsatisfactory. While there are sufficient pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments for one class to be taught at a time, they are in need of overhaul, and there is a shortage of beaters. There are not enough computers to enable the department to teach the full National Curriculum.
160. Over the last three years there have been three different teachers in charge of music as well as changes in supporting members of staff. The department is very effectively managed by the present subject leader who has been responsible for much improvement in the short time she has been in the school. She has clear strategies for continuing this improvement, including introducing a GCSE course in September and extending the range of extra-curricular activities. New schemes of work have been written with clear procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' work. There are plans for the more rigorous use of assessment to guide curriculum planning and for the more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress in order to raise standards. Five instrumental teachers visit the school and give tuition to sixty pupils. In order to extend pupils' musical experiences a series of workshops have been held by visiting professional groups.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision for physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils.
- The indoor accommodation.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment.
- Teaching and learning.
- Subject leadership.
- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress.

161. Overall standards of attainment are below national expectations. Pupils' are not making the progress they should in physical education and achievement at the end of Year 9 and in Year 11 is unsatisfactory.
162. Inspection evidence shows attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9 to be below expectations. Boys attain slightly higher standards than girls and this is consistent with differences seen nationally. In work seen in lessons pupils have difficulty performing basic techniques in team games and athletics. In a Year 9 cricket lesson, pupils were unable to perform the basic bowling technique and so unable to achieve consistency in direction and length. In a Year 8 athletics lesson, pupils were unable to co-ordinate their movements so that they could link the phases of the triple jump. Standards in Year 11 are also below expectations. Some pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning through Years 10 and 11. In a Year 11 cricket lesson, for example, pupils showed good planning skills and were able to set up and agree the rules for a conditioned game. However, the majority of pupils make too little progress and learning activities that do not offer enough challenge restricts the progress of higher-attaining pupils.
163. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Instances of unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour are generally related to ineffective teaching methods, which do not provide pupils with enough guidance or take account of their levels of attainment. Many pupils enjoy physical education and have a responsible attitude and approach to their learning. Participation levels in Year 11 are variable, which means that some pupils miss important parts of the curriculum. Pupils usually develop good relationships with each other and their teachers. They work well both individually and when engaged in paired and small group work. However, a significant minority of pupils do not co-operate in small groups and disrupt the learning of other pupils.
164. Although there is some satisfactory and occasionally good teaching, the overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Strengths in teaching include a secure knowledge of the subject, good organisational skills, a positive interaction with most pupils and a consistency in applying health and safety procedures. Although there has been some progress in developing procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, not enough use is made of assessment to ensure that teachers and pupils have a clear understanding of the progress being made. Teachers are unclear about the intended outcomes of learning activities and learning objectives are not shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. As a result, learning activities lack direction and it is not possible to assess the progress pupils are making. Teachers do not plan activities for the high level of non-participants in some lessons. Not enough attention is paid to the attainment levels of pupils. In a Year 9 cricket lesson for example, many pupils were unable to follow instructions properly because they were unable to understand the technical language being used.
165. Owing to difficulties in teacher recruitment the department was without a subject leader at the time of the inspection. Despite three national advertisements the school has been unable to make

a suitable appointment. As a result, leadership and management in physical education are unsatisfactory. There is no clear vision for the future development of the subject, with a sharp focus on raising standards. The raising of standards is being impeded because learning activities are not well matched to pupils' attainment levels and there is a lack of planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own performance against clearly understood success criteria. Due to difficulties in teacher recruitment there is a heavy reliance on temporary and unqualified teaching. This is also impeding the raising of standards. Reports to parents do not provide enough information on what pupils know, understand and can do and what they need to do in order to improve.

166. The department has effective risk assessment procedures and safety procedures for the handling of equipment are reinforced in all lessons. Indoor facilities are very good with very good resources and storage space. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities that enhance learning. There is open access to all clubs, and squads are being developed for inter-school fixtures. The time allocation for physical education in Years 7 to 9 is below that found in most schools and has not changed since the last inspection.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the quality of provision for religious education is **good**.

### Strengths

- The subject is popular with many pupils, who enjoy the opportunities it gives for discussion of important issues.
- The wide variety of teaching and learning strategies.
- High expectations.

### Areas for improvement

- Resources to support the teaching and learning of higher and lower attaining pupils'.
- Standards of literacy.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 to meet the requirements of the new Agreed Syllabus.

