

INSPECTION REPORT

C.E.D.A.R.S.

PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Newcastle & Leek

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 131652

Headteacher: Mrs Jacquy Gabriel

Reporting inspector: Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 May 2000

Inspection number: 215469

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school: Pupil Referral Unit

School category: Pupil Referral Unit

Age range of pupils: 11-18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: Staffordshire Local Education Authority

Name of responsible officer Mrs Janine Murphy

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			Teaching and learning
Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Care for pupils
			Partnership with parents
Helen Maskew	Team inspector	Science	Curriculum
		Special educational needs	
Val du Plergny	Team inspector	English	Pupils' achievements

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The centres of education for adolescents requiring support (C.E.D.A.R.S.) reflects a commitment by education and health authorities in North Staffordshire to offer a continuum of support for adolescents with a wide range of difficulties, including acute and chronic mental health issues. The unit caters for up to 30 young people, mostly boys but with some girls, with attainment levels which range from special educational needs to A-level. There is one ethnic minority pupil. The base at Leek is an in-patient psychiatric unit for pupils aged 11-19 many of whom are there for short periods of time; the base at Newcastle is a local education authority community based unit for pupils aged 11-17. These pupils stay for longer periods and are re-integrated into colleges of further education. Most pupils currently in the unit are aged between 14-17 but there are a few younger pupils.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

The unit achieves high standards. Most pupils are keen to learn. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance is very good. Most teaching is of a very good quality which enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. There are very good arrangements to support all pupils and care for them and the unit has a strong partnership with parents and carers. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very strong. However the lack of a management committee denies the unit an opportunity to strengthen the overall quality of leadership and support. The unit provides good value for money although greater efficiency could be made by improved access to the non-delegated funding.

What the unit does well

- The very good quality of teaching and learning, especially in the use of assessment and information technology to support teaching.
- The levels of achievement reached by pupils and the good progress they make.
- The quality of leadership and management of the unit, especially in the use of professional development opportunities for teachers.
- The high quality pastoral care provided to pupils which leads to positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- The quality of personal development opportunities, including careers education, provided for pupils.
- The high quality of communication with parents.

What could be improved

- The quality of accommodation at the Wall Lane base.
- The provision for performing arts.
- Improving the targeting of non-delegated funds to meet the priorities of the development plan.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the local education authority.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the unit.

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
English	A	very good	A
mathematics	A	Good	B
science	A	Satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	Unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	Poor	E

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

Pupils' achievements are good in relation to their abilities and previous experience. Almost all pupils make very good progress in their lessons. They are becoming efficient learners. Standards of attainment

are above the national expectations in information technology. In all other subjects they are in line with or below the national expectations. Pupils make very good progress when teachers plan and lead lessons. Pupils' progress is good when pupils are supplied with work from their mainstream school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Pupils' attitudes to the unit are positive. Pupils work hard, show good concentration and persevere well to complete tasks they are set.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and in many lessons it is very good. They understand what is expected of them and try hard to comply.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the units are very good. Pupils relate well to one another and to staff. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities they are offered to take responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance rates are very good for a pupil referral unit. Some pupils achieve 100 per cent attendances which are significant achievements, as many pupils have a history of poor attendance in mainstream schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Very good
Lessons seen overall	30

