

INSPECTION REPORT

The Park Education Support Centre
Hatfield

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 130348

Headteacher: Mrs Gill Dunton

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708539

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of unit:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	5 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	New Barnfield Travellers Lane Hatfield AL10 8XG
Telephone number:	01707 281 460
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Appropriate authority:	Hertfordshire County Council
Name of LEA designated officer:	John Evans
Date of previous inspection:	Not previously inspected

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Geza Hanniker, Lay Inspector		
Helen Maskew	Mathematics History Geography Special educational needs Equal opportunities English	
Mary Vallis	Design and technology Information technology Science Modern foreign languages Physical education	Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Partnership with parents and the community Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Efficiency
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the unit does well

- Pupils make good progress and this enables many of them to return to mainstream schools
- Pupils are well taught; teachers are very good at planning appropriate programmes for individuals
- Assessment procedures are very good; they are helping to ensure that pupils receive the education that is suited to their need.
- The unit is very well managed and led. A common sense of purpose and direction is shared by the headteacher, LEA, management team and staff.
- The support and guidance offered to pupils is very good. Pupils are safe and well cared for, progress, personal development and attendance are very closely monitored and good behaviour is strongly promoted. Good relationships with support agencies help considerably.
- Pupils are given the vocabulary to express their emotions; this is helping them to keep out of trouble
 - There is very good provision for pupils' moral development; this helps them to understand the rights and wrongs of what they do.

Where the unit has weaknesses

- I. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is weak; there is very little geography or history and no music in the curriculum. There is insufficient attention paid to the multicultural nature of society and there are insufficient extra-curricular activities.
- II. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to socialise; they attend the Park only for lessons and there are no periods in the day for them learn how to socialise better.
- III. Long lessons are not always well used; pupils lose interest towards the end of them and they restrict flexibility of timetabling and the variety of what is taught.

The unit does many things well and has very few weaknesses. The weaknesses mentioned here will form the basis of an action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the unit.

How the unit has improved since the last inspection

The unit has not previously been inspected.

Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 14	By 16		Key
Targets set on admission and in reviews	B	B	<i>very good</i>	<i>A</i>
English: listening and speaking	B	B	<i>good</i>	<i>B</i>
Reading	B	B	<i>satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
Writing	C	C	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
Mathematics	B	B	<i>poor</i>	<i>E</i>
Science	B	B		
Personal, social and health Education (PSHE)	B	B		

Pupils make good progress overall. At Key Stages 1 and 2 they are on the roll for only very short periods but during this time they make sufficient progress through tasks and against targets set by their schools, parents and the unit to enable them to return full-time to their schools. At Key Stage 3 those pupils who are at risk of exclusion from school make sufficient progress for them to be able to return to school with better prospects of success. Those pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 who have been permanently excluded by schools make sufficient progress to enable them to gain recognised qualifications in a limited range of subjects.

Best progress takes place in:

- IV. English, where pupils gain confidence in reading and their speaking and listening skills improve;
- V. mathematics, where pupils understanding of number, shape and data handling improve;
- VI. science, especially in the study of life and living things;
- VII. information technology; pupils learn how to use computers more effectively and make good use of what they learn in many other subjects;
- VIII. PSHE, especially in citizenship and the management of their own emotions;
- IX. cookery, which provides them with valuable practical experiences.

Not enough progress takes place in:

- X. the humanities, because geography, history and religious education are not taught;
- XI. music, which is not taught.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:
5 – 11 years	Good	English, mathematics
11 – 14 years	Good	English, mathematics, science, information technology(IT), PSHE
14 – 16 years	Good	English, mathematics, science, IT, PSHE
English	Good	
Mathematics	Good	
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good	

Teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and 72 per cent was good or better. Teachers who are most familiar with their groups conduct the best teaching. Planning is a strength of nearly all teachers and pupils' work is well marked. Teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 have a particular strength in managing the teaching of individuals. Relative weaknesses in teaching include the use of time, especially towards the end of long lessons in Key Stage 3 and 4, and occasional under-expectation of what pupils could achieve in lessons.

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

Other aspects of the unit

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils behave well most of the time. Poor behaviour is often the

Attendance

reason for their referral but at the unit they show how well they can behave.

Does not meet the national benchmark for all schools but many pupils make good progress in improving their rate of attendance. A small group of pupils who were previously non-attenders at school are now attending regularly

