Edlington School
Doncaster

LEA area : Doncaster

Unique Reference Number : 106787

Headteacher : Mr P. Morley

Reporting inspector : Mr R. Holmes
T11700

Dates of inspection : 10 - 14 May 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 704897

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996
© Crown Copyright 1999

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

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Comprehensive

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 11 - 18

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Tait Avenue
Edlington
Doncaster
DN12 1HH

Telephone number : 01709 864100

Fax number : 01709 770026

Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mr E. Hardy

Date of previous inspection : November 1994
### INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team members</th>
<th>Subject responsibilities</th>
<th>Aspect responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R. Holmes, RgI</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attainment and progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The efficiency of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Lloyd , Lay</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes, behaviour and personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td></td>
<td>development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership with parents and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staffing and learning resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Haigh</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>The curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Barringer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Weston</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Hardman</td>
<td>Design and technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Cole</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Nutton</td>
<td>Modern Foreign Languages</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Gaulton</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Kinder</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Edwards</td>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>Support, guidance and pupils' welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Harvey</td>
<td>Religious education</td>
<td>Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Parry</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Special educational needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inspection contractor was:

*Peak Education Partnership*

19 Huddersfield Road

Barnsley

S70 2LT  Tel. 01226 280290

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:
The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
REPORT CONTENTS

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1 - 3
Key indicators 4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 5 - 14
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 14 - 20
Attendance 21 - 23

Quality of education provided

Teaching 24 - 32
The curriculum and assessment 33 - 45
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 46 - 52
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 53 - 57
Partnership with parents and the community 58 - 61

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 62 - 69
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 70 - 79
The efficiency of the school 80 - 88

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 89 - 116
Other subjects or courses 117 - 192

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 193
Data and indicators 194
MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Leadership in the school is very effective and there is a strong commitment to improvement.
- Most of the teaching is good, very good or excellent and very little is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for pupils’ social development is very good.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in English at Key Stage 3 and in modern languages and design and technology at Key Stage 4.
- Support and guidance for the pupils is effective and has led to a marked improvement in behaviour.
- The school’s administration is very efficient and is helping it move forward.
- Links with business, industry and the community are very productive.

Where the school has weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attainment is not high enough, particularly in GCSE examinations and in the use of information technology (IT).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Teaching in some lessons is not well enough planned, pupils are not involved enough and too little is expected of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. In a few subject areas, management does not evaluate its work or plan effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Too many pupils do not attend regularly enough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school has significantly more strengths than weaknesses and is very well placed to continue improving. The governors’ action plan will set out how these weaknesses are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress in tackling the large number of issues identified in the 1994 report. The arts curriculum has been reviewed, dance and drama are now strengths of the school. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The anti bullying policy has been fully developed and is working effectively. Behaviour has been addressed thoroughly and effectively; it is now good. The quality of teaching has risen significantly and is now often good or even better. An effective staffing structure is now in place, lines of management are clear and there is good communication between everyone. Job descriptions have been written and staff training is linked closely to the school development plan. This plan is detailed and focuses well on the main priorities for development, costs are included and some measures for evaluating success. More emphasis has been placed on pupils’ speaking and on their reading. Pupils’ work is assessed effectively although marking is still uneven. The support for pupils with special educational needs has been extended to other pupils with difficulties and is being managed effectively.

The school is now concentrating on clear priorities for development. There is a strong sense of commitment from staff and effective systems have been established. The school is very well placed to continue moving forward.
Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance in:</th>
<th>Compared with all schools</th>
<th>Compared with similar schools</th>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 3 test</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE examinations</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/AS - levels</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupils make good progress in English at Key Stage 3 and their test results at the end of the key stage are as good as in most schools. Results in science and mathematics are below average in the tests, although progress in the school is average.

At GCSE, pupils do best in design and technology and in modern languages, where results are above average. In other subjects the examination results are below national average and those in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Results in 1998 were adversely effected by the high proportion of boys in the year group. They scored close to the national average for boys, which is lower than the average for girls and this brought the overall figure down. Pupils are performing better in lessons than these results indicate, but there is still room for improvement.

Students at ‘A’ level generally achieve the results that would be expected given their previous performance in all subjects. Some pupils who would otherwise have left school are staying on to study intermediate GNVQ and are achieving well. Advanced GNVQ is being taken for the first time this year and course work results are good. Over two thirds of the students went on to further or higher education last year.

Quality of teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall quality</th>
<th>Most effective in:</th>
<th>Least effective in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 7-9</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>English, art, design and technology, modern languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 10-11</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth form</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>English, art, design and technology, modern languages, science, history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons, of which 37 per cent were good and 19 per cent very good or excellent. Most of the nine per cent of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory were in Key Stage 3. None of the lessons taught to the sixth form was unsatisfactory. Teaching in information technology is unsatisfactory because the current curriculum arrangements require all teachers to contribute to the subject and they are not able to do so. Specialist teaching of
information technology, for example, in GNVQ courses is often good.

Other aspects of the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>The great majority of pupils behave well and are polite and considerate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory. Too many pupils do not attend regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos*</td>
<td>Very good. The school has a strong sense of purpose and morale is high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and management</td>
<td>Highly effective senior management and excellent leadership from the headteacher. Some weaknesses at departmental level in a few subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Good. Broad and balanced, well supported by outside links and extended by vocational courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils with special educational needs</td>
<td>Good. Well managed provision and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual, moral, social &amp; cultural development</td>
<td>Good overall with social development particularly strong. Some weaknesses in spiritual development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing, resources and accommodation</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Sufficient staff and adequate resources and accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>Good. The school makes good use of its resources, provides good quality of education and pupils make progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.

The parents’ views of the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What most parents like about the school</th>
<th>What some parents are not happy about</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV. It is easy to approach</td>
<td>IX. Standards of behaviour are not high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. It keeps parents well informed about their children’s progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. It enables pupils to achieve high standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. It encourages pupils to be involved in a wide range of activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Pupils like going to school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspectors’ judgements agree with the parents’ positive views of the school. It provides a warm and friendly welcome and parents receive clear information about their children. Pupils are looked after well and encouraged to succeed.

Parents’ concerns about behaviour are justified more by how the school was rather than how it is now. There are still isolated examples of poor behaviour but there has been considerable improvement, which is still continuing, and behaviour is good overall.
**KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise the standards of attainment and improve the quality of education even further, staff and governors should:-

X. Make use of the many examples of good practice in the school to improve the quality of teaching in the small number of lessons which were unsatisfactory and also the weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons so that:-

- teachers and pupils are clear what will be learnt in the lesson
- the material being taught stretches the pupils
- lessons proceed briskly and pupils are actively involved.
- learning is reviewed and consolidated at the end.

(See paragraphs 30, 31, 32, 126, 144)

XI. Develop the management skills of some heads of department so that they are able to evaluate the work of their departments, using, for example, assessment information and lesson observations, and plan for improvements. This should build on the example of good practice in other departments.

(See paragraphs 41, 42, 44, 67, 108, 115, 146, 152)

XII. Ensure that information technology is adequately covered, particularly at Key Stage 4

(See paragraphs 11, 13, 14, 113, 148, 150, 151, 154, 168)

XIII. Increase the emphasis on spiritual development by planning opportunities for and considering issues for reflection in the curriculum.

(See paragraphs 46, 47)

XIV. Continue to work to improve attendance, looking for causes and raising parents’ awareness of the importance of their children attending regularly.

(See paragraphs 21, 22, 56)

In addition to these key issues, the school should also address the following issues in the action plan:-

- the provision of a daily act of collective worship
- health and safety issues in design and technology
- providing religious education for all students in the sixth form
INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Edlington school is a mixed comprehensive taking pupils between the ages of 11 and 19. There are currently 1116 pupils on roll, which represents a considerable rise from the 890 who were in the school at the time of the last inspection in 1994. One hundred of the pupils are in the sixth form. Almost all the pupils are white and all have English as their first language. Twenty-eight of the pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is higher than normal for a school of this size, and a further 95 are on the school’s register for special needs, which is about average.

2. The school is situated on the southern edge of the former mining township of Edlington, to the south-west of Doncaster. Pupils come to the school from Edlington, where there is considerable unemployment and also from the more affluent villages to the south and east of the town. They have the full range of ability that you would expect for their age, but in 1998, on entry, fewer than half of them achieved the expected levels in the national tests for English, mathematics and science. This is well below average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is close to the national average, but other indicators reflect the serious social deprivation found in some parts of the school’s catchment area.

3. The school’s mission statement is: “At Edlington school we are committed to developing all students into citizens of the future.” To achieve this, the school is currently focusing on three areas:

   XV. citizenship, including the importance of rule governed behaviour
   XVI. raising achievement, particularly in academic achievement
   XVII. establishing the concept of lifelong learning.
## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Curriculum Test Results</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above</td>
<td>Boys: 40(29)</td>
<td>51(50)</td>
<td>34(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls: 57(46)</td>
<td>48(53)</td>
<td>29(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 97(75)</td>
<td>99(103)</td>
<td>63(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage at NC Level 5 or above</td>
<td>School: 63(41)</td>
<td>59(56)</td>
<td>39(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National: 65(57)</td>
<td>60(60)</td>
<td>56(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage at NC Level 6 or above</td>
<td>School: 32(13)</td>
<td>27(29)</td>
<td>17(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National: 35(23)</td>
<td>36(37)</td>
<td>27(29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Assessments</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above</td>
<td>Boys: 44(30)</td>
<td>52(51)</td>
<td>41(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls: 32(50)</td>
<td>57(56)</td>
<td>40(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 76(80)</td>
<td>109(107)</td>
<td>81(71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage at NC Level 5 or above</td>
<td>School: 42(43)</td>
<td>60(58)</td>
<td>45(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National: 62(60)</td>
<td>64(64)</td>
<td>62(61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage at NC Level 6 or above</td>
<td>School: 19(11)</td>
<td>22(30)</td>
<td>23(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National: 31(23)</td>
<td>37(37)</td>
<td>31(29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year.
### Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### GCSE Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of pupils achieving standard specified</th>
<th>5 or more grades A* to C</th>
<th>5 or more grades A* to G</th>
<th>1 or more grades A* to G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>30(30)</td>
<td>96(93)</td>
<td>108(101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>29(30)</td>
<td>69(75)</td>
<td>76(82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59(60)</td>
<td>165(168)</td>
<td>184(183)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Percentage achieving standard specified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>29(30)</th>
<th>80(83)</th>
<th>90(90)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>44.6(43.3)</td>
<td>89.8(88.5)</td>
<td>95.2(92.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attainment in the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Average A/AS points score per candidate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average A/AS points score</th>
<th>For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent</th>
<th>For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of such students who achieved these qualifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>22  82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year
2 Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year
### Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Authorised Absence</th>
<th>National comparative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of half days missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:</td>
<td>School 9.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorised Absence</td>
<td>School 2.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Exclusions

**Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed period</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quality of teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good or better</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory or better</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than satisfactory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5 Results at GCSE, taken over the last three years are below average and have been falling. Last year, 1998, results were well below average compared with other comprehensive schools and with schools having a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The group taking GCSE last year was three-fifths boys and their performance at this age is significantly below that of girls. If this is taken into account, then the measures the school is introducing to improve performance can be seen to be having an effect, but there is still some way to go.

6 When pupils come into school at 11 years old many have low standards of attainment for their age. The results of the national assessments (SATs) taken at the end of Key Stage 2 for the current year 7 pupils are well below average in all three core subjects. Only half the pupils reached the expected level 4 in English compared with two-thirds nationally. The picture is similar in mathematics and science and very few pupils have reached the higher level 5 in any of these core subjects.

7 Pupils make particularly good progress in English at Key Stage 3 as a result of effective teaching and well-chosen work for the pupils to follow. Their attainment at the end of the key stage is in line with national averages for the number reaching level 5 and also for the number going onto reach the higher level 6. This is a considerable improvement which has taken place over the last few years. The quality of work in lessons at Key Stage 4 has also risen, but has not yet had time to affect results at GCSE, which are below average. English results in the sixth form are above average.

8 In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 3 and achieve results which are close to those of similar schools and below the national average. The proportion reaching level 5 is average but few go on to the higher level 6. Results at GCSE are below average and at A level they are much better and close to the national pattern.