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

The quality of teaching is very good. Nearly two-thirds of lessons were judged to be very good or excellent. In nine out of every ten lessons teaching was judged to be good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics, science and information technology is very good. Teaching is good in art, design and technology, geography and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects. The quality of learning is very good as a result of the very good teaching. The pace of learning is very good and pupils sustain their interest and concentration throughout most of their lessons. The skills of numeracy and literacy are effectively taught. The work is well-planned to match the specific needs and interest of pupils. Teachers' expectations are high and relationships are very good. They make excellent use of assessment to plan further work. Very good use is made of information technology to support learning in most subjects. Teachers are more effective when they teach and plan their own lessons than when they are teaching to work set by mainstream schools.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and well-planned across all subjects. There is a weakness in the provision for music. The length of lessons in the school is mostly appropriate to sustain pupils' interest. The personal, health and social education provision is very good. Careers and vocational education are strengths.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Individual education plans are well designed. Targets are set on the basis of very regular assessment of progress in both academic achievements and behaviour.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for pupils' moral development and very good opportunities for pupils' social development. Cultural development opportunities are good but there are few opportunities for spiritual development.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Very effective procedures are in place to ensure the care and protection of pupils. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are very good. The quality of day-to-day assessment is excellent. Parents and carers are very strongly supportive of the work at the Cedars and value its work highly.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The unit is well led and managed by the headteacher who provides clear and decisive leadership. She is well supported by her two deputy headteachers who effectively undertake day-to-day management of the respective sites.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	There is no management committee to support the work of the staff and this is a weakness. The quality of service provided by the named officer is very good and much valued by staff.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	There is effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the unit is well placed to implement performance management targets.
The strategic use of resources	The adequacy of staffing is good. Learning resources are satisfactory. Information technology resources are good. Accommodation at the Newcastle site is satisfactory but there are weaknesses on the Wall Lane site. Financial resources under the control of the unit are effectively targeted to planned priorities applying the principles of best value. There are inefficiencies in the targeting of non-delegated funds.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like attending the unit • The quality of teaching is good • They feel comfortable approaching the unit • The unit expects children to work hard • The unit works closely with parents • The unit is well led and managed • The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible 	

Over half the parents with pupils at the units completed the questionnaire and 14 parents attended the parents meeting with the Registered Inspector. It is evident from the parents' responses that they have a very high regard for the quality of education the units provide. They identified no weaknesses or areas of concern. The inspectors' judgements agree with those of the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and achievements

1. A wide range of attainment is represented by the pupils in the school. Examination results for those pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 at the Newcastle base in 1999 indicate successes in basic tests, set by an examination body, for geography, literacy, numeracy and science. All pupils in Key Stage 4 in 1999 achieved success in the Royal Society Arts computer literacy and information technology examinations (CLAIT) covering word-processing, desk-top publishing, database, graphs and spreadsheets. Standards overall, judged on lessons seen and in work completed, are below those accepted as the national average. However, the achievements of pupils, even of those who have only been in the units a very short time, are good in relation to their abilities and previous experience. Current pupils in Year 11 have already gained academic Achievement Tests for literacy and numeracy and in the CLAIT examinations and several pupils have gained success in initial text processing examinations. Most of these pupils are working towards taking GCSE examinations in science and mathematics. There is a similar pattern for pupils at the Wall Lane base with a strong emphasis on entering pupils for examinations in information technology along with working towards GCSE examinations and A-levels in courses started at their high schools. A small number of pupils in the unit at Key Stage 3 are working towards assessments in SATs. No physical education lessons took place during the period of the inspection. Although there was one pupil taking A-levels at the Wall Lane base, he was not in the unit at the time of the inspection.
2. Almost all pupils in the units make very good progress in their lessons, and in the way they conduct themselves during their working times. They become better able to learn, as they are enabled to build on their own successes. They use the knowledge and skills they acquire to develop further, and they take some responsibility for their learning when they set their own targets at the end of each lesson. They do this on the basis of their evaluation of what they have learned in that session. They are becoming efficient learners.
3. Attainment in English is below average, but pupils make very good progress. The difference in achievement by those pupils who have been in the school for some time is really quite startling, particularly in reading and spelling. Pupils who had little idea of more than the first letter of a word can now spell accurately relatively complicated words such as 'surrounded' and 'characteristics'. One pupil is triumphant because he now knows, for certain, the difference between 'there', 'their' and 'they're'. The pupils are sensitively yet powerfully encouraged to read, and it is their positive response to this stimulus which enables spelling, handwriting and clarity of thought to blossom. Almost all pupils use the school's word-processing and desk-top publishing computer programs, and these enable them to look at their work very critically, when it is in 'published' form. The use of these programs is a big inducement to take care over spelling, punctuation, and the style in which their sentences are constructed.
4. Pupils sometimes bring work, based on the GCSE in English literature, from their mainstream schools, or it is sent in for them. All the pupils study books and plays, and are often surprised at their own achievements. One pupil has been studying the play 'Educating Rita' by Willy Russell, and moves from an analysis of the similarities and differences between Rita and Frank to a careful consideration of how the relationship between these characters changes through the play. She is pleased with her work, and delighted to do it. One group of pupils has been reading the novel 'Crash in the Jungle' by Jim Alderson, which they have all enjoyed. As a response to this, they write their own stories about their survival in a hostile environment, with a very good sense of 'writing for the reader'. The stories are exciting, and made more so by the good use of vocabulary. They use a thesaurus with confidence, and are pleased to be able to substitute 'scorching' for 'very hot', which adds depth to their writing.
5. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is below the national average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. Many pupils when they enter the unit have low levels of confidence in tackling mathematics. However as a result of some very good teaching the levels of achievement are good. All pupils are assessed on entry in order to determine the appropriate level of work they are capable of. With good encouragement from teachers all pupils are making very good progress. For example, in the