Ethos*	Good. The centre is clearly a place of learning with a good educational focus. Pupils improve their attendance and show that they want to learn and improve their behaviour.
Leadership and management	Very good. The headteacher leads the school very well. She is strongly supported by the active and well constituted management group and the LEA. There is very close monitoring and evaluation of every aspect of the unit's work. A very clear sense of direction is evident in plans for the development of the unit.
Curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a good focus on the important subjects of English, mathematics and science; PHSE and IT are also well represented. There are weaknesses with regards to the lack of geography, history and music. Careers education and guidance is good but there are insufficient extra-curricular activities. The joint curriculum planning between the unit and primary schools is very strong and is helping pupils to reintegrate particularly successfully. Assessment is a strength of the school.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Satisfactory. Spiritual development is good. Despite the lack of formal religious education the unit is having a significant impact on pupils' lives and the way they think. Moral development is very good; it is helping pupils who have experienced great difficulties in distinguishing right from wrong to improve their attitudes. Social development is satisfactory and antisocial behaviour is being discouraged but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to socialise. Cultural development is unsatisfactory: weaknesses in the curriculum lead to pupils not being given sufficient opportunities to broaden their cultural and multicultural awareness.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. There are a good number of teachers who are experienced in teaching pupils who have had difficulties in school. A good range of support workers are involved in lessons and in the preparation of individual programmes. Accommodation is good and there is a good range of resources to support the curriculum.
Value for money	Good. Pupils are well taught and make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school is very well managed and efficiently organised.

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

· **The parents' views of the unit**

One parent attended the pre-inspection meeting and expressed her relief and satisfaction that the unit was helping her child. A further seven parents responded to the questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection. Every response was supportive of the unit, the standard it achieves and the education it provides. There were no concerns expressed.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve educational standards and the quality of education, the headteacher, management group and the LEA should now:

- Improve provision for the cultural development of pupils by:
 - i. broadening the curriculum to include access to the study of geography, history and music;

- ii. introducing a planned programme of curricular and extra-curricular visits to museums, galleries and local places of interest;
- iii. arranging opportunities to give pupils access to a range of visits and visitors from the world of art, music and literature;
- iv. introducing a planned programme to raise pupils' awareness of the multicultural society in which they live.

(Paragraphs 38,41,48)

- Reschedule the timetable to recognise the difficulties of maintaining pupils' interest towards the end of long lessons and to provide greater flexibility, allowing a broader range of subjects to be taught.

(Paragraphs 17, 30, 40)

- Provide times in the day when pupils can practise the social skills they are learning in PSHE: these could include a short communal period at the start and end of each session or a short break during a session.

(Paragraphs 25,47)

In addition to the above, the following minor weaknesses were also identified. These may be addressed in the action plan.

XII. Overuse of worksheets (paragraph 16).

XIII. Lack of experimental science (paragraphs 17,35).

XIV. SEN/behaviour training for teachers (paragraph 66).

XV. Links with the community (paragraph 59).

· INTRODUCTION

· Characteristics of the unit

1. The centre is one of eight Hertfordshire Education Support Centres. There are currently 26 pupils (18 boys and 8 girls) on roll. The Centre admits pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 but at the time of the inspection there were no Key Stage 1 pupils on roll.
2. The centre supports pupils presenting a variety of difficulties but particularly those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. A significant number of pupils have been referred because of their poor attendance patterns at their previous schools. Twenty pupils are on the roll of other schools or Youth Programmes as well as the centre. Five of them are attending both, whilst the rest are attending the centre only, prior to their full time return to school.
3. Virtually all pupils are white and all speak English as their main language. Whilst behaviour and non-attendance are the reasons for referral there is a small number of pupils with additional learning difficulties. Nevertheless, most pupils are of broadly average ability. Nearly all pupils receive between nine and thirteen hours of teaching per week at the Centre. For permanently excluded pupils at Key Stage 4 this is supplemented by Youth Programmes.
4. The centre serves a large area. Parts of this are relatively affluent whilst others are deprived. Most, but not all, of the pupils come from those less affluent areas.
5. There are only small numbers of pupils in each key stage and they are drawn from a broad range of

different schools. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils stay at the centre for only 4-6 weeks before being returned to school. Those Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils with schools to return to also stay at the centre for a short period. For these reasons, what these pupils know, understand and can do is not reliably attributed to the work of the centre but the contribution the centre makes has been taken into account insofar as possible. What is clearly attributable is the progress pupils make with regards their attitudes, behaviour and attendance, all factors that have prevented pupils from making the most of their mainstream education.

6. The overriding aim of the centre is to return pupils to school full time whenever possible. For permanently excluded Key Stage 4 pupils it is recognised that this may not be realistic and for these pupils preparation for life after school becomes the priority.

6. Key indicators

7. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	Unit	8
	Absence	National comparative data	
	Unauthorised	Unit	13
	Absence	National comparative data	

8. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

9. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	12
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

10. Destination of leavers 1998-9

There were 72 leavers last year. Their destinations were as follows:

Re-entry to schools	65%
Further education	15%
Employment	2%

Training 7%

Other 11%

Six Year 11 pupils left the centre without sitting examinations; most of these were non-attenders.

10. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

10. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE UNIT

10. Attainment and progress

7. The interrupted patterns of education that most pupils have experienced make it inappropriate to judge their attainments against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give some examples of what pupils know, understand and can do by the time they leave. Judgements about progress take into account progress made in lessons, information from teachers, the views of pupils and their parents and the scrutiny of pupils' past work.
8. Progress is good overall. It is good at Key Stages 2 and 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4 where pupils display slightly more hardened attitudes, more resistance to learning and lower attendance. Nearly all pupils are of broadly average ability and behaviour, not learning difficulty, is the sole criterion for admission. Many pupils have previously underachieved at school. Their progress has been slowed because they have often faced repeated exclusions, resulting in time out of school, and by frequent loss of access to learning opportunities caused by negative attitudes and misbehaviour when in school. In some cases pupils have resorted to non-attendance at school as a means of escaping from their problems.
9. In all lessons pupils make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress through the tasks they are set. They do so because they are well taught in small groups. This allows them to receive a lot of individual attention, free of the distractions they have difficulty in coping with. Individual needs are well met and extra support is given to less able or more troubled pupils. Scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and teachers show that this progress is continued over longer periods of time and is helping many pupils to make a satisfactory return to mainstream schools.
10. Pupils make good progress in English at all key stages. They make particularly good progress in the skills of speaking and listening. Extra opportunities provided by other lessons, such as PHSE and Citizenship, contribute well to providing pupils with an increased vocabulary for discussing strong emotions. Pupils usually speak politely to each other and to staff. They take turns and frequently modify their language for the occasion. By the end of Key Stage 2 they express strong emotions when they discuss their feelings about being blamed for things they have not done and listen carefully to teachers. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils discuss the development of plot in stories. Pupils in Year 11 can distinguish between accent and dialect and can discuss the effect of emotive language.
11. Good progress in reading is encouraged by a wide range of attractive, up-to-date reading materials and by the introduction of the Literacy Hour. At Key Stage 2 pupils read aloud with a little expression from a range of materials. By the end of Key Stage 3 they discuss what they have read, making reference to the text. There are no non-readers. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about books they have read for pleasure at home.
12. Progress in writing is satisfactory. Information technology is used well for re-drafting work and for enhancing presentation. The setting of targets for spelling and punctuation have contributed to progress. Pupils respond well to writing for a range of purposes. At Key Stage 2 they express their thoughts in writing, using simple, unlinked script. At Key Stages 3 and 4 they write sensitive poetry following study of the war poets. The over emphasis on the use of worksheets restricts independent writing and sometimes constrains progress, especially for more able pupils.
13. Progress in mathematics is good overall. At Key Stage 2 pupils follow the National Numeracy Strategy with good effect. They make good progress in understanding basic multiplication tables and successfully use computer graphics to record data collected in the form of a pie chart. All Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils make good progress in basic numeracy skills in relation to their prior attainment. At Key Stage 3 they improve their knowledge of mathematical concepts, such as handling and recording data, and the use of frequency charts. They demonstrate their understanding of factors and multiples. Lower attaining pupils

- understand and can fill in different types of graphs, can describe varieties of angles and complete simple algebraic problems. Opportunities for practical mathematics are used in cookery and science. All Key Stage 4 pupils have the opportunity to sit public examinations. Twenty four pupils gained passes with the Associated Examining Board last year.
14. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science, overall. The subject has been developed over the course of the current term and the specialist teacher is addressing the need to ensure that programmes match pupils' ability and needs. Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress using techniques for classifying living things: they distinguish vertebrate and invertebrate animals and flowering and non-flowering plants. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 discuss topics concerning health hygiene and safety and show an awareness of preventative medicine and how vaccination works. They also plan diets and discuss the dietary needs of different people. Good use is made of mathematics to complete data collection. Pupils are expanding their scientific vocabulary and use it well. There is insufficient opportunity to develop practical work, especially with regards the mixing of substances. This means that whilst pupils are increasing their knowledge of the subject they are not gaining sufficient access to that part of it which makes it exciting and memorable. This weakness is well recognised by the newly appointed teacher and plans to make improvements are well advanced.
 15. Pupils make satisfactory progress with regards practical experiences. At Key Stage 2 pupils use simple construction kits to create models of different forms of transport with moving parts. In art lessons they use scissors competently and design and make their own calendars and cards, decorating them with ribbons and rosettes. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils who have access to food technology are making good progress through well prepared tasks. They design dishes such as pizzas, use a variety of cutting and slicing techniques to prepare toppings and mixing techniques for bases. When food is prepared pupils discuss whether they like what they have produced and how they would change it were they to do it again. The carefully prepared lessons contribute to raising pupils' self-esteem and development of social skills.
 16. Pupils make good progress in information technology. At Key Stages 3 and 4 they use appropriate technical vocabulary when they are requesting help, they describe a 'tool bar' correctly and they load their assignments by opening files from discs. They alter the appearance of text by changing typeface and can move text around a document. Most pupils are making sufficient progress to achieve external accreditation. The use of information technology across many areas of the curriculum helps to ensure that progress is maintained. The acquisition of new skills and the pleasing presentation of work have enhanced the self-esteem of pupils.
 17. Progress in physical education is satisfactory. Pupils develop skills in small games, trampolining, squash and racketball. They show an increasing awareness of tactics and most are willing to exert themselves sufficiently to improve their level of fitness. They occasionally use mountain bikes, climbing-walls and canoes in their adventure activities. Good progress in communication and collaboration is made when pupils use 'parachute games'. Social skills and self-esteem are enhanced in all areas of the subject.
 18. Pupils make good progress in PHSE. There is a good focus on developing the ways in which pupils can cope better in school. All pupils identify sensible strategies, appropriate to their age, for coping with anger. They identify where blame is justified and where it is not. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils show a good understanding of the difference between aggressive, assertive and passive behaviour and how each approach can arouse different feelings in themselves and others. These older pupils also learn where they can go for advice about drugs, sex and health issues and also about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
 19. A little art is taught and in it pupils make good progress through individual tasks. Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils recognise the different styles of some famous artists. They mix colours well to create desired shades and incorporate this exercise into an associated weaving activity to produce visually striking patterns. Good quality leaf prints and rubbings have been produced on the theme of autumn. In clay work pupils have created simple pots, bowls and figurines which they have coloured attractively.

23. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. Poor attitudes have often been the cause of referral but at the centre pupils relate well with staff and become more confident and self aware. They take an active part in lessons, some of the more disaffected grumbling a little but eventually all joining in. Great pride is taken in completing work and in discussion pupils are very positive about the time spent at the centre. They listen well to instructions from teachers, less well but adequately to visiting speakers, and show good powers of concentration. The attitudes of permanently excluded Key Stage 4 pupils are satisfactory overall but their aversion to school is more entrenched than at earlier key stages and they are fully aware that they will soon be leaving school for good. This makes their teaching more difficult.
21. Behaviour in the centre is good. Pupils are polite and bad behaviour rarely disrupts lessons. A little bad language occasionally slips out but it is not targeted at teachers or class mates and pupils moderate their language when they are reminded. No bullying was evident during the inspection and no incidents of bullying are on record. Pupils do not consider it to be an issue at the centre. Pupils respect their classrooms; there is no graffiti or damage to displays. Equipment is well looked after. That teachers are respected is evident in pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around the centre. Occasionally pupils have difficulty maintaining their productivity to the end of long lessons and when this happens they become more easily distractible, behaviour deteriorates and progress slows. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
22. Relationships in the centre are good. Pupils occasionally work co-operatively in groups or in pairs and the small class groups enable pupils to get to know each other well. The progress they are making in learning to communicate appropriately also helps them to relate better to one another as they listen to different points of view, allowing others to express views that they may not agree with themselves but usually respecting the right of individuals to differ.
23. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They respond well to the expectations of the centre with particular regard to behaviour and attendance. Together with the good progress they make in PHSE this is facilitating a successful return to mainstream school for many and a satisfactory end to the school career of others. Success in lessons boosts self-esteem and confidence. There are limited opportunities for responsibility or initiative to be developed but most accept responsibility for getting to the centre each day, correctly dressed and arriving in a fit state to work. They listen well and achieve personal targets set by staff, parents and themselves. All pupils develop the ability to talk about their feelings; this helps to keep them out of trouble. The lack of breaks and less formal periods in the day reduces the opportunities for pupils to further develop their personal and social skills.

27. Attendance

24. Pupils show satisfactory progress in improving their attendance. Although the attendance of pupils is about five per cent below the expected minimum rate for all schools, a few persistent absentees distort the figures. The problem is significantly smaller this year than last. The attendance of pupils in Year 11 is the least satisfactory. Pupils' attendance nearly always improves whilst at the centre. A small group who had previously been non-attenders at school have been supported through an initiative managed by staff at the centre. All have improved their pattern of attendance, most of them significantly.
25. The centre co-operates very well with the schools where the pupils are dual registered. For instance, pupils must attend their main school in the morning to be allowed to come to the centre in the afternoon. The registration system used by the centre is similar to that in the mainstream schools. Follow-up of absence is rigorous; after 30 minutes the register is closed and the school secretary contacts the parents or carers if their child is absent. Representatives of the education welfare service speak highly of the centre's effectiveness. The centre exchanges attendance information with the Youth Programme personnel regularly, too.

26. The centre co-operates well with parents and pupils to improve the pupils' attendance. As the good reputation of the centre increases amongst pupils they realise they are gaining education and recognition and this encourages them to attend. The pupils arrive to the centre punctually. Even those who use public transport or walk in usually arrive on time, enabling sessions to start promptly with pupils well settled to work.