9 Pupils do not make as much progress in science as they do in English or mathematics at Key Stage 3. By the end of the key stage their attainment is below average, particularly in their ability to carry out investigations. Results at GCSE in 1998 were also well below average for the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades and also A*-G grades. Attainment in lessons is much better than this and most pupils are working close to the level expected for their age. In the sixth form pupils make appropriate progress and achieve the grades expected from their previous performance.

10 In other subjects at Key Stage 3, pupils reach the expected levels in art, design and technology and religious education. Attainment is a little below expectation in history, French and physical education and
below in geography, music and information technology (IT).

11 At GCSE, results are lower than average in art, geography, history and religious education. Results are average in French, German and physical education. Standards in IT are very variable at Key Stage 4, depending on the course that pupils follow.

12 At A level, results over the years have been good in art, history, French and German. They have been average in design and technology and lower than the national picture in geography. Generally students reach the standards that would be expected from the GCSE results they achieved. Students following GNVQ advanced and intermediate courses make good progress and achieve well.

13 The school is making efforts to develop pupils' core skills across the curriculum. Speaking and listening has been identified as needing particular attention and they are being used effectively in English and in GNVQ courses, but they are sometimes neglected in other subjects. The majority of pupils express themselves clearly in speech but more could be done to make use of discussion in their learning. Pupils read effectively but do not make enough use of reading to research information. Writing is often untidy and spelling is inaccurate in too many pupils' work. Mathematical skills are used effectively in some geography and design and technology lessons but could be developed further in other subjects. IT skills play an important part in GNVQ courses but are not used widely enough in other subjects.

14 The progress that pupils make is at least satisfactory in 92 per cent of lessons and it is good or very good in almost half of lessons. Progress is good or very good in most lessons in the sixth form. It is better overall at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, although this varies between subjects. The only subject where pupils do not make enough progress is IT. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them, particularly when they are supported in lessons and given special help.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

15 The previous inspection pointed to less than satisfactory behaviour overall. Since then, pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved significantly.

16 Most pupils have good and positive attitudes to learning. They try hard in lessons, concentrate on their work and are keen to do well. By contrast, in a very few lessons, pupils can be disruptive, inattentive and unresponsive to the teacher's efforts to engage their interest. When this happens, it is usually related to the quality of teaching or behaviour management.

17 In and around the school pupils' behaviour is almost always good. There is little evidence of silliness or lack of respect for people or property. On a school site which is not easy to negotiate, movement on staircases and between buildings is orderly and sensible and most students show proper care and consideration for the needs of others.
18 If pupils behave in a wholly unacceptable manner, the school makes appropriate use of the ultimate sanction of exclusion. This is reserved for serious offences and is only used when all other avenues have been exhausted. The rate of fixed term and permanent exclusions has fallen dramatically since the last academic year, demonstrating that pupils are learning to understand and accept the standards of behaviour that are expected of them.

19 Relationships between pupils are good. They work well together, collaborating on tasks in lessons and helping one another appropriately. During breaks and lunchtimes they make good use of the social areas provided for them, where there is a friendly, comfortable atmosphere. In the dining hall and at the pre-school breakfast bar pupils and staff mix together sociably and clearly enjoy an easy, friendly relationship. The quality of relationships throughout the school reflects the developing community spirit that the school is working to achieve.

20 Pupils are willing and eager to make their own contribution to the life of the school community. They are keen to take responsibility or volunteer to become involved in activities which will benefit the school, such as the School Council, running the school bank, acting as librarians or joining the litter patrol. Sixth formers are pleased to act as counsellors and advisors to the younger pupils and, as elected prefects, take full responsibility for their own sixth form area and for liaison with heads of year. Through the Young Enterprise scheme, older pupils are able to demonstrate that they are growing into responsible and independent young adults, capable of making decisions and of translating their ideas profitably and effectively into practice.

Attendance

21 Pupils’ attendance is unsatisfactory. It is below the national average and there is twice as much unauthorised absence as in similar schools. This is having a detrimental effect on pupils’ attainment and progress, especially in special needs, design technology and music.

22 Much of the unauthorised absence is due to the failure of parents to respond to the school’s repeated requests to give reasons when pupils do not attend. Considerable efforts are being made to reduce absences. These include attempts to promote good attendance by the award of certificates and trophies, monitoring first day absence by telephone for Year 7, regular letters home for pupils with poor attendance records and personal visits by senior pastoral staff and the Education Welfare Officer. The school’s initiatives have met with some limited success and there has been a small improvement in the overall attendance figure this year, but there are still too many pupils who do not appreciate the importance of regular attendance.

23 Punctuality is generally good. A number of pupils arrive late at the beginning of the day, but on the whole, lessons start and end on time.
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

24 Overall, the quality of teaching is good, more than 90 per cent of lessons were at least satisfactory and over half were good, very good or excellent. Teaching is strongest in the sixth form where there were no unsatisfactory lessons and two thirds were good or better. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is much the same although there were slightly more unsatisfactory lessons at Key Stage 3, as a result of more teachers working out of their subject expertise.

25 Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is at least sound and often good, for example in science and English. On a few occasions, teachers work outside their subject strengths, particularly at Key Stage 3 and a small number of these lessons are unsatisfactory.

26 Lesson plans during the inspection were generally clear. Most concentrated appropriately on what the pupils would learn and how this was to be achieved, but some placed more emphasis on listing the activities the pupils would carry out and a few were too brief to provide much guidance at all.

27 Time is used effectively in almost all lessons, they start promptly and little time is wasted on routine administration.

28 Pupils' work is marked regularly and in some subjects, particularly English and geography, marking is detailed and helpful comments are added to help pupils improve. Comments are rarely added in mathematics and too little use is made of assessment in planning in a number of subjects.

29 Teaching methods are usually chosen well. In the majority of lessons, which are good or better, teachers have clear plans for what pupils will learn and pupils know what these are. The activities chosen are relevant and interesting for the pupils. They are expected to take an active part and contribute to the lesson, often discussing what has been learnt or answering searching questions. In these lessons, the pace is brisk and the work that has been covered is reviewed at the end.

30 A number of lessons, whilst being satisfactory overall, are less successful. In these lessons, the teachers concentrate too much on controlling the behaviour of the pupils through sanctions rather than capturing their interest. Planning is shallow and concentrates on activities rather than learning and in these lessons pupils are not encouraged to be active. Questions are often too simple and writing and other tasks are used to keep pupils occupied rather than to extend their understanding.

31 A very few lessons were unsatisfactory because pupils' behaviour was not managed effectively and they made little progress in the lesson. This was sometimes due to poor planning and on one occasion, although the lesson was planned well, relationships were not well established and some pupils were determined to be disruptive.
32 Some of the unsatisfactory lessons were taught by teachers who performed well in other lessons. Whilst it is important that the problems they encountered are addressed, the school should continue to concentrate on improving the performance of the small number of teachers whose work is often on the boundary between satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Senior management places considerable emphasis on the importance of teaching well, senior staff set very good examples in their own work and the great majority of staff have responded positively to the increased demands on their professional performance and teach effectively.

The curriculum and assessment

33 The overall quality of the curriculum is good. The total teaching time meets the Department for Education and Employment’s recommendations. The issue of continuing curriculum review, suggested in the last inspection report, has been addressed and some improvements to the curriculum have taken place. However, the time allocated to art and music remains too short at Key Stage 3. The time devoted to guidance (personal and social education - PSE) is more than that in most schools. There is too little time devoted to IT. The construction of the timetable is mostly appropriate, with 30 lessons of 50 minutes being appropriate in the main. Double lessons are mostly arranged to meet the subjects’ requirements or wishes, although there are too few double sessions in some subjects, especially art and science.

34 The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has good breadth, including all the elements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum is enriched by dance and drama for all pupils, plus an extra ‘literacy’ lesson. The balance is distorted by some unusual time allocations. The time allocation for mathematics, English, art, music and RE is a little below average, whereas that for design and technology, modern foreign languages and PSE is above average.

35 The Key Stage 4 curriculum has all the statutory requirements with an appropriate core of subjects for all pupils. The time for mathematics remains too low at ten per cent and that for RE is only just enough. There is a long list of option subjects and the vast majority of pupils obtained their first choices this year. There are too few vocational options, but this is being addressed in a current review. Some enrichment is provided by taster courses run in conjunction with the local further education college.

36 The sixth form curriculum is wide, with 18 A level courses and four general national and four vocational courses (GNVQ). Again, links with the College add breadth and other enrichment is provided by guidance for all, and general studies, PE and IT courses for some. The time allocation to subjects is largely appropriate. The overall curriculum for sixth formers has good breadth and balance and is of good quality.

37 All the statutory requirements of the curriculum are met, with the exception of RE in the sixth form, as there is too little time allocated to this. Pupils do not attend a daily act of collective worship. All have
equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum. The quality of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and those on the school’s code of practice register is good. However, some subjects (mathematics, for example) make scant use of individual education plans.

38 The banding and setting arrangements generally enable pupils to be taught in groups of similar ability in most subjects. The work is most often planned to meet the needs of the pupils well. The planning to ensure continuity of work through the key stages is good, except in IT where it is unsatisfactory.

39 The provision for pupils’ guidance is good. There are two lessons each week, and this is more than the average amount of time normally devoted to personal and social education (PSE). However, this time also includes that for the one assembly each week that pupils attend. There is a ten minute morning registration session and a five minute afternoon registration, and although this time is often, but not always, used well, it is not part of the overall PSE programme. The quality of the PSE programme is good and health education, sex education and drug education are all well covered. The quality of careers education is good. The careers service is very supportive and pupils and parents appreciate the support provided.

40 There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include sporting and cultural opportunities, covering music, dance and drama. There are a few subject clubs. About 170 pupils are involved in competitive sports, supported by ten teachers. Many of these pupils participate in sports at regional, county and national levels, in a wide range of activities. There is particular success in rounders for girls, and football, swimming and athletics for boys and girls.

41 There is a good assessment policy, which gives clear guidelines to subject departments on what constitutes good practice, and assessments in most departments give the pupils and their parents satisfactory information on their progress through the National Curriculum. There is significant variation between departments, however. Assessment of pupils’ progress is particularly effective in English, modern languages, geography, art and music, and in history at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There are thorough procedures for identifying pupils who need special educational support.

42 Assessment is unsatisfactory in history in Key Stage 3 and in mathematics, because there is inconsistent practice between teachers, and in PE, because assessment is insufficiently related to the National Curriculum. Assessment of IT is unsatisfactory, because the development of IT skills is not sufficiently well tracked when it is taught through other subjects. This latter deficiency was also noted in the previous inspection.

43 Through the use of the Progress Check Record, subject teachers and form teachers have a very good picture of the progress of individual pupils, and this is an effective tool to ensure that pupils are making the progress they should. There is too little use of Key Stage 2 test results, but the school makes good use of Key Stage 3 assessment data and
other measures which indicate when pupils are underachieving. Where there is underachievement, form teachers and members of the Senior Management Team work with pupils to improve their progress.

44 Some subjects departments are beginning to use information from national tests and GCSE and A-level examinations to look for ways to improve achievement in their subjects. Such information is well used in English, modern languages and geography, but in most other subjects more could still be done.

45 The school ensures that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum, including those with special educational needs.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46 The school has a very positive ethos. Though it does not specifically refer to spiritual development in its aims. The school tries to give pupils a sense of self-respect and worth in the ways that staff relate to them as persons. The overall provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, the provision for pupils’ spiritual development is unsatisfactory. In English, history and religious education pupils learn about beliefs, values and human emotions and have opportunity to reflect on fundamental human problems such as suffering. They are alerted to the non-material aspects of life which are expressed in worship and prayer in the major world faiths. Human values and feelings are also explored in the expressive arts.

47 The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship or a ‘thought for the day’, but it does offer occasional opportunities such as a Christmas or Education Sunday celebrations at which members of the music and drama groups perform. Every year group has a weekly assembly. During inspection week the assemblies were interesting and worthwhile, but did not constitute acts of worship. Several subjects miss opportunities to contribute to pupils’ spiritual development. Since the last inspection the school has not made progress in fulfilling its statutory requirements to provide a daily act of worship.