basic skills of either addition, subtraction, multiplication and division pupils' weekly test scores show consistent improvement on previous results. For those pupils whose work has been set by the mainstream school teachers skilfully teach the appropriate concepts which promotes good progress.

6. At the Newcastle base provision for pupils across both key stages enables them to make very good progress in science. Whilst most pupils' knowledge and understanding of science is satisfactory when they enter the unit, as a result of very good teaching and a carefully planned and applied curriculum pupils make very good progress in understanding some difficult scientific concepts. They can remember and explain how a complex food chain works. They have good understanding of a range of scientific vocabulary. They can use a variety of scientific equipment, including microscopes and different types of measuring tools, to support their work. Pupils are able to set up and monitor small water-based eco-systems and identify micro-organisms within them. Progress in science at the Wall Lane base is restricted by the lack of science facilities on the site. These pupils make satisfactory progress in the work set by the mainstream schools.
7. In art, attainment was below average, though achievement was good. It is quite clear from the carefully maintained records that many pupils have not had much success in the subject in the past. The line drawings of shoes, using a soft leaded pencil for tone and depth, are accurate, and done with painstaking care. The pupils who are working on colour gradation understand how to move from blue to purple, from yellow to green, and do so using oil pastels, cartridge paper and fingertips. They have already done this using a computer program, and are pleased with their results when they try it for themselves, by hand.
8. In design and technology pupils demonstrate good levels of practical skills particularly when constructing in wood. Design skills are satisfactory but there is a reluctance to modify design briefs in the light of the practical problems they encounter when making their products. Pupils evaluate their work at the end of a project. They show more enthusiasm for making and designing than they do in evaluating their work but their evaluation skills are satisfactory.
9. There is a difference in the progress made in geography between the two sites. Where the teacher is interactive and leading the lesson on an individual topic, as is seen at the Newcastle base, pupils make very good progress in their learning. At the Wall Lane base pupils are supplied with work from their mainstream schools, their progress is good because the teacher enhances the material to make it more interesting. One pupil is entered for GCSE and sat the exam during the inspection. Some pupils come into the centre with a good understanding of co-ordinates and other aspects of map work. By the end of one lesson they successfully identify a map of the Isle of Man they have plotted to the real thing in a road atlas. One pupil can identify and name various types of rocks. Another remembers how waterfalls are formed and can describe the erosion process. Some pupils' knowledge and understanding are impeded by disjointed school attendance, mostly for medical reasons.
10. In history progress and learning are satisfactory. Pupils study individual topics set by their mainstream schools. These vary in quality and the resources are often unstimulating. The work is sometimes not matched to the abilities of the pupils concerned. For example, when a pupil is questioned on work sent to him on riots and rebellion in the 18th century, he has no background knowledge from which he can proceed. However, one pupil is able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources in a topic on the slave trade
11. Attainment in information technology is in line with national averages. They achieve satisfactory results in national tests for word-processing, desk-top publishing, databases, spreadsheets and graphics. Pupils make good progress in information technology and they are confident when using computers and are willing to try new techniques in order to develop their skills. There is a good use of information technology to support learning in all subjects across the curriculum.
12. Attainment in French is in line with national averages. Pupils make satisfactory progress. They can translate a simple paragraph describing a student and the sport which he enjoys, and successfully guess the meanings of words such as 'jouer' by using clues in the text.