30.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

30. Teaching

27. Teaching is good overall. 72 per cent of those lessons observed were good or better. 12 per cent were very good and none was unsatisfactory. Good teaching is shared by all teachers, showing strength throughout the unit. Teaching is good overall at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and, although it is not identifiably weaker in any single subject at Key Stage 4, the aggregate of teaching shows that it is slightly weaker, though still satisfactory overall. This is largely as a result of teachers' experiencing greater challenges to their pupil management skills at that key stage.
28. Lesson planning is very good. It identifies clear learning objectives and links this well to activities which will help pupils to meet them. Nearly all planning clearly states what teachers will do as well as what pupils will be expected to do. Because learning objectives are so clearly stated, this helps teachers to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and whether pupils are making progress. This high quality day to day assessment allows teachers to plan highly appropriate programmes and to support pupils well. It also means that good quality homework can be realistically set. In no aspect is teaching unsatisfactory. Relative weaknesses emerge at Key Stages 3 and 4 where expectations of what individuals can achieve are tempered by the occasional reluctance of pupils to work hard and a slight reluctance of teachers to press them to do so at the risk of creating disruption. This also leads to increased formality in lessons, an over reliance on worksheet based work and less adventurous methods of delivery. At Key Stage 4 groups are larger and test teachers' management skills to the full. Lessons are long and towards the end of a minority of them teachers experience difficulties in maintaining pupils' interest.
29. Teaching in English is good. Lesson preparation is thorough and teachers show a good appreciation of the needs of individuals. Praise is used well and warm relationships and good control help to ensure that pupils of all ages have the confidence to read aloud and contribute orally. Homework is well related to work in class. The thorough assessment of all areas of learning is a strength. All work is well marked and helpfully annotated.
30. Teaching in mathematics is good overall. Good planning ensures that teaching at Key Stage 2 reflects the work the pupils are doing in their mainstream schools and supports reintegration well. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the teacher has a very good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are very well prepared and move at a crisp pace. The content of all lessons is well matched to the individual abilities of the pupils. The impact of this is that pupils sustain their concentration in spite of the length of the lessons. At all key stages expectations of both attainment and behaviour are good. The teachers have developed good relationships with the pupils and this helps create a purposeful and productive ethos. Assessment and recording is very good at all key stages. It is effectively used to inform the progress of those pupils who are returning to school and those in KS4 who are moving on to alternative educational opportunities. Homework is well set.
31. Teaching in science is good. The teacher is a specialist recently appointed. She has very good subject knowledge and is secure in the delivery of the subject. Management of behaviour is good, relationships with pupils being good, polite and understanding. Planning is very good. The schemes of work match pupils' needs and the early assessment of pupils' previous attainment enables good development to be made. Lessons are well organised and the texts interesting. There are few opportunities for practical work but teachers maintain pupil interest by delivering lessons with good pace and encouragement.
32. Teaching of physical education is done by an instructor, and is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully explained and techniques illustrated. Lessons are good when praise and encouragement are used to enable pupils to overcome reluctance to try new moves on the trampoline. Staff have a good rapport with their pupils and clearly understand their needs. This enables them to match lesson content with individual targets.

33. The teaching of information technology is good. It is shared by a teacher and a well qualified assistant. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the teacher and assistant have motivated pupils to complete work of commendable quality and quantity. High expectations and the efficient use of good resources contribute well to pupils progress.
34. There were no opportunities to observe the teaching of food technology. However, discussion with the teachers and pupils, scrutiny of planning and resources combined with photographic evidence lead to the judgement that teaching is good. There are good opportunities for the development of social skills and cross-curricular links such as numeracy.
35. The teaching of PHSE is good. It is shared between teachers and a broad range of visiting speakers. That by the teachers is stronger than the rest because they have better management skills and understand the needs of the pupils well. Programmes and lessons are well planned and teachers use a good range of interesting activities to enliven lessons.

39.

39. **The curriculum and assessment**

36. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The centre follows the LEA's curriculum framework for all pupils. The LEA's Curriculum Complaints Procedure is accessible to parents.
37. There is a good focus on the important subjects of English, mathematics and science. IT and PHSE are also well represented. Art and drama therapy are provided and add relevance to the curriculum. There are weaknesses with regard to the lack of geography, history and music. Art and PE are available but there are limited opportunities for some practical subjects such as design technology where although most pupils have opportunities to cook they do not have access to other areas of designing and making, such as with resistant materials. The centre timetable is a limiting factor to the curriculum being offered. Lessons are long and often the final quarter is not sufficiently used to provide opportunities for broadening the curriculum.
38. At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to follow the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This provides the opportunity for them to keep up with their peers when they return to mainstream school. A satisfactory variety of vocational training and work experience through the Youth Programme Scheme is available to those pupils who will not be returning to school. This supports and extends the academic curriculum. Regular contact with the Careers Service means that all Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance.
39. Provision for PHSE is good. There are comprehensive sex education and drugs policies in place and they are accompanied by good programmes of study. Citizenship has recently been included on the timetable and covers topics such as young people and the law. The centre invites speakers from a variety of relevant organisations such as the local Young People's Information Centre, Youth Justice and the Citizens' Advice Bureau. This supports and promotes the pupils' ability to access support agencies independently. For younger pupils emphasis is appropriately placed on emotional and relationship issues in preparation for their return to school.
40. The constraints of the timetable and travelling arrangements means that pupils have no access to extra-curricular activities and this is a weakness. There are no opportunities for visits to theatres, museums or galleries. No provision is made for local artists, actors or musicians to enliven the wider cultural curriculum.
41. Provision for pupils with special education needs is good. Although teachers do not have specialist formal qualifications in special needs, they are very experienced and have developed good individual programmes that cover pupils' behavioural needs. Learning needs are also well assessed and targeted. Programmes are used effectively to monitor and improve behaviour and attitudes. These continue to be

used well when pupils return to mainstream school and facilitate successful reintegration. Parents and pupils are always involved in the setting up and review of individual programmes. The statutory annual reviews of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need are carried out effectively.