48 The provision for the moral development of pupils is good. Teachers help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong behaviour. The school has a clear code of conduct and a system of rewards and sanctions which support positive behaviour. These are known by pupils and are effective. The school’s anti-bullying policy and equal opportunities policy also contribute to acceptable standards of behaviour. In particular, science, geography, design and technology and religious education provide opportunities for pupils to discuss specific moral issues such as rich and poor within communities, crime and punishment, pollution of the environment, abortion and euthanasia. The guidance programme, pastoral arrangements and liaison with parents gives much positive support to pupils by setting standards and encouraging acceptable behaviour.

49 The provision for pupils’ social development is very good. All subjects offer pupils opportunities to develop basic social skills. Pupils generally co-operate well in class, during field work visits and residential
experiences and in sporting, musical, dance and theatrical activities. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility and show initiative. They assist in the resources centre, serve on the school council, show visitors and parents around the school and answer their questions, run the breakfast club and the school bank and senior pupils act as counsellors for younger pupils.

50 Pupils support the work of charities such as the local hospice, UNICEF and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Pupils participate in local community projects. They have helped in improving the wetland area in Doncaster and are taking part in the millennium planting. They have worked on community projects and won an award from the South Yorkshire Police Lifestyle initiative. They frequently engage in community work through the Duke of Edinburgh and Trident awards. In the guidance programme especially, pupils learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and crime and the law.

51 The provision for pupils’ cultural development is good. Pupils have many opportunities in English and history lessons to learn about British culture, past and present. They gain first hand experience of European culture through visits to France and Germany and in working with modern foreign language assistants. Expressive arts groups visit the school and perform plays, western and non-western music and dance. Artists and writers, including a black writer, have visited the school and worked with pupils. Visits to art galleries, museums theatres and other cultural venues are a feature of the curriculum. School societies and sports clubs also enrich pupils’ cultural awareness.

52 Pupils are also alerted to other cultures within the curriculum. They learn about West Indian, North American Indian, Chinese, Sikh, Hindu and Buddhist life and culture through their studies in history, music, art, religious education, design and technology and dance. The school’s provision encourages pupils to respect and appreciate the rich diversity of cultures.

Support, guidance and pupils’ welfare

53 Pastoral support for all pupils is covered through the guidance programme and is very effective. Form tutors remain with pupils throughout the school and very good relationships are created between pupils and their tutors. Heads of Year play a key role supporting tutors and parents and pupils are pleased with these arrangements. A pastoral manager co-ordinates the pastoral system and each head of year is supported and managed by a member of the senior management team. Students in the sixth form are supported well and report that they are pleased with the quality of support and advice, particularly for the next stage of education. The school provides additional support for pupils with a number of student support officers. These include the school nurse and they are valued by pupils.

54 All tutors meet with their pupils for ten minutes each day for form time and although pupils’ diaries are checked regularly, this time is not always used effectively by all tutors. The guidance programme is also taught by tutors for two periods in the week, one of which includes an
assembly. Personal and social education, including careers education, is taught during this time and its quality is good.

55 Pupils’ academic progress is monitored by tutors and heads of year and the Record of Achievement has a high priority in the school. Pupils with special educational needs have good support and individual pupils are offered guidance for behaviour and social skills in a sensitive way. Opportunities are given to pupils to take responsibility throughout the school and this enhances their personal development.

56 The arrangements for the monitoring of pupils’ attendance are very good. Registers are marked effectively and lateness and punctuality are challenged. There is a clear code of conduct and pupils are aware of it. Rewards and sanctions are appropriate to encourage good behaviour and discipline and this is continually reinforced by the senior management of the school. There is a clear anti bullying policy and this is reinforced in the guidance programme. Incidents of bullying do occur in the school but pupils are satisfied that when they are reported, the school addresses them effectively.

57 Child protection procedures exist in a draft policy and although understood by staff of the school, they are not documented. Support from the Social Services is good. There is a Health and Safety policy and the issues highlighted in the previous inspection report have been attended to. Fire regulations are clearly documented but no risk assessment has taken place in departments or throughout the school. There are no COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) arrangements in place in the design technology department.

Partnership with parents and the community

58 Since the last inspection the school has maintained and extended its strong links with outside agencies and industry and further developed its positive partnership with parents.

59 Parents are very supportive of the school’s efforts and appreciate its achievements. They play their part in the life of the school by checking and signing planners, attending parents’ evenings and supporting staff in pastoral and behavioural matters. A small growing number of committed parents gives time and energy to organising fund raising and social events, while others use their practical expertise in such ventures as helping backstage at school productions. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in the Reading Partnership and in regular reviews. Even where parental support is not as strong as the school would like, for example, in responding to requests for information about attendance, efforts to gain co-operation are still vigorously pursued.

60 The information that the school provides for parents is good. The prospectus and half-termly newsletters are accessible and informative and all written communications with parents are attractively presented. There is a good range of opportunities for parents to discuss pupils’ progress with staff and the school has made changes to the arrangements for meetings to take account of parents’ needs. Many
parents have made positive comments about the approachability and helpfulness of all school staff. School reports are compiled from carefully selected departmental statement banks, supplemented by hand-written comments. They include target setting and opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own progress. Most are helpful, although in some subject areas they emphasise attitudes rather than explaining clearly what pupils, know, understand and can do.

61 Community links are extensive and contribute very effectively to the school's aims of developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world outside and preparing them for adult life. The curriculum is enhanced by visiting speakers in most subject areas and by visits to places of interest in support of students' academic learning and personal development. The strong school-industry partnership covers a wide range of activities, including industry days for pupils in Year 10, question and answer sessions with business volunteers for Year 9, a flourishing Young Enterprise company and sponsorship of newsletters by local firms. Links with Doncaster College have enabled the school to begin widening the curriculum for Key Stage 4 and have also provided some specialist teaching, staff development and access to specialist facilities. All Year 11 pupils undertake work experience organised by Project Trident and some in Years 12 and 13 undertake work experience which is organised by the school. Many aim for the extended aspects of the award, which include community service and a personal challenge. There is a flourishing Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme which gives opportunities for service to the local community and students work hard to raise money for a variety of local and national charities.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

62 Leadership in the school is very effective. The headteacher, in his short time in post, has succeeded in establishing a strong sense of purpose in the school and a belief in its ability to succeed. He is ably supported by two deputies, who have been in post an even shorter time, and enjoys the trust and respect of senior management team and staff throughout the school.

63 The previous inspection team found many areas that the school needed to develop and identified eleven key issues for action. Good progress has been made in addressing these issues and the school is in a strong position to continue moving forward even more rapidly as a result of clear leadership and commitment from the staff.

64 Dealing with the eleven areas for development in turn:-

- The curriculum has been reviewed and the performing arts enhanced by the development of dance within physical education and drama within English. These are now strengths of the school and students achieve high standards of work in them.

- The school does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of
collective worship.

- The anti-bullying policy has been fully developed and is working effectively.

- Behaviour has been addressed thoughtfully and effectively. Rewards and sanctions are now applied consistently and the underlying causes of some students' disaffection are being addressed. The general level of behaviour is now good, students want to learn and most show a pride in their school.

- The quality of teaching has risen significantly, with over half now being good, very good or excellent. Some work still remains to be done to improve the quality of some teaching which was just satisfactory and to eliminate the small number of unsatisfactory lessons.

- The staffing structure has been revised and is effective. Pastoral and academic staff are more closely linked and those in middle management posts are more effectively involved in whole-school planning and decision making.

- Staff have job descriptions and there is clear line management and accountability

- Staff training is managed effectively and is matched to the school development plan.

- The school’s development plan contains costs and some measures for evaluating success.

- More emphasis has been placed on developing oral skills and this has been extended to encouraging students to read more. Oral skills are used effectively in some lessons, notably English, modern languages and in GNVQ work, but it is still neglected in too many lessons.

- Assessment schemes are now effective, but only a few departments are making thoughtful use of assessments to look for reasons for under achievement and to improve their teaching. Marking is still uneven, some teachers provide very helpful comments and accurate grades, but other marking is superficial and many different grading systems are in use. Support for students with special educational needs has been extended and is managed effectively.

65 In all cases where work still needs to be done, this has been recognised by the school and progress is being made.

66 The senior management team has analysed the situation in the school and identified the need to change the management culture so that all staff, and particularly middle management, are consulted and encouraged to contribute ideas. Developments have been focused on the three key areas of student achievement, citizenship and life-long learning. These are recognised and accepted by all and there is a concerted drive to achieve them alongside some healthy professional
debate about the practical steps to be taken.

67 Planning at whole-school level is effective and far sighted. It is based on accurate information from the analysis of a wide range of assessment figures and from internal monitoring, including the evaluation of all teachers’ performance through observations of their lessons. Some heads of department are continuing this work within their own subjects and are producing plans based on a similar set of information, but monitoring and development planning to overcome weaknesses are not yet taking place in some departments.

68 The school has a very positive ethos and students are well behaved and willing to learn. Staff are very positive about the way they are moving the school forward. Relationships in the school are good and there is a strong team spirit in which all teaching and support staff are involved.

69 Almost all statutory requirements placed on the school are met. Arrangements for collective worship do not satisfy the act and there is not sufficient time for religious education in the post-16 curriculum.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

70 There are sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and overall there is a good match between their initial qualifications and the subjects they teach. A succession of supply teachers in music has adversely affected attainment and progress in that subject. Additional specialist teaching is provided by the peripatetic music service and through the school’s partnership with Doncaster College, whose staff teach some of the specialist sections of GNVQ courses. There is appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs, helpfully supplemented by the Teacher Support Service.

71 Teachers have a wide range of expertise and there is a good balance between those who have substantial experience and those who are newer to the profession. The pupil to teacher ratio is slightly above the national average and the proportion of time spent teaching is about average for schools of this size and type. The number of special needs support staff is very high compared with similar schools, but they are appropriately deployed and provide effective support for teachers and pupils.

72 Technical support is good in science and IT. In design and technology, technician support for IT is less effectively deployed and there is no technical support in the art department. Administrative staff are very well organised, have detailed and appropriate job descriptions and provide an excellent level of professional support that allows teachers to concentrate on their primary role.

73 The school has recently gained the Investors In People award, an accolade that recognises the effectiveness of its provision for staff
development. There is a well-documented review system, whereby line managers discuss strengths and development needs with teachers. Staff development and training are well managed and linked to identified priorities in the school development plan and are designed to enhance the quality of pupils' learning by helping teachers to increase their own effectiveness. Non-teaching staff also benefit from a similar review and personal development process. When teachers and other staff are appointed to the school there are comprehensive procedures to ensure that they receive good support from departmental colleagues and senior management. Newly-qualified and student teachers are also welcomed and well supported.

Accommodation

74 The school, dating from the nineteen sixties, is housed in eleven separate buildings, some connected by walkways at first floor level. Several are multi-storey blocks with no disabled access. The earlier report noted litter as a problem in some areas but this is no longer so, although it is a difficult site to supervise and maintain. It is remarkably free from litter. The external appearance of the school is shabby with many rotting window-frames and peeling paint on the wood cladding. The school has done relatively badly in capital investment by the LEA. The new security fencing has significantly reduced theft and there has been some decrease in vandalism.

75 At the time of the last inspection not all curriculum areas had rooms grouped together. This deficiency has now been put right. A few rooms remain unclearly labelled. In general, subject accommodation is satisfactory but there are inadequacies and significant problems presented in some areas. Some rooms in science, modern foreign languages, geography, art and careers are too small for full-size classes. The computer room is small and poorly ventilated. The design technology suite offers many problems, there is poor access and emergency egress, rooms are small and there are health and safety hazards. The music room is unsuitably resonant and poorly sound proofed and there are now no practice rooms. Many rooms are in a poor state of decoration.

76 Caretaking costs appear to be relatively high but maintenance and technical staff are paid overtime to carry out minor building and construction works. This is a good cost-saving strategy. The internal cleaning of the school is satisfactory. Display in some subject areas continues to be sparse but in others it is good and the public areas benefit from excellent display of pupils' art work.

· Resources

77 Spending on learning resources is similar to the national average and there are plans for this to be increased next year. Provision of textbooks and equipment is adequate in most subject areas, but there are some deficiencies in music and RE. In design technology some of the fixed equipment and machinery is outdated. The ratio of computers to pupils compares favourably with national averages. Within departments the provision of IT is inadequate in mathematics, geography and music and the careers department has too few
computers to make best use of its available software.

78 The resource centre is constantly being developed and improved and in the last year the school has spent a considerable sum on new books, but the practice of targetting two departments a year for purchases means that in some areas of the curriculum the range of books available to complement departmental provision is limited. The careers library is well-resourced with books and reference material.