13. Pupils work individually on religious education topics set by their mainstream schools. These include Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Classics. Progress is satisfactory in this disparate group. One pupil can understand and explain the analogy within the parable of the sowing of the seeds from St. Mark's gospel. Another pupil spends time copying a map of the spread of Buddhism. He is able to work independently on what is a new topic for him.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to the unit are positive. Although many pupils have a history of inappropriate attitudes or behaviour in their previous schools, pupils are keen to attend. Attitudes in lessons are good and often very good. Pupils work hard, show good concentration and persevere well to complete the tasks they are set. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations staff have of standards of work and behaviour. Often they enjoy their work and take pride in it as, for example, in an English lesson where they were using the computer to design a book cover.
15. During this and other lessons, pupils showed a high level of self-motivation. The evaluation sheets used in English lessons enable pupils to see what they have achieved and this successfully improves their motivation and confidence. However, in some lessons at the Wall Lane base the work supplied by the mainstream school failed to hold the pupils' interest.
16. Behaviour is good; in many lessons it is very good and occasionally exemplary. Pupils work well in pairs when offered the opportunity to do so. They are confident to ask for help when they need to and treat books and equipment well. Pupils move around the unit in an orderly way. They understand what is expected of them and try hard to comply. Pupils and their parents and carers are well informed about the expectations of behaviour before admission, and are asked to sign a contract agreeing to abide by them. There have been no exclusions in the last school year but two pupils were transferred out of the unit for behaviour related reasons.
17. Relationships in the units are very good. Pupils relate well to one another and to staff. They respond positively to the respect with which staff treat them. Visitors are treated politely. At the Newcastle base, the start of day session and the activity sessions allow pupils to develop their capacity to develop good relationships in a relaxed but structured setting. At the Wall Lane base, staff from the unit are involved in the community meetings held on the ward, which provide a forum for pupils to address social issues. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities that they are offered to take responsibility. For example, they run the daily tuck shop at the Newcastle base very well, including managing the money. The courtyard project actively involved all staff and pupils in debating, decision making, work and evaluation of the resulting improvement to the facilities.
18. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social skills. The many structured opportunities provided at the Newcastle base for organised, supervised activities, including football, chess and backgammon, make a strong contribution to this. The unit provides a good programme of personal, health and social education, taught in one lesson a week, but in addition a strong emphasis on personal and social skills successfully pervades its work.
19. Attendance rates are very good for a pupil referral unit at around 94 per cent for the first two terms of this year. A few pupils achieve 100 per cent attendance but most achieve attendance of 90 per cent and above. These are significant achievements, as many pupils have a history of poor attendance in mainstream school. Levels of unauthorised absence are extremely low.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching across both the Newcastle base and the Wall Lane base is very good. Nearly two-thirds of the lessons were judged to be very good or excellent. In nine out of every ten lessons teaching was judged to be good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. As a result of the very good teaching the quality of learning is very good. In all subjects pupils acquire skills and knowledge and their understanding is well-tested before moving on to the next task. The pace of learning in lessons is very high and pupils sustain their interest and concentration throughout most of their lessons. Teachers are more effective when they plan and teach their own lessons than when they are teaching work set by mainstream schools.