42. The reintegration programme for younger pupils who have been permanently excluded is good. The support the centre gives to both pupils and their new primary schools is effective in helping to ensure successful outcomes. Planning is of a high quality and seeks to provide continuous access to the curriculum. While the planning for older pupils is equally thorough, the reintegration process into mainstream secondary schools is sometimes less successful as schools are more reluctant to accept pupils in the last year of their education.
43. Assessment is a strength. All subject areas have good systems of assessment and recording progress on a very regular basis. Documentation is clear and consistent. All pupils' curriculum needs are assessed when they are admitted and those returning to school undergo final assessment when they leave the centre. Thorough assessment documentation is made available to the school, which greatly assists the reintegration process. Documentation from the schools which have permanently excluded pupils are not always so comprehensive. Work is marked regularly with positive and useful comments. The attainment of pupils is well recorded in their Records of Achievement. Key Stage 4 pupils have access to public examinations.

47. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

44. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. However, there are significant variations in provision for each aspect. Despite a lack of explicit planning, the spiritual development of pupils is good. A short, weekly assembly, based on the thought for the week, provides an opportunity for reflection. Relationships are warm and pupils feel valued as individuals. Their opinions are well respected. Well-presented work is displayed with pride. A safe and supportive framework provides good opportunities for exploring strong emotions. Through lessons such as PHSE and English, pupils are given the vocabulary with which to express and understand their emotions more effectively. Art and drama therapy for a minority of pupils allows for the deeper exploration of powerful issues.
45. Opportunities provided for moral development are very good. All pupils are taught strategies to deal with anger. The well-planned citizenship programme helps pupils learn self-control and how to develop self-expression safely. The effects of prejudice and racism are taught through practical activities. Rights and responsibilities in the home and community are considered. Positive day-to-day interactions within the centre reinforce lessons addressing moral issues. Pupils perceive that systems are fair and consistent. They are well aware of boundaries and were involved in drawing up the sensible rules. Punctuality, good work and behaviour are rewarded by credits that can be exchanged for shopping vouchers.
46. The social development of pupils is satisfactory. However, there are too few opportunities for social occasions and this is an area for development. Pupils meet together infrequently apart from lesson times. Because of part time attendance at the centre and the structure of the timetable there are no breaks or lunch times. Within lessons pupils are encouraged to work together, with boys and girls sharing tasks. Pupils lack opportunities for developing self-control and social skills in larger, less formal settings. Well-focused targets on Individual Educational Plans do help pupils consider their behaviour and to act with consideration for other people. Work experience helps Year 11 pupils learn the social skills expected in the work place.
47. The centre makes unsatisfactory provision for the cultural development of pupils. The small amount of history and geography are incidental to other lessons. Pupils do have opportunities to study the richness of their own culture through good literature. Shakespeare and many poets are studied and short stories representing a wide range of genres are read. Art expertise within the centre is good but under-used. There are insufficient visits into the community to enrich the curriculum and this is a weakness. The

attractive displays do not promote sufficiently the multi-cultural society in which pupils live. No music is played and there are no music lessons.

51. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

48. The staff are very committed to the care of the pupils and they are very effective at looking after their well being. The pupils realise this; they feel safe and secure in the centre and this helps them to relax, to make academic progress and to concentrate upon resolving their problems.
49. The pupils receive very good quality educational guidance. Success is built upon carefully prepared and monitored Individual Education Plans, which include behaviour and learning aspects. The pupils, their parents, their mainstream schools, the LEA and other support agencies representatives contribute to these and to the reviews. The support pupils are receiving at the centre is helping them to overcome their difficulties and enabling most of the pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 to return to mainstream schools to continue their education. The centre supplies a good quality report when pupils leave and this helps the receiving school to continue giving pupils appropriate support, aided by the continued involvement of centre teachers for an agreed time period. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are less likely to reintegrate into a mainstream school. The LEA Youth Service provides an additional Youth Programme for them that supplements their tuition out of the centre.
50. The measures to encourage good behaviour are very well applied. The centre's code of conduct comprises of a few sentences and a few key words support it. It is easily understood by pupils, prominently displayed and decorated with eye-catching illustrations. The teachers have very effective strategies to implement the code without confrontation. The pupils are encouraged to assess their own behaviour. The staff correct bad language and do not tolerate any kind of harassment or bullying.
51. Improving the attendance of pupils is a priority of the centre. Pupils remain registered at their mainstream school, if at all possible, as well as at the centre. The centre's systems of prompt follow-up of any absence or lateness and the persistent encouragement the pupils receive to attend are very effective. The centre maintains close contact with the mainstream schools and the Youth Programme. The personal support of the pupils by the LEA educational welfare services at the centre and in schools is also very well defined and executed.
52. Effective child protection procedures are in place. The Area Child Protection Committee's guidelines are implemented. All staff new to the centre receive an induction from the headteacher. Confidential files are kept securely. The centre calls upon the services of other professionals to advise the pupils. Pupils at the centre receive a very well constructed personal, social and health education. A main part of it is the teaching of the life skills programme. It ranges from health and fitness to earning money and making decisions about their environment. There are good sex education programmes and pupils are made well aware of the uses and abuses of drugs and medicines. The centre is extremely vigilant regarding health and safety. There are clear and comprehensive procedures, which are rigorously implemented. All appliances are checked regularly and fire drills are keenly observed.