79 Good use is made of off-site resources, including residential trips abroad for both modern linguists and students of art. At the end of the summer term, all students are taken off timetable to facilitate a wide range of visits, industry days, community work and at this time all Year 8 pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential experience. In addition, pupils are able to partake of visits to museums, theatres and art galleries, as well as field trips in geography, geology and biology.

The efficiency of the school

80 The previous inspection found that the school managed its budget well. The governing body’s finance committee monitored spending effectively, but decisions about the allocation of funds were not linked closely enough to the school development plan. Staff were deployed effectively and efficient use was made of the school’s accommodation and its resources for learning. Overall the school gave satisfactory value for money.

81 This generally positive picture has improved further. The governing body are very well informed about the budget and spending decisions have been made very prudently. A significant budget deficit, which resulted from an over-estimate of the number of pupils expected to join the school some four years ago, has been claimed back and the budget has been balanced carefully. The governors have a policy of spending rather than holding a budget surplus and skilful financial management has enabled them to spend within one per cent of the budget over the last few years.

82 The funding available to the school through its designated budget is much less than most other schools of its size in the country. The school increases its resources by successful bids for curriculum development grants, including funding from the European Community, but the funding available for each pupil is still much lower than most other secondary schools.

83 Priorities for development have had to be chosen carefully and funding allocated cautiously. For example, the school's initiative to address low attendance has incurred considerably more postage and telephone expenses and used additional clerical time. This has been costed carefully and governors have judged that it is effective spending. Resources for information technology have been enhanced recently and the significant expenditure on new machines has been supported by staff development courses provided through Doncaster College to enhance teachers’ skills. Governors are clear that they expect students to improve their skills in information technology and a result of this
spending, but they have not set any targets by which they could measure its success.

84 Curriculum developments, such as the introduction of GNVQ courses, are being managed effectively and particularly good use is being made of partnership agreements with Doncaster College. The increased number of students staying in education after age 16 as a result of these courses brings extra funds to both institutions and well as improving the life chances of the students involved.

85 Staff in the school are deployed effectively. Roles and responsibilities of senior staff are well defined and the head teacher and deputies work particularly effectively together. The extended senior management team have well defined roles which support the school’s development and the attainment of its students. The structure for the management of subjects and for pastoral issues is effective and the links that are being developed between the two are helping the school move forward. Subject teachers are appropriately qualified and, with very few exceptions, work in their areas of expertise. Support staff are deployed very effectively and staff working with students who have special educational needs are able to reach a wider group of students and help them make progress. Technician support is deployed purposely in science and for information technology, but less effectively in design and technology.

86 Accommodation is used well, with rooms for subjects grouped together. The resources centre, however, is under-used both as a time-tabled area and by students looking for information to take back to lessons. Resources have been purchased carefully and are kept in good condition. Computers in departments are generally used efficiently, but those in the resources centre are under-used.

87 Financial control is excellent and helps the school make best use of the funds it has. Administrative systems are highly effective and unobtrusive. The school runs very smoothly and the administrative staff’s high level of efficiency frees teaching staff from many routine tasks. They are often the first point of contact with the school and they are very good ambassadors, creating a warm and friendly welcome for visitors and callers.

88 Taking into account the progress that pupils make in the school, the quality of the provisions and the low budget, the school provides good value for money.
PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

89 The standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, as seen in current work, is in line with the national expectation. In National Curriculum tests in 1998 the percentage of pupils reaching at least level 5 or level 6 was close to the national average. Girls performed better than boys but the average points scores of both sexes compared similarly with their respective national scores. Pupils' performance was close to the average of pupils in schools with a similar proportion of free school meals. Results in 1998 showed a significant improvement upon those of 1997 and maintained the upward trend of recent years.

90 The general standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is somewhat below the national expectation. In the GCSE in 1998 results in both English language and English literature were below the national average. Girls did better than boys in both subjects. Within the school, however, boys did better in both language and literature than they did in the other core subjects.

91 Standards in the sixth form are somewhat above average. In ‘A’ level in 1998, the average points score in English literature was well above average. In English language, however, the points score was below the national average but the percentage of pupils achieving high grades was well above.

92 There has been a general improvement since the last inspection in the standard of oral work. Pupils listen attentively and work well in pairs and small groups. The majority of pupils read aloud with confidence and clarity. Many high attaining pupils read fluently, varying pace and expression, and communicating meaning effectively. Pupils generally answer questions willingly and audibly. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils make well prepared, extended spoken presentations. Feedback from group discussions in Key Stage 4 is often relevant and articulate, cleverly drawing together the views of the group. In informal talk with adults pupils are courteous and confident. By the end of Key Stage 4, in formal language situations, most pupils use standard English. In the sixth form pupils discuss texts with maturity and perceptiveness. Work in drama supports the development of pupils’ spoken work very effectively. Standards in drama have improved very greatly since the last inspection and are now a strength of the school. Teaching is well supported by comprehensive documentation and pupils respond very positively to the good working atmosphere created in drama lessons.

93 The need for improvement in the standard of reading has been identified as a priority and several successful initiatives are in place. During Year 7 and 8 time is set apart for uninterrupted, sustained silent reading. This strategy ensures that pupils read regularly and record what they have read. The response of pupils and the quality and quantity of their reading demonstrate the success of the scheme. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from being withdrawn for additional support. Further help in raising the level of
reading is provided by other agencies, and the standard of reading by the end of Year 7 shows positive gains. Many pupils read with confidence and satisfactory understanding. Throughout the school pupils read a wide range of literature with enjoyment and understanding. By the end of Key Stage 3 they read major works of literature and identify successfully aspects such as plot, character and themes. At Key Stage 4, pupils study works of increasing complexity, analysing such features as genre, style and the use of language. In the sixth form, examination courses require pupils to read extensively. The reading of poetry is given great emphasis throughout the school.

94 The majority of pupils throughout the school write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences. Much lively work is done in developing the understanding of the language of persuasion in, for example, advertising. Written work is generally neatly presented and many pupils draft their work carefully. At the end of Key Stage 3 the writing of high attaining pupils is of above average quality, communicating clear and often imaginative ideas through accurate and well structured assignments. A significant number of pupils of average and low attainment make frequent errors with details of sentence structure, punctuation and spelling. Pupils commonly fail to express ideas precisely. In the GCSE examination at the end of Key Stage 4 written work is by far the most important element and the requirement to plan quickly and write accurately and relevantly at speed proves difficult for average and low attaining pupils who are used to methodically drafting work. These are contributory factors to the apparent difference between work in the classroom which is broadly satisfactory and the results in the GCSE which are below average. The best writing at Key Stage 4 by high attaining pupils is in response to their study of literature. In the sixth form, in both the literature and language courses, pupils make useful notes and write at length for a variety of purposes.

95 Levels of literacy, especially in reading, are well below average on entry and significant progress is made by the end of Year 7 particularly by pupils with special educational needs who receive additional support. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils make rapid gains in the confidence and clarity of their speaking. Results in National Curriculum tests, which are in line with the national average, demonstrate positive progress. The quality and effectiveness of group work also improves steadily. At Key Stage 4 pupils develop a more mature and thorough analysis of literature as well as using the appropriate terminology of literary criticism. In the sixth form such progress continues and those studying the language course progress rapidly in learning a challenging new range of concepts and vocabulary.

96 Attitudes to work are almost always positive. In contrast to the findings of the last report the great majority of pupils work with commitment and enjoyment. In group work and other situations they show initiative and make sensible and practical decisions. In their special investigations in ‘A’ level English language pupils in the sixth form pursue detailed individual study which involves much reading and research. Pupils throughout the school generally sustain concentration well. They show respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. Relationships are tolerant and positive. Behaviour is generally good and is a real strength of the department.
The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is always satisfactory and is good or very good in three-quarters of lessons. At Key Stage 4 teaching is good or better in all lessons and in the sixth form it is always good. Teachers plan and prepare lessons very well. Their knowledge of the subject is good and they have very high expectations of attainment and behaviour. The teaching of pupils in mixed ability groups at Key Stage 3 is skilful and effective, with tasks matching closely pupils’ levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are taught with great sensitivity and specific work is often set to suit their learning needs.

In almost all lessons relationships are positive and purposeful. Pupils respond well to encouragement and praise. Their written work is marked consistently and conscientiously with positive and helpful comments. Assessment at the end of Key Stage 4 is particularly helpful with much detailed commentary and advice. The best teaching is outstandingly good with lessons conducted at pace; pupils clear about tasks and targets; and certain about what standards are expected. The overall standard of almost all teaching is good with a high percentage of very good and excellent teaching.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides equality of opportunity to all pupils. Allocation of time to the subject at Key Stage 3 is below the national norm. Departmental documentation is very good. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is thorough and development planning effectively identifies priorities for action. Accommodation and resourcing are adequate but classroom book collections require replacement if encouragement for private reading is to be sustained. Good display of pupils’ work and other material in classrooms has created attractive learning environments in unpromising surroundings. Staff have a clear sense of purpose and vision. Relationships are strong as a direct result of leadership which is outstandingly good.

In most other subject across the curriculum pupils listen attentively. Where they are given the chance to work in pairs and small groups they collaborate effectively and productively. Not all subjects encourage this important way of learning. The majority of pupils speak with confidence and clarity and conduct purposeful discussion. These skills are well developed in GNVQ courses. When invited to read aloud, as in science, pupils are generally articulate and audible. Much attention has been given in training and discussion to the use of talk as an essential way of learning but, as yet, only a few curriculum areas have accepted oracy as an essential aspect of pupils’ learning.

The majority of pupils read well enough to understand the tasks set for them. In a few subjects the readability level of textbooks is well above the reading age of some pupils. There is little evidence that pupils are encouraged to broaden their reading and to read widely for research and extension of learning. The awareness of the importance of reading is given emphasis in Year 7 and 8 but this is not being enriched throughout all curriculum areas up to the end of Key Stage 3 and beyond.

In the majority of subjects the presentation of written work and handwriting are below average. Some curriculum areas do not appear to
recognise the importance of neatness and legibility in writing. Spelling is identified as a widespread weakness.

Mathematics

102 Pupils’ standards in the subject on arrival at the school are below the national average. The results in the national tests, taken by all 14-year-olds in summer 1998 were below the national average overall, although a similar proportion to that nationally obtained a level 5 or above. When compared to schools with about the same proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results were average. The trend in results over the last few years has been upwards, but at a slower rate than the increase nationally. Boys have done better than girls. The GCSE results were well below the national average in 1998, and this has been the pattern in recent years. There is no clear trend unlike the national pattern, which is rising. A much higher proportion than normal failed to obtain a grade in 1998. Girls obtained slightly better results in mathematics than they did in their other subjects whereas boys did a little poorer in this subject than in their others. The A level results were in line with the national pattern in 1998, having been below average for the previous two years. The results of pupils resitting GCSE in the sixth form were good.

103 By the end of Key Stage 3, the most able spot patterns from sequences of numbers and generalise their results. Many are apprehensive about expressing their findings in algebraic form, however. Their number skills are above average and work on shape and space is generally sound. Average attainers know their tables. Low attainers use and apply their mathematics knowledge well, measuring angles and producing good quality geometric drawings. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is below average. Many pupils approach investigative work with a wide range of skills, spot patterns and talk about their results with understanding. However, they have difficulty in expressing general results in algebraic form. Some average attainers have an insecure grasp of Pythagoras’ theorem. Some of the least able solve equations, and some cope with simultaneous equations. Their grasp of number techniques such as rounding is often insecure. The most able pupils in Year 10 are good at algebra, and many rearrange complex formulae successfully. Others write large numbers in standard form and lower attainers cope with co-ordinates and find areas and perimeters of two dimensional shapes. Attainment by the end of the sixth form is in line with course expectations in general. Students have a sound grasp of probability and calculus. The most able have mastered a wide range of techniques and are destined for top grades. Those following the numeracy element of the GNVQ courses attain expected standards, with sound skills of estimation, for example.