21. The quality of teaching in English is very good overall, and never less than good. Both teachers have very good command of the subject, and know and care for their pupils very well. The work is planned to match the specific needs and interests of each pupil. Very careful records are kept, and regular assessments are made, so that teachers know precisely, at any time, what their pupils can do, and what they need to do next. Sometimes they use these records as a tool for encouragement, as they can point out to a pupil, with absolute accuracy, just how much has been learned in a lesson, a week, a month. Lessons are presented in a very positive climate, with very good attention given to social and moral development. Pupils are enabled to listen to each other, to respect the work of others, and to feel safe enough to make a mistake, as they know they will be helped when they need to be, and not ridiculed by their friends and classmates. Teachers use the resources well, and they enable the pupils to make particularly good use of computer programs.
22. The quality of teaching in mathematics is usually very good and never less than good. Teachers have high expectations of both pupils' achievement and behaviour. They are very supportive towards pupils and provide encouragement especially to those pupils who have had experienced difficulties in learning mathematics at their previous schools. Lessons are well-planned and based on the individual needs of the pupils within the teaching groups. There is a good range of appropriate resources to support learning. Assessment of pupils' work is a strength in the teaching of mathematics. Accurate assessment information is used carefully to plan future lessons.
23. At the Newcastle Base the teaching of science is very good across both key stages. The teacher has high expectation of both pupils' achievement and behaviour. Lessons are well planned and the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject is very good. There is a designated classroom for science and the range of resources and equipment, although limited by space, is well selected and organised. Relationships with pupils are very good. The teacher is able to draw out their knowledge very effectively by good use of open questions. Pupils are encouraged to think and work things out for themselves. One pupil can describe the effects of the use of pesticides on the wider environment.
24. The quality of teaching in art is good. There is good subject knowledge, and high expectations, with good technical support for the pupils. Teachers make and maintain a constructive working climate, and ensure that all pupils are safe enough to experiment, without incurring ridicule or comment. Skills are built gradually, step by step, and great attention is given to the detail of each pupils' previous experience, and which skills they need to learn next.
25. The quality of teaching in design and technology is good. There is a good connection between the design and making processes. Health and safety issues are stressed and pupils wear safety glasses at appropriate times. There are good opportunities for pupils to work with a wide range of materials and resources. Pupils work independently and sustain their interest throughout the lessons.
26. The teaching of geography is good and often very good. Where it is taught as a single topic the lesson is well planned and time and resources used effectively. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are assessed at the end of the lesson and they can ascertain how much progress they have made. The small size of the group means that they have individual ordinance survey maps with which to work. There are good opportunities for the teacher to draw out their knowledge and help them apply it to the task set. Where pupils bring in their own work the teacher works with pupils on a variety of individual topics. Good use is made of practical specimens for geology, video material and information technology.
27. The teaching of history at the Wall Lane base is satisfactory at both key stages. Individual setting of topics means that there is no whole class teaching of a single theme. The teacher does provide additional material and support to endeavour to make the lesson more interesting and pupils are able to access information through CD-ROM. However, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and photocopied text.
28. The quality of teaching in information technology is very good. The teachers' enthusiasm allied to the very detailed and well-planned schemes of work enable pupils to work independently during lessons. Expectations are high and all pupils are entered when ready for external examinations in

information technology. Relationships are excellent and pupils' confidence in using information technology equipment is very good.

29. The quality of teaching in French is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to use the French that they know, and to guess at what they do not. There is little use of audio or visual material. Record-keeping is satisfactory.
30. In religious education the teacher provides good individual support for all pupils. She shares her time with them fairly. They are encouraged to think for themselves and the teacher draws out some difficult concepts by good use of questioning techniques. Good relationships exist between the teacher and the pupils.

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

31. The academic curriculum is good overall. It includes English, maths, science, information technology, art, design and technology, geography, history, French, personal, health and social education, physical education and religious education. Information technology is very well used across the whole curriculum. There is no music timetabled because the unit lacks a specialist teacher. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with the exception of performing arts, and well-planned across all subjects. At present the time available to cover the entire curriculum to a suitable depth is satisfactory. The time for teaching varies between the units (22 hours at Wall Lane and nearly 19 hours at the Newcastle base) and is below the recommendations for pupils of this age. While the medical needs of some pupils overrides their curriculum needs, all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. On the Wall Lane site the nature of pupils' medical conditions restrict opportunities to take part in physical education activities. The length of lessons is mostly appropriate to sustain pupils' interest. Progress in French is restricted by the infrequency of lessons. The length of the single lesson being too long for pupils to maintain and sustain concentration.
32. Provision for pupils with statements of special need is good. There are effective links with a variety of agencies. Pupils also make good contributions to both annual reviews of statements and individual education plans. Pupils with weaknesses in basic skills are well supported by the strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Individual education plans are well thought through. Targets are set on the basis of very regular assessment of progress in both academic achievements and behaviour.
33. The curriculum in English is broadly based, and closely follows the National Curriculum. Careful attention is given to each of the attainment targets - speaking and listening, reading and writing, and each lesson represents a good mixture of work in language and in literature. The planning is very good. Most of the work is focused on the recently written unit award scheme, which means that pupils work in modules - for example, on styles of journalism, or on letter-writing. A wide range, of novels, poetry, and plays, is studied, and the school has a small but very good range of fiction and non-fiction books which pupils read for interest and pleasure. There are several pupils in the Newcastle base who would doubtless enjoy studying for their GCSE in English literature, and who are capable of this work. Currently pupils at the Newcastle base are not entered for GCSE English literature. Pupils at the Wall Lane base follow the subjects that they are studying in their mainstream schools.
34. The National Literacy Strategy used by the school means that there are very good examples of cross-curricular attention to English. For instance, a pupil proudly showed his work experience file, in which he had kept a running diary of his time spent as a trainee stone surgeon. The writing was clear, to the point, well spelled, and appropriate for that particular purpose. When pupils work on word-processing programs on the computer, they use the spell-checker, but only after they have tried their best with their own spelling.
35. Strategies for teaching numeracy are good. Pupils are tested on entry and the results are used to determine the levels at which they enter the English and mathematics curriculum. Pupils are tested and assessed regularly and very clear records are kept of their attainment and progress. Pupils at the Wall Lane base follow work set by their mainstream schools. There is effective use