167. As a result of the change in the character of the school, Year 11 will be the first cohort to sit the GCSE short course in religious education this summer. All pupils are being entered. Pupils achieved average grades overall in their mock examinations. However, below average levels of literacy are likely to adversely affect outcomes in the final examination. Nevertheless, in terms of the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, pupils in Year 11 are achieving the expected standard in the subject. This represents good achievement when standards at the end of Year 9 are taken into account. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Here, frequent changes in teachers and low standards of literacy have affected pupils' progress and achievement at the end of Year 9 is just satisfactory.

168. By the end of Year 9, pupils are very knowledgeable about their own faith and have a reasonable understanding of the basic beliefs and practices in Christianity and four other major world religions. Pupils also display an understanding of social problems. In one Year 9 lesson, for example, higher attaining pupils showed good understanding of the problems of racial prejudice and discrimination in their ideas for role-play. However, in another Year 9 lesson, the effects of low literacy standards were apparent when average attaining pupils had difficulty in scanning information about Mother Theresa to produce an interview on her life. Girls' productivity on such creative tasks is better than boys. In general, pupils do not develop their ideas in enough detail in their writing, whether producing a modern version of a parable or, in an assessment exercise, explaining how beliefs in different faiths affect lifestyles. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to write in a range of styles and to engage in project work. However, due to a lack of structured guidance some pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils, fail to complete their assignments.

Similarly, not enough attention is paid to the specific language needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

169. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in Year 11 is consistent with the standards expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. All pupils follow a GCSE short course and are able to apply religious teachings from Christianity and Islam to moral and social issues. Higher attaining pupils are developing effective examination techniques. These enable them to apply their subject knowledge effectively when answering questions. The majority of pupils have a good knowledge of the faith teachings on the topics studied but have difficulty in explaining beliefs or contrasting opposing views in writing. In a stimulating Year 11 revision lesson, based on the issue of separating twins joined at birth, lower attaining pupils were able to engage in a sensitive discussion in which they drew effectively on their religious knowledge and understanding. However, this level of understanding was not evident in their written work. Low literacy skills are likely to have an adverse effect on the GCSE examination results and so the results are unlikely to reflect the standard of work being achieved in lessons.
170. Pupils display positive attitudes towards the subject, with many listing it among their favourites. The faith background of the majority of boys and girls predisposes them to attach particular importance to their studies. Lessons generate a lot of interest and pupils are keen to involve themselves in the learning activities. The GCSE short course is proving particularly popular. Pupils find that many issues covered in the course are highly relevant to their everyday lives. Pupils are also motivated by the prospect of obtaining a GCSE grade and apply themselves well on the examination course. Behaviour is good. Pupils are generally fully engrossed in their learning, with only occasional lapses in concentration when a task does not offer enough challenge.
171. The quality of teaching is good overall and relationships in classes are conducive to learning. Teaching is not as good in lessons taken by non-specialist and temporary teachers. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one Year 7 lesson, where weaknesses in planning led to pupils being confused and there were not enough resources to allow ant variety in learning activities. A strong feature of specialist teaching in the subject is a common approach to maximising pupil participation in learning through a variety of well-planned learning activities. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils were highly active and made good progress and, as a result, as they devised board games to illustrate the Hindu ideas of karma and dharma. In Year 9 lessons, pupils were stimulated by learning activities that required them to produce imaginary interviews with Mother Theresa in one lesson and their own version of Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech in another. However, although learning materials provide a good stimulus they are not always closely matched to the needs of pupils at different attainment levels. Teaching is consistently good or better on the GCSE short course. Team teaching is used effectively to give added variety to some lessons. Thorough lesson planning and high expectations ensure a good response from pupils. Effective use of small group discussion is deepening most pupils' understanding of moral and social issues.
172. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has a high workload. A great deal of work has been put into the development of the GCSE short course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. In addition to substantial teaching commitments she is also additional responsibility as a year achievement leader. This heavy workload limits the amount of time devoted to monitoring and supporting teaching and learning in the subject. Good liaison with the local Interfaith Centre and the examination board has guided the department's planning for Years 10 and 11. Ideal accommodation and a good supply of textbooks are supporting good teaching in the department. The focus on the examination course has meant there has been little opportunity to develop the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, which is now needed in the light of revisions to the local Agreed Syllabus.