104 Attainment in number work across the curriculum is broadly average. Pupils use their skills sensibly and appropriately and do not make unnecessary use of calculators. They draw and interpret graphs accurately in science and in geography. They measure and estimate sensibly in design and technology. Pupils following the GCSE PE course measure well and draw graphs accurately. There is a little use of number skills elsewhere, but not as much as there ought to be.
Pupils make satisfactory progress at each stage. Standards of attainment at entry are below average, and although a significant minority progress well, standards are still below average at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils in Year 7 mostly get off to a good start, although the teaching does not always sufficiently accommodate the wide range of ability in the classes. Many grasp new ideas well, such as the use of negative numbers, and the patterns in groups of consecutive numbers. The progress of the highest attainers (in ability sets after Year 7) is often too modest, as they are still tackling work at the same level as pupils who are well below their ability. Low attainers are generally appropriately challenged and usually make good progress, although when the teaching is weak and pupils’ attitudes are poor, progress suffers correspondingly. Progress in some lessons suffers from a narrowness of approach, with one task dragging on for all the lesson, and pupils’ interest not being maintained. The best progress at Key Stage 4 was with an average to lower ability group, working on a range of tasks including co-ordinates, and the skilled teaching, use of praise, brisk pace and high expectations kept all pupils on task. Some Year 11 pupils, boys in particular, are progressing slowly because they lack interest, and the teacher is unable to motivate them, despite his strenuous efforts. Pupils with special educational needs make broadly satisfactory progress as the work is largely matched to their needs. The mathematics teachers are only just starting to use the Individual Education Plans for these pupils, and some teachers need guidance in their use. Sixth formers are progressing soundly because they have sensible and mature attitudes to their studies.

Pupils attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall, although they are a little better in the sixth form and at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. In about half the lessons, the pupils’ response was good or very good. There are clear links between behaviour and the teachers’ expectations. Many classes, of all levels of attainment, are too noisy, even when they are working. Occasionally pupils lack courtesy and concentration is very variable. When their interest is captured, most show the ability to work hard and sustain concentration. A significant minority of pupils, mainly boys, lack self control in their mathematics lessons, yet behave well in many other subjects’ lessons.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and it varies very little between the stages. One ninth of the lessons were very good and a further ninth were unsatisfactory. The main strengths of the best teaching are the generous and appropriate use of praise, the good pace and variety of some lessons and the positive relationships between the teachers and the class, ensuring good discipline and steady progress. Much lesson planning is good, but the range of approaches is generally too narrow, for example IT is rarely used and practical activities are too infrequent. The teachers communicate clearly and the most effective lessons start with a recap of the previous lesson, have an explanation of what is to be done and close with a summary of what has been learned. The main weaknesses are control that is too lax and tolerance of poor behaviour and standards of work. Some questioning is not focused on individual pupils so many escape being involved in lessons or their progress is not assessed well enough. Occasionally a teacher answers his own questions. Much of the teaching lacks life and sparkle. Much
teaching has energy and commitment. This unevenness needs addressing.

108 The schemes of work are clear and the National Curriculum requirements are met. The head of department provides some good support for his colleagues. The teaching is not systematically monitored, however, and the leadership of the department is not yet strong enough. The most recent department development plan is thin and a new plan is in its early stages. There is no assessment or marking policy and, although much marking is helpful to students, its quality is very uneven, and comments on work indicate insufficiently how standards of attainment can be raised. Although the ethos for learning has improved since the last inspection, it is still not good enough and is clearly not as good as that in many other departments. Most teachers accept standards of work, presentation and behaviour that are too low.

Science

109 At the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils in the national tests is below the national average and below the average achieved by similar schools. When compared to the pupils’ performance in mathematics and English within the school, the science results are significantly lower. This was confirmed during the inspection. Evidence showed, for example, that most pupils can identify the parts of the flower and describe their function, whilst the more able are developing a good understanding of the efficiency of the energy conversions in a power station. Overall, attainment in experimental and investigative science does not match that of the other attainment targets and is well below the national expectation at the end of the key stage. Although pupils can devise a fair test, most cannot recognise all of the key factors that must be controlled. Pupils’ skills in raising questions to investigate problems and in selecting suitable equipment to use during investigations are underdeveloped.

110 In 1998, just over 4 out of 5 of students were entered for double award GCSE science, the remainder studying single award. The proportion of students gaining grades A*-C in GCSE science was well below average. This represented a fall in the results seen in the previous two years. 75% of students achieved A*-G grades, this is also well below the picture seen nationally. During the inspection, however, evidence from pupils’ work and lesson observations show that attainment is close to the national expectation. A high proportion of Year 11 pupils know which factors influence the rate of a chemical reaction and can explain how these factors have an effect. During Key Stage 4, there is a much greater emphasis on investigative work which is also close to the national average by the end of the key stage. Students can construct line graphs precisely and the more able are capable of detailed interpretation of the graphs. The GCE A level examination entries in biology, chemistry, physics and geology in 1998 were too few to make meaningful comparisons with national standards.

111 During Key Stage 3, the progress of all pupils is satisfactory, including those with special educational needs. The science course is taught by a number of teachers and is broken into a series of very short
topics. This means that, although topics are revisited throughout the key stage, the teaching can be disjointed and continuity and progression is difficult. For this reason, pupils are not making more rapid progress. Overall, at Key Stage 4, students are making satisfactory progress, with the most able making good progress. Progress in experimental and investigative work is more rapid during Key Stage 4. There is a greater emphasis on teaching the appropriate skills and the department have developed support materials that are proving useful in raising standards. The progress of A level science students is good. This is a reflection of the good teaching in small groups that the students receive.

112 In about two thirds of lessons at Key Stage 3 and most lessons at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, students are interested in and enthusiastic about the work they are studying. Students’ oral responses are good and, in some lessons, they have the confidence to introduce their own ideas and ask searching questions to deepen their understanding of a topic. When the control of poor behaviour is weak, pupils quickly become distracted. This leads to a loss of interest and the purpose of the lesson is lost. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 there are few opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to develop the skills needed to work more independently. The department should look at the ways in which experimental and investigative work is delivered in order to give students more opportunities to make their own decisions about how an experiment should be conducted. Students would also benefit from more research based learning.

113 In more than 4 out of 5 lessons, the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better, with nearly half of lessons good or very good. Teachers’ expertise to deliver the science curriculum is good. Teachers plan carefully and provide good introductions to lessons, however they tend to over-emphasise the activities to be delivered rather than what it is that students are expected to learn. When teaching is good, the pace of lessons is brisk, relationships between teacher and pupils are good and pupils respond positively. Most of the Year 11 lessons observed were being used as part of students’ final preparation for external examinations. The revision programme that has been developed for the first time this year is proving to be particularly effective and is appreciated by the students. In the less successful lessons, particularly to mixed ability groups in Year 7 and lower sets in Key Stage 3, the activities used do not cater for the needs of the least able. This means that the challenge offered is well beyond the ability of these students and, in consequence, the pace of lessons becomes laboured and pupils’ interest and behaviour deteriorates. Although information technology is taught through datalogging activities, there is insufficient provision to improve pupils’ skills. Homework is set inconsistently, however the activities given are generally appropriate and provide a useful extension to classwork.

114 The department is planning to develop new schemes of work throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and to introduce modular courses in all the A levels delivered. The work that has begun with the Year 10 course supports good teaching but must include a range of activities so that teachers can respond to the needs of all pupils. In carrying out this work, the good practice that is present in teaching within the department must be incorporated as part of an entitlement for all pupils.
115 The department is well managed on a day to day basis, but there are weaknesses in departmental documentation which means that the educational direction provided by the head of department is not entirely clear. This is particularly so with the department development plan which does not provide the strategic vision that the department needs to make the necessary improvements in order to raise the attainment of students. To be effective, the plan must reflect the aims of the department, include targets and success criteria showing how activities will impact on pupils’ learning, be costed and be monitored and evaluated (little departmental monitoring is undertaken at present).

116 The accommodation and resources in the science department are adequate, although the two smallest laboratories inhibit large class practicals. The laboratory technicians provide very good support. There is a good safety policy which defines clear health and safety procedures and allocates particular responsibilities to named staff. Procedures for the risk assessment of materials and activities are appropriate.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

  • Art

117 Attainment is better overall than at the time of the last inspection. Attainment meets national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. Key Stage 4 attainment now meets course requirements. GCSE results for those gaining A*-C grades have been below national averages but have improved over the last four years. They are better than most other subjects in the school but not to the same degree as nationally. Girls do better than boys which reflects the national trend. The A-level results have been good but in 1998 were poor. They are rightly expected to be much better this year.

118 Progress is satisfactory to good across Key Stage 3 and is especially good in year 8. Pupils generally show good control of a range of media. Year 7 lettering and Year 8 designs are imaginative. Year 9 work creating tiles is excellent. Progress is good in Key Stage 4 with a notable increase in maturity of response in Year 11 where pupils are able to develop their ideas appropriately and confidently. Some Year 10 boys find this process difficult, operating at a lower level of skill and imagination than the girls. Progress post-16 is again good building on the sound art experience at Key Stages 3 and 4. Understanding of technical language and working to scale, criticised in the previous report are now better. Pupils with special educational needs experience success in art and the attainment of some is high.

119 At Key Stage 3 pupils’ attitudes are good and sometimes very good. Some Year 7 classes take time to settle but there is a big improvement in Year 8 where behaviour and motivation are good. Pupils discuss their work with adults confidently. In Year 9 they show good self-discipline and work with plaster of Paris was especially well controlled. There has been a big improvement at Key Stage 4 where the disenchantment of the GCSE group noted in the earlier report is no longer evident. Pupils remain on task and behaviour and relationships
are good. Post-16 pupils are thoughtful in their approach.

120 Overall teaching is good. It is most variable at Key Stage 3 but is always at least satisfactory, usually good and has some very good features. The last inspection identified Key Stage 4 teaching as the least satisfactory but this is no longer the case. It is now good as it is post-16. The staff are very committed to their pupils and to the subject. There is much work of good quality well displayed in the public areas of the school as well as in the art rooms. All staff have appropriate skills knowledge and understanding. Expectations are good or better, pace is well maintained and tasks are often challenging both technically and intellectually. Day to day lesson planning is good. Methods are appropriate. A good degree of independence is offered but support is given to those who need it. Classes are well managed and the approach to the less able is caring. Time and resources are used well. There is good analytical verbal feedback to pupils but insufficient opportunity is given for pupils to appraise their work and that of others. Regular practical homework is set and it is well marked.

121 The curriculum overall meets statutory requirements although three-dimensional work is limited due to the lack of a kiln. The time allocation at Key Stage 3 is well below recommendations and seriously limits the department’s ability to deliver a quality curriculum. Moral and social understanding is well developed in art. The art rooms are open daily out of school hours for pupils to continue their work. Many do. The department is well led and a good working ethos is created. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, there is an adequate supply of books and consumable materials but there are no suitable computers or printers in the art area which limits work in information technology.

**Design and Technology**

122 By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils is in line with national expectation. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the 1998 GCSE examination is above the national average in relation to all maintained secondary schools. However the number of pupils achieving A*-G grades is below the national average in some aspects of the subject for boys and well below the national average across the subject for girls. The poor attendance of some pupils accounts for this. Examination results for A level are broadly in line with the national average, with all students achieving a pass grade.

123 Attainment in lessons by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with expectations. Pupils demonstrate this, when using a range of sources for inspiration when designing ties. They disassemble food products and are able to explain the purpose and benefits of such an exercise. At Key Stage 4, attainment is above the national average and examples of products demonstrate a high level of individual skills. Attainment in Key Stage 5 is sound. Students are developing a wide range of complex design portfolios, which focus on, for example, fashion design, a practise area for golf with operating mechanisms, which alter the counters of the green.

124 Pupils make good progress overall by the end of Key Stage 3. A
Year 7 class made good progress and all are able to apply and demonstrate their understanding of mathematics through the correct weighing of ingredients. Pupils with special educational needs, working with a support assistant, made good progress during the lesson. A Year 8 group, comprising of lower ability pupils, made satisfactory progress in preparing their plans for making a notepad or photograph holder. They have developed a plan for the step by step manufacturing of their product and many are developing three-dimensional drawings of their final solution. By the end of Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils make very good progress. A Year 11 class of all boys made very good progress in their consolidation of knowledge. During the lesson, excellent teaching provided the pupils with the opportunities to both demonstrate what they know, understand and are able to do whilst at the same time extending their knowledge to higher levels of capability and understanding. In Year 11 classes across the food technology area, equal numbers of boys and girls made very good progress during their lesson as a result of very good co-ordinated teaching styles which both support and promote learning.