56. Partnership with parents and the community

53. Parents are kept well informed about their children. They are involved in discussions prior to pupils' enrolment in the centre. A home-school agreement identifying responsibilities is signed by parents, the pupil and the head teacher before enrolment. Parents are very supportive of the centre and appreciative of the work that it does. Parental involvement in their children's education is encouraged. Parents are invited to celebrate success as well as to discuss issues of concern. They approach the centre confidently, secure in the knowledge that they are working in partnership and express gratitude for the emotional support that is given to their children and themselves. Opportunities are given for parents to

attend presentation and awards ceremonies, for example, after the completion of work experience. Parents are informed immediately of absence.

54. Formal reports are regularly issued, reflecting the length of pupils' stay. These record pupils' improvement in behaviour and attitude as well as reporting on progress in each subject. Almost all parents attend review meetings where they contribute to setting pupils' targets for behaviour and work. Good home-school links for parents of younger pupils include a contract book where comments can be recorded. This system encourages shared opportunities for reading aloud.
55. Links with the community are very variable but satisfactory overall. There are good links with a range of local authority services including the educational welfare service, police and social services. These links, combined with good liaison with local schools, help inform the planning of programmes to promote an early return to mainstream education for all but the oldest pupils. There are also good links with the local university, some of whose students provide art and drama therapy in the centre. There is a particular weakness with regards the contribution that the centre can make to the community. No areas in which pupils can actively enhance the lives of others have been identified. Links with local industry and business are also under-developed.

59. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE UNIT

59. Leadership and management

56. The leadership and management of the unit are very good. The headteacher, senior staff, management group and local education authority work very closely. They have created a unit which has a very clear educational identity, responds to changes very quickly and is constantly evolving and improving because of the very clear vision displayed by all parties. On a day-to-day basis the headteacher ensures that there is appropriate provision for each pupil and that all staff are clear about their responsibilities. Senior staff give very good attention to their duties. They are given a good degree of non-contact time in which to ensure that the responsibilities are met and contribute significantly to the high standards of management. The management group is well constituted; it includes headteachers of local schools, representatives of the LEA and also, very importantly, elected members of the local authority. The quality of the leadership and management is contributing very strongly to the centre achieving its stated aims.
57. Regular reports to the management team and to the local education authority give these respective bodies excellent information to help them to maintain all of the workings of the unit. The local education authority in particular is comprehensively monitoring the success or failure of new initiatives and is constantly comparing the relative standards of the unit against others in the area. There has been little formal monitoring of teaching but staff communication is good and regular meetings attended by all staff give the headteacher a very good view of what is happening in classrooms. Plans to introduce more formal monitoring of teaching are well developed and were implemented prior to the inspection. All legal requirements are met by the headteacher and local education authority.
58. Development planning is good. The headteacher has identified appropriate areas for development planning and has produced a realistic plan which recognises cost and training implications and the practicalities of implementing change and improvement. In this the local education authority has provided a good lead through its clear and comprehensive behaviour support plan for 1999-2001.
59. The clear, primary aim to reduce exclusion for mainstream schools is very well supported through the programmes for supporting pupils in schools. The good admissions policy ensures that only when a further need is identified and pupils are considered to be at imminent risk of exclusion are they admitted to the centre for a clearly defined period of time, presently six weeks for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils and four weeks for Key Stage 1 and 2. The management recognises that there will always be a small number

of pupils for whom mainstream school becomes untenable and for these pupils it has made provision in separate groups to be educated part-time in the unit. Through good organisation, these discrete groups all have access to the centre curriculum, each appropriate to need but each kept separate and with a clear focus. The importance of increasing provision for permanently excluded pupils has been recognised and is being developed through good initiatives with youth programmes which result in pupils gaining access to organised activities for a large part of each week.

60. There is a strong commitment to pupils and a very high regard for their welfare. This is shared by all staff and is appreciated by parents. Pupils are appreciative of the help they are being given and relate well to staff despite their own difficulties in relating to one another. This helps to create a good ethos in which pupils make good progress academically and also in their attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance.

64. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

61. Staffing is good. The centre is staffed with suitably qualified and dedicated staff. Teachers are appropriately qualified with specialists available to teach most subjects. Although teachers have many years of experience, much of this has been in individual tuition and there is a weakness with regards to recent experience of teaching larger groups of pupils. This impacts upon the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 4, where class groups are largest. Part-time teachers and instructors contribute effectively to the staffing of the centre and bring extra expertise to science, PE and English, as well as providing good support for pupils in other schools. A well-qualified support assistant provides additional teaching in IT. The centre receives additional support from art and drama therapists, as well as a range of visiting speakers. There is a school nurse. The centre's administrative staff are enthusiastic and professional and they ensure that administrative tasks are very efficiently carried out
62. Induction procedures for new staff are being developed. There are good arrangements for linking the professional development of staff to an appraisal system and this forms part of the development plan. However, although there is a good range of opportunities for addressing the training needs of staff, the programme does not sufficiently reflect the special educational needs of pupils and no teachers are receiving training to address this weakness. The centre is reviewing its professional development policies and priorities and is working on 'Investors in People' programmes. Roles are clearly defined and understood. Job descriptions are in place. Staff are very aware of their mission and speak with one voice.
63. The centre provides good accommodation for the majority of its pupils. The provision of a gymnasium has made a positive improvement to the facilities now available. The learning environment is bright, clean and attractive in all areas, although the gymnasium is cold at times. Specialist areas for information technology and food technology are very good but limited space means that there are no dedicated rooms for the teaching of art, science and technology. The teaching area for younger pupils is cramped and could not support larger groups. Despite these shortcomings, the accommodation is a strength of the centre and pupils and staff feel valued because of this high quality. Décor and displays are very good.
64. The learning resources are accessible and good, overall. The recently acquired information technology resources are significant additions. Numeracy and literacy programmes have added excellent resources. Reading books are very good. The books are very well looked after and easily accessible. Resources are discussed at staff meetings and all staff are involved in their acquisition. The centre does not make sufficient use of resources in the community despite the close proximity of some very good facilities. Visits have, however, been made to enable climbing, canoeing and mountain biking to take place.

68. The efficiency of the unit

69. The headteacher and the management committee plan expenditure and manage the devolved budget very effectively. The centre accounts have been audited and there are no discrepancies. The cost per pupil in the centre cannot be assessed due to the constant turnover of pupils and the integral outreach and integration programmes. Spending is very carefully monitored by the local education authority and by the centre. The systems and checks in the centre are excellent and there are good breakdowns of spending, which are effectively used by the senior management team to monitor spending. The financial planning helps curriculum development in that it makes it easy to predict how much will be available to spend as well as to determine effectiveness of what has been spent. All systems are good: ordering, checking, auditing and evaluating. Difficulties of deploying teaching staff to a very broad range of roles are satisfactorily overcome with teachers being efficiently used in all departments. The accommodation is well used. It is attractive and bright and its efficient use adds to the learning experience. Resources are also efficiently used. The day-to-day management is first class and procedures are watertight.
65. Pupils are making good progress academically. Their behaviour and attitudes are good. Teaching is also good. The curriculum is developing well and programmes of work are in place. Staff numbers are high but this is often the case in such centres. Pupils begin at the centre with low attainment due to disturbed histories in schools. They have a background of disaffection and disruption. They make good progress in meeting their own targets. In the light of this evidence the centre provides good value for money.

70. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

70. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

66. The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors over a period of four days amounting to a total of sixteen and a half inspection days. One of the inspectors was a lay inspector. During the inspection all, or parts of, twenty five lessons were observed for a total of over nineteen hours. In addition to these lessons the manner in which pupils arrived and departed the centre was observed. Inspectors looked at the work of all pupils. Informal discussions were held with several pupils. Planned discussions were held with most staff, representatives of the LEA, the headteacher and members of the management group. Documentation provided by the centre, including policy statements, schemes of work, pupils' records and reports, the development plan, budget information and minutes of meetings, was analysed before and during the inspection. One parent attended a meeting prior to the inspection and two others spoke to inspectors during the inspection. The team considered the views of six parents who returned a questionnaire about the centre.

71.

71. DATA AND INDICATORS

72. Pupil data

Unit	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of part-time pupils with mainstream placements	Number of part-time pupils at the PRU only	Number of pupils directly supported by the PRU but not on the roll
	15	19	8	72

73. Teachers and classes

73. Qualified teachers (Y1 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	4
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73. Education support staff (Y1 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff:	2.5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	64
Average class size:	4

74. Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	275830
Total Expenditure	275830
Expenditure per pupil	*
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

* this figure is impossible to calculate on account of the part time nature of education, the variable length of stay and the apportioning of funds for the ongoing support of pupils in mainstream schools.

75. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 20
 Number of questionnaires returned: 6

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the unit encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the unit	50	50	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the unit with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	100	0	0	0	0
The unit handles complaints from parents well	33	34	33	0	0
The unit gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	50	50	0	0	0
The unit keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	67	33	0	0	0
The unit enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	67	33	0	0	0
The unit encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	80	20	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	50	33	17	0	0
The unit's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	83	1	0	0	0
The unit achieves high standards of good behaviour	33	67	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) unit	50	50	0	0	0

Not all parents replied to all sections of the questionnaire

76. Summary of responses

Parents are very supportive of the centre. Most have never had reason to make complaints or suggestions about the centre.