At all key stages, the majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards the subject. They enjoy the practical activities and respond to the challenges of designing and the making. However, a small number of Key Stage 4 girls arrive late regularly for lessons. There is some unacceptable behaviour and misuse of hand tools by boys at Key Stage 3 and whilst pupils are taught the importance of taking responsibility for recognising hazards when studying food technology, they do not apply this knowledge when working with resistant materials on machine tools. All pupils readily discuss their work and share their designs with a sense of pride. This was never more so than when the Key Stage 3 group, who had designed a recipe for soup, readily agreed which tasted the best and which ingredients were creating the wonderful flavours.

Teaching is good overall. It was unsatisfactory in two lessons at Key Stage 3. In most lessons, teaching was judged to be good or very good and one lesson was judged to be excellent. In those lessons which are very good, teachers are well organised and pupils know the standard expected of them. Relationships are very good and there is a clear sense of a partnership for learning. When teaching was unsatisfactory, it was as a result of the organisation and planning of practical activities which resulted in the pupils being placed at risk from the number of unacceptable hazards within a small working area. A weakness of all lessons can be found in the day to day planning and the use of assessment to inform the next stage of learning.

Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment have been maintained. The previous inspection identified that, although adequate, the accommodation needed to be reviewed to ensure safe usage, that equipment needed enhancing and a phased programme should be considered. A new food technology room is to be commissioned this summer, but apart from that, no refurbishment or replacement of equipment has taken place. Rooms and, in particular, M4 are unsuitable for the development of technology in the modern world. Equipment is more suited to the 1940's than the year 2000 and should the school wish to aspire to a centre of excellence in technology, a refurbishment and
replacement programme must be considered.

Child Development

128 In relation to other subjects within the design technology department results in this area are below average. Twenty four percent achieved a grade A*-C and only 83 per cent achieved a grade A*-G. This represents appropriate levels of achievement for the pupils in the group. They make satisfactory progress and often have a firm understanding of the issues covered in the course. Their ability to express themselves in writing is not as good as in speech and this affects their examination performance.

129 Teaching is well informed and lessons are satisfactory. Pupils respond well, they concentrate well, take a lively interest in the work and answer questions thoughtfully.

Geography

130 The attainment of 14 year old pupils, as assessed by teachers at the end of Key Stage 3, is below the national average. The proportion of 16 year old pupils gaining grades A*-C in GCSE examinations is also below the national average. In 1998, 45 per cent of pupils entered for the examination obtained this standard, which is a little below average, and this represented an improvement on the previous year. The percentage gaining grades A*-G is in line with the national average. The percentage of girls achieving grades A*-C shows marked variations between years because of the relatively small number taking the subject. At A level, recent results have been below the national average in most years, especially for numbers gaining high grades. In 1998, 71 per cent of students obtained grades A-E, which is well below the national average, though the proportion obtaining this level had been average in the previous year.

131 Attainment in lessons at Key Stage 3 is below that expected by the age of 14, although some pupils achieve or exceed the expected levels. At Key Stage 4, the level of attainment in work inspected is a little below that expected nationally, but work seen in Year 10 is of a higher standard than that in Year 11. Most pupils at both key stages can use geographical skills effectively to represent and interpret data, but their use of information technology is not well developed. Many have good knowledge of geographical patterns and processes, for example in work on population changes and types of industry, but some do not convey their understanding effectively in written work. In A level lessons, standards of attainment are average for the course, with a few students showing above average attainment, for example in their understanding of changing land use patterns in cities or of the causes and impact of industrial pollution.

132 Most pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Many at Key Stage 4, and some at other stages, make good progress. A few pupils, especially at Key Stage 3, make unsatisfactory progress because they are too concerned with the presentation of work or write slowly. At Key Stage 4,
some make unsatisfactory progress because of poor attendance. Most pupils make good progress in the presentation of maps and diagrams. Many make good progress when lessons are well structured and pupils are motivated by a variety of activities, as in a Year 9 lesson introducing tourism, and when they are challenged by demanding questions and interesting tasks, as in a Year 10 lesson on land use in towns.

133 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have positive attitudes to learning. The great majority are attentive in lessons and many, of all ages, respond well to teachers questions, though in a small minority of lessons girls appeared reluctant to volunteer answers. Most settle well to written tasks and work conscientiously but a few, especially in Key Stage 3, lack concentration at times. The great majority of pupils behave well, often very well. In a few lessons, a small minority are restless at times or demand attention but teachers ensure they do not disturb the work of others. Relationships between pupils and teachers are usually good and sometimes very good, with good humour and mutual respect contributing to a pleasant and constructive learning environment. Relationships between pupils are satisfactory and are sometimes good, as in the few lessons seen at each key stage when they were encouraged to work together. Attendance was good for a lunchtime slide presentation on Nepal at the Globetrotters club.

134 Teaching is always at least satisfactory. At Key Stages 3 and 4 it is often good or, on occasion at Key Stage 3, very good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Discipline is firm but unobtrusive. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of their behaviour, and this creates a good ethos for work. In many lessons, the use of well focused questioning, directed to individuals, enables pupils to make good progress. This is especially effective when combined with a brisk pace to the work and an insistence on detailed responses using appropriate geographical terms, as in a Year 11 lesson on changing population trends in Kenya. Occasionally, however, oral work continues for too long and some pupils are not sufficiently involved. Teachers monitor work in progress closely. They check pupils understanding and provide a high level of support for individual pupils, including those with special educational needs. This promotes effective progress in their learning.

135 Pupils work is marked regularly and comment is often used well to show how pupils can improve. All teachers use homework effectively to extend pupils learning. The most effective teaching combines the good features already described with a variety of short, well chosen activities which maintain pupils' interest and concentration. This was well illustrated by a Year 7 lesson in which good use of a pupils own photographs and of a practical experiment contributed to very good progress in pupils understanding of the effects of rain falling on different surfaces.

136 Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory, but there has been very good progress in the past eighteen months under the strong leadership of the newly appointed head of department. Levels of attainment and examination results have not increased to the same extent as nationally, but provision for pupils with special educational needs and the quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4
have improved. As a result of an excellent analysis by the department of the 1998 GCSE results, steps have been taken to raise pupils performance in the examination. The department has improved the quality of the classroom environment with well presented display and created a good ethos for learning. The quality of curriculum and development planning is now good, reflecting the clear direction provided for the subject, and the department is well placed to bring about further improvement.

History

137 At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1998 the proportion of pupils achieving the A to C grades was below the national average for all schools, with girls achieving slightly above the average and boys well below. In relation to the proportion achieving A to G grades there was little difference with the national figures. When compared to similar schools the results were slightly better than those normally found and there was little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The results in history were better than those achieved in English and geography. Although there has been variation from year to year the trend over the last few years has been small but steady improvement. The A level results were better than the national average for all schools.

138 The overall findings of the inspection, based observing lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their work, are that the standards being achieved by A level students are in line with expectations but that standards are just below expectations at both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3.

139 Students following the A level course have well balanced skills, knowledge and understanding. Although all have a good overview of the periods studied their depth of knowledge does vary. One or two students are not always able to recall significant dates, events and people but most have appropriate knowledge to exemplify their answers. They evaluate sources and have a good understanding of how they can be used to support different interpretations, such as Stalin’s daughter’s letter to support the view that he was mentally unstable. The pupils effective skills in analysis reflect the strong emphasis placed on interpretation in many lessons. Chronology is sound and helps them to see patterns in the development of events and their subsequent consequences. This was clearly seen in their discussion on the events between 1640 and 1642 that lead to the Civil War in England. Students understanding is satisfactory as demonstrated by their comments that public trials gave legitimacy to Stalin’s purges but had the unintended consequence of making officials more concerned with protecting their position than being effective administrators. Pupils’ writing skills are at least satisfactory and enable them to communicate their ideas successfully. Progress post 16 is good and reflects the good quality teaching seen in lessons and the often challenging use of questioning by teachers that encourages thoughtful and considered responses.

140 Students following the GCSE course are achieving close to but below expectations. The main area of weakness is found in their knowledge. By Year 11, students often have a good knowledge and
understanding of the broad picture and the chronology of the main events within a period for example the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles and their impact on the attitudes of Germans and the subsequent rise of the Nazis. However, their knowledge of the details to support their answers to questions is often insecure. Many, for example, cannot remember that it was under the Dawes Plan that the USA provide loans to the Weimar Republic or who it was who appointed the chancellor. Progress in this key stage is at least satisfactory and is sometimes good. It is better in one teacher’s classes and reflects more thorough preparation and higher challenge in his lessons. In one class’ Year 10 lessons challenging questioning around the use of sources enabled pupils to develop good understanding of different interpretations of how civilians’ responded to the Blitz. In the parallel Year 10 class a more general discussion with a less clear focus resulted in pupils having the view that the Blitz united civilians against the Germans.

141 By the end of Key Stage 3 standards overall are close to but below expectations. As in Key Stage 4 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the broad picture but many have limited detailed knowledge. They are able to gain information from sources and interpret graphs, such as seeing the relationship between the rise in unemployment in Germany in the early 1930’s and the number of seats the Nazis gained in the Reichstag. Their ability to evaluate the usefulness and reliability of sources is not sufficiently developed. Most have developed satisfactory understanding of cause and consequence and can see the links between the Treaty of Versailles, the impact of reparations on the German economy, the rising resentment of the German people and the subsequent rise of Hitler. Their knowledge of the name of the treaty and of terms such ‘reparations’ is often weak. Although they are able to record what they have found in a variety of ways their skills in deciding for themselves how best to communicate their findings are less well developed. Progress in the key stage is satisfactory but does vary in lessons from good to occasionally unsatisfactory. When progress was unsatisfactory, in one Year 7 lesson, pupils were do not given sufficiently challenging tasks and spent too much time copying out sentences and word-searches when they could have been recording their own ideas on why the Emperor built the Great Wall of China. In a number of lessons lower attaining pupils identified as having special educational needs struggle to cope with the resources they are given and do not make enough progress.

142 Pupils with special educational needs who have additional adult support in lessons make good progress. Their helpers are skilful in encouraging them to learn and effective in enabling them to achieve similar learning in history to other pupils in the class. Teachers ensure they are well briefed.

143 Pupils attitudes in history lessons are good. They are well behaved and almost always listen well and often respond with enthusiasm to teachers’ questions. Occasionally, when teaching lacks conviction, as in one Year 12 lesson, pupils are less willing to enter into discussions and in some lessons at A level a small number of pupils are reluctant to answer the challenging questions that are asked.

144 Teaching overall is satisfactory. It is satisfactory at Key Stages 3
and 4 and good at A level. Teachers’ subject knowledge is often good but one teacher is less confident and effective when teaching an unfamiliar syllabus. Planning of lessons is variable and often lacks detail of what students will learn. Sometimes this leads to lessons that are not as well prepared as they should be. In Year 12 time was wasted at the end one lesson because the teacher had not prepared sufficient work for the session. Teachers usually provide pupils with appropriate tasks but occasionally as described above this does not happen and progress is unsatisfactory. A variety of suitable teaching styles are used that are mostly well matched to the learning needs of pupils. Questioning in tutorials is used very effectively in the best A level lessons. These sessions challenged students to clarify and refine their thinking. Occasionally, as in one Year 10 lesson, the teacher’s use of questions lacks precision and reflects the teachers weakness in identifying learning objectives in his planning. This resulted in lost opportunities to develop pupils’ analytical and reasoning skills. Teachers explain effectively and often well making imaginative use of analogies and establishing links between events in the past with similar events and situations at the present time. Teachers manage pupils effectively based on good relationships and knowledge of them as individuals. Marking is regular but variable in its quality and usefulness. In Key Stage 3 it is barely satisfactory because there is no clear criteria followed and pupils have little idea what the marks mean. In contrast at both Key Stage 4 and at A level marking provides clear indication of attainment and includes many useful comments that successfully help students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Homework is used satisfactorily at Key Stage 3 and makes a good contribution to the progress made by students at Key Stage 4 and A level.

145 The curriculum is balanced and provides satisfactory progressions at Key Stage 3 but the scheme of work is not very detailed. It does not provide a structure for the delivery of each study unit nor does it identify specific units of learning that can be readily assessed. More work has been undertaken to develop the curriculum for Key Stage 4 and the syllabus for A level is closely followed. Overall, there is insufficient guidance in the schemes of work to inform teachers’ planning of specific. Assessment at Key Stage 4 and A level is good and helps to support the progress that pupils make. At Key Stage 3 teachers regularly assess pupils but practice varies from teacher to teacher and pupils do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing. Recent plans to use a common format for recording progress may help in addressing this issue.

146 The head of department has had prolonged absences through illness. As a result the monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and the curriculum have not been developed sufficiently. There is a positive ethos for learning and the members of the department support each other well.

Information technology

147 In the last inspection report standards were judged to be appropriate for pupils ages and to be better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. This inspection finds standards to be below the level expected by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 3 and to be very variable
in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 depending on the courses that students follow. Those who follow courses with a distinct IT element achieve appropriately but many other pupils have little access to IT in school and their skills are dependent upon their own efforts and their access to computers at home.

148 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have developed skills in line with expectations in communicating information but below them in the other strands of handling information, monitoring and control and modelling. Pupils in Year 9 are able to produce high quality presentations that show good awareness of layout and use a variety of type faces and styles to create effects. These skills are shown to good effect in the reports, posters, pamphlets and booklets they produce in design and technology lessons and in the word-processed work undertaken in English and French. A number of pupils have sent e-mail messages to their pen pals in France but use of the INTERNET has not been developed in other pupils. Although pupils are able to use graphic programs to produce their own diagrams and pictures this aspect of communicating information is less well developed than their skills in using text and creating layouts. Most of the graphical elements in their work result from them selecting and incorporating clip art. Pupils understanding of the nature of datafiles and how they can be created, and the information collected and entered sorted and searched are poor. They do understand and can describe how data can be entered into a spreadsheet and different sorts of graphs produced to display the information. Currently their understanding of the power of spreadsheets in handling calculations and in modelling situations are weak. Although a useful start is made early in the key stage in developing pupils understanding of how computers and sensors can be used to monitor events such as cooling rates this is not built on and by Year 9 pupils’ understanding and skills in this aspect of IT are underdeveloped. Towards the end of the Key stage pupils come to understand that computers can be used to control devices, such as milling machines. However, they do not have appropriate skills in planning, developing, testing and modifying instructions and procedures to enable computers to control devises.

149 Pupils taking technology, science and GNVQs in Key Stage 3 and 4 continue to develop their skills in using aspects of IT that are relevant to their studies. They often show high achievement in these. The quality of technical designs created using CAD packages is good. Many pupils produce good quality portfolios of work that show skills in communicating information that have been successfully developed from Key Stage 3. A number of students taking science courses have demonstrated sophisticated skills in using sensors. The general level of IT work in GNVQs, including IT and Leisure and Tourism, is satisfactory. For example, spreadsheets are effectively used to analyse collected data in the IT course and pupils make effective use of word-processing programs to produce business letters, templates and brochures and regularly make use of e-mail and the INTERNET to gain information. A number of pupils have benefited from the taking IT NVQs provide after school through the local college which have increased their skills in using databases and spreadsheets.

150 The overall progress being made in all three key stages is
unsatisfactory. This is due to the variation in experience of most pupils in all the key stages and specifically the current lack of basic IT entitlement at KS4. The IT curriculum is delivered through different departments in the school. The mapping of this indicates that most strands are covered at Key Stage 3 but that insufficient time and attention is given to each strand with the exception of text based work in communicating information. The progress made in communicating information is satisfactory but it is unsatisfactory or poor in the other strands. Only in design and technology is there consistent regular provision made for all pupils. This forms a core, basic course but on its own is insufficient to deliver the requirements for Key Stage 3. Pupils have two 6 or 7 week blocks of IT during the year. As this is the principal vehicle for teaching IT to most pupils overall too little time is provided for the subject. Within this provision there are areas of weakness, including for example, the module on control, which does not develop the skills needed to achieve the appropriate levels in the programmes of study. There is insufficient opportunity at Key Stage 3 for pupils to develop their understanding of information handling particularly in relation to databases. The school has recognised some of the shortcomings in this area and is providing Year 9 pupils with an additional unit of work on using spreadsheets. This should build on work undertaken in Year 7, which introduces pupils to spreadsheets. The contributions made by departments do not always deliver the learning identified in the curriculum map. In French, for example, some pupils have regular access to IT and make better progress than others, whose teachers are less enthusiastic about using IT. A similar picture is found in other subjects that have agreed to support the delivery of this core skill.

151 At Key Stage 4, there is defined IT entitlement but no mechanism to ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop their skills. Those following courses with IT elements as described in the paragraph on standards do make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in particular aspects of IT. However, many students do not have to make use of IT within their course work. A number of these do make use of the IT facilities available in the school to present course work, others rarely do. Students who have access to IT at home clearly make better progress than those who don’t. A similar picture is found post 16 and as at Key Stage 4 those who make use of IT within their courses make at least satisfactory progress in the skills related to their work and in communicating information.

152 The collection, collation and use made of assessment information overall is unsatisfactory. Assessment and recording of pupils’ progress in the IT lessons in design and technology in Key Stage 3 is good but very little is done elsewhere.

153 In lessons pupils work hard, behave well and often enjoy their work. They often make satisfactory and some times good progress and this reflects teaching that is good overall. The teaching of IT was never less than satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. All the IT lessons seen in Key Stage 3 were taught as part of the IT modules followed by all pupils. These lessons were planned on the basis of the detailed scheme of work and were well prepared. A feature of all the lessons was the purposeful nature of the task used to develop pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding. The difference between the most
effective lessons and the lessons that were satisfactory was often the level of challenge provided by the tasks given to pupils. In a very good lesson in Year 7 the teacher’s high expectations led to pupils using spreadsheets to perform calculations, pupils analysing, evaluating the impact and appropriateness of the layout of their posters and book covers and then working to improve them. The teacher made very effective use of examples from the classes work to encourage the pupils to develop critical awareness. All pupils in this class made good progress in their learning. In a satisfactory Year 7 lesson most of the time was spent copy typing a piece of text. This successfully encouraged pupils to develop their formatting skills but made little contribution to the development of other aspects. In all lessons teachers explained clearly the new learning they wish to develop, as well as what they expect pupils to do in each lesson. Resources and pupils were managed effectively and little time was wasted in any lesson. After clearly focussed introductions teachers provided appropriate support to individuals and groups of pupils as they work on their tasks. This enabled pupils across the range of attainment to achieve the lessons’ objectives. A weakness common to many lessons is that teachers do not take sufficient account of the differing levels of expertise that pupils have when they come into IT lessons. Pupils who have their own computers at home and make regular use of them could be challenged to work at higher levels than those expected in many lessons.

154 The management of the IT has been poor. Little has been done to address the weaknesses identified in the curriculum in the last inspection report and there has been little monitoring and evaluation of the arrangements to ensure that all pupils have appropriate experience of IT. Specific shortcomings have not been identified and addressed. Recently senior management has become more involved in developing IT and there are clear plans to address some of the issues related to resources and curriculum entitlement at Key Stage 4.

155 There are sufficient IT resources but shortcomings related to a prevalence of stand-alone systems results in considerable difficulties in managing pupils’ work and in practicalities related to printing. Insufficient use is made of IT resources in the school. The bookable facilities in the Resources Centre, for example, are often used for less than 50% of any one week. An area where there has been considerable improvement is in developing staff expertise. Many teachers have achieved Level 1 NVQs in IT and are now working towards Level 2 or Level 3.

Modern Foreign Languages

156 In 1998 the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C in French in GCSE examinations was below national average, but in 1997 and in earlier years results in French matched national averages. In German, a smaller group of higher attaining pupils achieved results well above national average in both 1997 and 1998. In both years pupils did better in languages than in most of their other subjects. In most years girls do better than boys, reflecting a difference found nationally, but in 1998 boys’ attainment matched that of girls. Results in GCSE are similar to those noted at the last inspection.
157 In 1998, the proportion of pupils gaining a pass at A-level was in line with national averages in German but below in French. In the previous three years, the proportion of pupils gaining a pass in French or German was above national average, as was the proportion attaining grades A or B.

158 Teachers’ assessments at Key Stage 3 indicate attainments well below national average in 1998. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are only just below national average in French. Their writing and speaking skills are just below national average, but their understanding of French, is similar to that found in most other schools. Standards in German are above national average.

159 In lessons observed during the inspection, standards were broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a sound understanding of both the spoken and written language. Overall writing skills are below national average, but higher-attaining pupils are beginning to write independently at length. Most pupils readily speak in response to the teacher’s questions but only the highest attainers make more than the briefest of responses.

160 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils attain average standards. Higher-attaining pupils speak fluently in both French and German, and write well at length, demonstrating an appropriate range of vocabulary and structure, over a range of topics. Lower-attaining pupils communicate reasonably well in writing, when the task is carefully prepared. In speaking, they make brief responses readily but too often resort to English, when they need to express anything at length. Higher-attaining pupils read a range of texts and listen to spoken French or German with good understanding. Lower-attaining pupils understand well when supported by the teacher and can usually make sense of simple, straightforward passages of French.

161 Pupils make good progress overall. In Key Stage 3, they make sound progress: in Year 7, they learn rapidly but progress is slower later in the key stage, when the work is not sufficiently well matched to the wide range of attainment in some of the classes. In Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils make good progress, and in around a third of the lessons very good progress. In a German lesson in Year 11, pupils made excellent progress in their use and understanding of spoken German, over a range of topics, because of the teacher’s high expectations. Pupils studying Spanish, as part of a GNVQ course in the sixth form are also making very good progress.

162 In a small number of lessons, pupils make unsatisfactory progress when they do not have enough opportunity to practice hearing and speaking the foreign language, or when they do not work hard enough. At all key stages, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.

163 Pupils’ attitudes to their work are good. In most classes, they concentrate hard and work well with each other in pair work. Pupils make too little use of dictionaries and other reference materials, and this limits their capacity to become independent learners. In a small number
of lessons, pupils should be asked to work harder, and in one lesson in Year 9, most pupils made almost no progress because of their poor behaviour.

164 Teaching is predominantly good at each key stage. In around a sixth of the lessons teaching was very good. In a French lesson in Year 7, the careful planning of the lesson enabled pupils to quickly develop the ability to make up their own sentences, using vocabulary they had only just met. A small number of lessons are taught by non-specialist language teachers, and progress is less good in these lessons and is sometimes unsatisfactory. All the main teachers are fluent speakers of French or German, and mostly conduct their lessons in the foreign language. In a few lessons, particularly in Key Stage 4, there is too much use of English by some teachers. Teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve in most lessons but in some do not match the work carefully enough to the pupils’ knowledge and understanding. This is particularly true in Key Stage 3, and sometimes leads to pupils not working hard enough or misbehaving.

165 The modern languages department is very well led, and has made good progress in addressing most of the deficiencies noted in the previous inspection report. Most lessons are taught in rooms which are grouped together and these areas are enhanced with displays of pupils’ work. Pupils’ progress benefits from visits and exchanges with France and Germany, and the French native-speaking language assistant is used to good effect.

Music

166 No pupils were entered in the last year for GCSE because of the policy on the viable size of groups. There are therefore, no figures to make comparisons against national trends. The policy has since changed and some pupils will be entered this year. The current GCSE group have a reasonable knowledge of music from other countries, use computers capably to organise their compositions and have sound performance skills. Their grasp of technical language is limited.

167 At the end of Key Stage 3, although individuals pupils achieve well for example in their instrumental work, standards overall are below those expected by the end of the key stage. Pupils’ written work relies more on their comprehension of English than their knowledge of music, they describe music that they have heard clearly but do not use musical language effectively and compositions are fairly simple. Pupils’ improvisations in Blues style show that they have grasped the syncopated nature of the rhythms but few of them manage to keep a regular beat. However there is evidence that standards are rising. Pupils’ work in Year 8 is at a very similar level to that found in Year 9 and they are making better progress.

168 The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has improved and now covers the full range of the subject. Information technology at Key Stage 3, however, is not offered in sufficient depth to all pupils. There are no students of music in the sixth form but music is integral to the Performing Arts course. The curriculum is enhanced by the varied programme of
instrumental and extra curricular activities.

169 The quality of teaching by the permanent staff ranged from satisfactory to very good. However, at the time of the inspection, some lessons were taken by a temporary teacher and a student teacher and too much of this work was less than satisfactory. There are strengths in the pleasant working ethos, the good relationships that are created and in the sharing of learning objectives with pupils which help to develop positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers have good subject knowledge, good assessment procedures are in place and criteria for the assessment of individual tasks are shared with the pupils. In the best teaching, lessons maintain a lively pace with timing for specific tasks keeping the lesson moving well and the pupils working continuously. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, presentation was lacking in conviction. In some lessons, some of the tasks were too long to maintain interest and little learning took place, control was weak and resulted in a deterioration in pupils’ behaviour. The varied instrumental provision is well taught and makes a good contribution to pupils’ knowledge and understanding in music.

170 Although resources have improved since the last inspection, some aspects are still unsatisfactory. There are now enough keyboards for pupils to share one between two in all but the largest classes. However, the range and quantity of tuned and untuned instruments are limited. There are not enough computers in the music room to provide adequate access for pupils in Key Stage 3 and, at present, the music department does not have timetabled access to the computer suite nor the necessary software. The good collection of books in the resource centre are largely inappropriate to the pupils’ needs.

171 Accommodation is inadequate especially when two class lessons are taught at the same time. The main teaching room is a large enough space but noise from adjoining areas filters through during quiet activities. The room has no sound proofing nor even a carpet to reduce sound levels. There are no practice rooms and the many instrumental activities are taught in inappropriate spaces such as a windowless office or the open balcony. Class lessons are frequently interrupted by pupils collecting instruments from storage.

• Performing Arts

172 This is offered in the sixth form. The teachers involved plan together to make best use of their personal expertise. The teaching seen was good. Teachers are sensitive to developing pupils’ independence and co-operative skills. They guide and advise as well as instruct. The standards that pupils achieve are below the average but this is because they are strong in only one of the disciplines; they dance well but their acting skills and musical knowledge are weaker elements. The pupils have good general skills in planning and preparing their work individually as well as in groups and show great commitment to improving what they do.

Physical education
173 The standards achieved at GCSE in physical education in 1998 were well below the national expectations. This was the first year that the school took the examination. Standards achieved in dance at GCSE were in line the national expectation. Most pupils achieved a pass in 1998. Results in previous years were well above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are just below the national expectation and vary between years and activities. Pupils' knowledge on the effects of exercise are sound and some are able to name large muscle groups of the body. They understand the need for a warm up before vigorous activity. Most pupils in Year 9 understand the technique of serving in tennis and some are able to perform it successfully. Standards in athletics, particularly sprinting and long jumping are below expectations. In dance pupils are able to choreograph their own work and have a secure knowledge of dance terms.

174 By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are often good in dance, particularly at GCSE. Pupils are able to perform their own dances, perform them to a high standard with a partner and in a group in preparation for their practical examination. They have a good understanding of dance terms and technique. In basketball, pupils in Year 11 demonstrate sound knowledge of strategies of defence and attack. Standards in rounders are below average in some lessons.

175 Progress at both key stages is often good, being very good in tennis and dance. Pupils arrive at the school with a low level of skill and experiences. Previously learned skills are used appropriately in tennis although control of the tennis racquet is a weakness. Pupils use their knowledge experiences and skill in dance to plan and perform their own work. Unsatisfactory progress results from teaching which lacks challenge and the inability of pupils to perform set tasks. This is evident in athletics where pupils are unable to take off correctly in long jump and many have a poor understanding of technique.

176 At Key Stage 4, pupils working for their external moderation in the GCSE examination in dance demonstrated very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress although there is not always planned differentiation in teaching.

177 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are generally good, often very good. They arrive on time to lessons, many of them prepared to work hard. Behaviour is mostly very good, although there was evidence of poor concentration and co-operation from some pupils in Year 7. Pupils work co-operatively with a partner and in groups, often supportive to each other. They form good relationships with their teachers. Some pupils' attitudes in the GCSE course were unsatisfactory when they arrived for lessons poorly prepared and homework not completed. Pupils listen intently to instructions in most lessons, noticeably in dance.

178 The quality of teaching is good overall. Most of the teaching was at least satisfactory, a quarter is good and a third very good. Teachers knowledge is good in all areas of the curriculum but needs to improve in the National Curriculum so that requirements are met adequately. Teachers know their pupils well, form positive relationships with pupils and give them opportunities to plan and evaluate their work, especially in
dance. The use of learning objectives in lesson plans is not always evident. Teachers adopt a wide range of teaching strategies and encourage pupils to work with a partner and in groups. Differentiated teaching is not always planned for although pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress. Unsatisfactory teaching results from a lack of challenge, poor pace in lessons and unsatisfactory management of pupils. Some poor behaviour and a lack of enthusiasm for some pupils at both key stages also contributes.

179 The curriculum is adequate at both key stages although there is too much choice available to pupils at Key Stage 4. As a result some groups are too large and little constructive teaching is able to take place. Schemes of work have improved since the last inspection as have assessment but they need to be linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum to recognise what pupils know, can do and understand. The linking of dance with physical education needs to be stronger particularly at Key Stage 3. There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities on offer to pupils with support from 10 staff. Over 170 pupils take part in competitive school teams and the school has achieved success in a range of sports, with particular strengths in rounders, football (both boys and girls), swimming, rugby and athletics. A high proportion of pupils have gained representation at regional, county and national level in a wide range of sports and this is a credit to the school. Accommodation indoors is good but storage is poor. Outdoor facilities include tennis courts where the surface is breaking up, and a jumping pit in need of attention. Playing fields are good. Off site facilities are available for sixth form students for their recreational lessons. Resources are adequate.

Religious Education

180 At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' attainment is just in line with the expectations of the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus. Because of the arrangements for teaching religious education at post 16 level, no lessons were observed. GCSE results for 1998 are well below the national average, but show some improvement on the 1997 results. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have some knowledge of Christianity and three other world faiths. Their understanding of concepts is less secure. They know about important people, the main beliefs, worship, religious books and aspects of family and community traditions and practices. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils also have a basic knowledge of the responses of some religions to a range of human issues such as suffering, crime and punishment, prejudice and discrimination, abortion, euthanasia and some environmental issues. The attainment of girls is better than boys.

181 Progress is barely satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is restricted by the inadequate time allocation, which needs to be nearer to the national recommendation, if progress and attainment are to be improved. Pupils gain new knowledge and understanding and steadily become more confident in using technical vocabulary and approaching religious questions. Lower attaining pupils also make progress. Their rate of learning would improve, if they had some additional in-class support in religious education and access to a greater range of learning
resources, which more closely match their particular needs. The progress of a few pupils is reduced by a low level of interest and motivation.

182 Pupils’ attitude to learning at both Key Stages is good overall. Many pupils show some interest in the subject. They are willing to talk about their work. When they are given interesting and challenging tasks they co-operate well with teachers and with each other, such as in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were learning in groups about the life and work of well known Christians and searching for information in a collection of learning resources. Behaviour is satisfactory in most classes, but there were occasions when a small number of pupils were silly, repeatedly disturbed the concentration of other pupils and needed to be rebuked. Pupils respect differing viewpoints, religious practices and unfamiliar concepts such as ‘refuge’ in Buddhism and ‘trinity’ in Christianity. Pupils also respect property, displays of work and learning resources.

183 The teaching was satisfactory at both key stages and was good in half the Key Stage 3 lessons. One lesson was unsatisfactory. Two teachers contribute to the religious education programme. Neither has formal qualifications in the subject, but the head of department has engaged in further training in religious education and has considerable teaching experience. Both have a commitment to the subject. Expectations of pupils are generally realistic, but there were occasions when pupils should have been more vigorously challenged. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and expositions are generally lucid. Questioning is effective and thought provoking. The most effective lessons had clear objectives and realistic tasks within a framework of good management and discipline. A range of teaching methods and a variety of resources stimulate pupils’ interest. Time is used effectively and the pace of lessons is generally brisk. Homework is regularly set and marked.

184 Since the last inspection the school has improved the resources for religious education. Text books and other learning materials have been purchased, but the range and quantity of learning resources still needs to be increased. Though artefacts can be borrowed from the multi-cultural centre, the school’s flexibility in using artefacts, both in the classroom and as whole school displays would be enhanced, if it possessed its own collection. Library provision has improved, but the range of books to support enquiry based learning needs to be extended.

185 Management is satisfactory. The subject makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through the study of some of the world’s major religions at Key Stages 3 and 4.

186 The school should review its arrangements in order to meet the statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form. Attainment at GCSE is still a matter for concern, but an adequate time allocation throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and the vigorous implementation of an action plan would improve the slight upward trend in attainment. Pupils’ interest and understanding would be enhanced by extending the programme of visitors to include members of world faiths.
A planned programme of visits to a Buddhist centre, gurdwara and other places of worship would also provoke interest and give pupils an appreciation of other cultures.

**GNVQ**

187 The school has extended its provision post-16 by introducing GNVQ courses at intermediate level in health and social care and leisure and tourism and in business studies at both intermediate and advance levels. Students who take these courses would, in most cases, not have stayed on at school to take A levels. The numbers taking GNVQ has risen steadily as the courses have become established.

188 31 students were involved on intermediate courses in 1998, an additional 14 Year 12 students followed advanced level courses, giving 45 students in total. With relatively small numbers in each course, results have fluctuated over the last two years, all three subjects having results below average in 1998, where leisure and tourism and business studies were above in 1997. Overall, students make appropriate progress in these courses and the proportion who achieve distinction or merit awards is high. Students taking the business studies advanced course have not yet finalised their assessment, their results so far are good and, as with the other courses, standards in lessons are appropriate for the level of the course. In all courses, students’ subject knowledge is good and their skills in communication and in using IT are high.

189 Students are making good progress in these courses. The style of working suits them and response in often very positive. In almost all lessons, they are committed and work hard. Almost all respond well to carrying out their own research and the quality of the work they present is often high.

190 Teaching is good overall, ranging from very good to satisfactory on GNVQ courses. Teachers know their subject well. Mostly, teachers manage the distinctive style of GNVQ work successfully. There is generally a good balance between the work students initiate and guidance from the teacher. In several sessions, the group were very successfully encouraged to discuss issues that arose, demonstrating good communication skills and relevant knowledge. In a few lessons, students are not guided strongly enough and some drift off task in the absence of clear expectations of what is to be achieved in the lesson. Some team teaching would provide the opportunity to share the very effective practice in the department.

191 The curriculum is well organised and very effective use is made of links with Doncaster College to extend the students’ work both through students visiting the college and college staff teaching in school. Assessment procedures are well established at intermediate level and developing at advanced level. Good use is made of assessment to help students improve their work and they are encouraged effectively to review work themselves and be self-critical. The reporting procedures imposed on the school by the GNVQ system are time-consuming and overly bureaucratic. These should be streamlined as much as possible.
The courses are managed well and there is a good emphasis on key skills. Staff new to GNVQ work are supported well at first; there could be more follow-up to ensure that all staff work effectively. External links are managed productively and there is a clear plan for future development.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

During the inspection:

- 232 lessons or parts of lessons were observed;
- 4 acts of collective worship were observed;
- registration periods were observed in each year group;
- discussions were held with pupils to assess their knowledge and understanding;
- the conduct of lunchtimes and break times was observed;
- interviews and informal conversations were held with pupils from each year group about their life in school;
- samples of pupils' work from across the range of attainment and from each year group were examined;
- discussions were held with teaching and non-teaching staff about their roles in school;
- school documentation and planning were evaluated;
- governors were interviewed about their involvement and roles in managing the school;
- parents were asked about their views of the school, through the use of a questionnaire and at a meeting;
- attendance registers were examined;
- photographic evidence of the school's activities was examined.
DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of pupils on roll</th>
<th>Number of pupils with statements</th>
<th>Number of pupils on school’s register</th>
<th>Number of full-time pupils eligible for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y13)

- Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)
- Number of pupils per qualified teacher

Education support staff (Y7 - Y13)

- Total number of education support staff
- Total aggregate hours worked each week

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

Average teaching group size

- KS3
- KS4

Financial data

Financial year: 1997/98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure per pupil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward to next year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 900
Number of questionnaires returned: 217

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school handles complaints from parents well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is expected to do at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school achieves high standards of good behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren) like(s) school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting, a number of parents commented on the improvements that the school is making. A few felt that behaviour could still be improved and there was a general consensus that the management team are addressing this issue and taking the school forward rapidly.