of appropriate resources, including the use of a commercial scheme to support this learning. At the Newcastle base pupils follow a well structured course in mathematics. Pupils are taught in groups according to ability and there is an appropriate concentration on basic numeracy skills and in particular on the four rules of number.

36. The curriculum in art pays good attention to both attainment targets of the National Curriculum, and as a result pupils who have been in the school some time have good grasp of both their own growing skill, and of the work of other artists and craftspeople. A good portrait in the style of Van Gogh is a focal point in the art room in the Wall Lane Base. Many topics are linked with design and technology. The line and tone drawing of a shoe will lead to the construction of one, and the work done on colour gradation will lead to the printing of T-shirts next half-term. This is exciting, and gives the pupils a sense of purpose in their work.
37. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A variety of activities in and around the Newcastle base is made available to pupils. They visit the local theatre and places of historical and environmental interest. These include canals, the boat museum and a whole day visit to the village of Eyam. All pupils are taken on an informative visit to their own public libraries. Visits have been made to the fire station as part of a science project. Opportunities for sporting activities are also good. Besides recreational sports at break time, pupils visit the local sports centre for badminton and Keele University for rock climbing and squash. They also have the opportunity to taken part in canoeing.
38. The community is also used effectively to increase extra-curricular activity. Football and basketball matches are arranged between local organisations, including a neighbouring roofing company. A project to improve a section of the unit's garden was sponsored by the manager of the local garden centre who was generous in donating plants. The Newcastle base is part of the Neighbourhood Watch and liaises with local residents and the police.
39. The personal, health and social education provision is very good. Careers and vocational education is a strength of the unit. Work experience is well-tailored to meet the individual needs of each pupil. During their placement there is a very good mechanism for them to keep a diary of their progress. This includes contributions from parents. College links are very good. Pupils have the opportunity to try a variety of vocational courses including horticulture, leisure, retail and construction. This experience increases their confidence and, as a consequence, the majority of Year 11 pupils anticipate attending college when they leave. Two boys run the unit's tuck shop as a small business venture. This helps to increase their understanding of aspects of retail management. Drugs, sex and health education are taught in accordance with the local authority guidelines.
40. The unit's relationship with its partner institutions is also very good. Regular contact with the local mainstream schools ensures that both staff and pupils are not isolated from their professional colleagues and peer groups. A member of staff from a neighbouring school has visited the Newcastle base to coach basketball. The unit is also used as a moderating base for some external examinations.
41. The units provide few opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. Although the atmosphere in the units are purposeful, but calm, there is no time available for spiritual issues to be followed up and discussed more fully, either in groups or for individuals, apart from in English lessons.
42. There is very good provision for pupils' moral development. Teachers take many opportunities to reinforce appropriate moral values. In a science lesson pupils are reminded that even the smallest of micro-organisms need respect in their handling. In religious education one girl explains very clearly the meaning of the parable of the sowing of the seeds from St Mark's gospel. In team meeting staff encourage pupils to take pride in their positive actions towards each other. Pupils show courtesy and respect for both staff and each other in the classroom and when socialising. The tuck shop and café provide good opportunities for learning appropriate interaction with customers!
43. The Newcastle base provides very good opportunities for pupils' social development. The civilised atmosphere enables pupils to relax with each other. At break time they take part in backgammon and chess, read magazines and play a variety of sports in the yard outside. Opportunities to

socialise beyond the unit have been opened up through electronic mail. Pupils now communicate with each other out of school hours. The opportunities for pupils' social development at the Wall Lane base are provided by the residential ward staff and not by the teaching staff.

44. Cultural development is good. A range of multi-cultural topics is available in history, including the study of black and native peoples of America. Pupils study a variety of faiths in religious education. The unit houses a good selection of multi-cultural books. Wall displays for art include examples of different periods and styles. The 'Seven Ages of Man' from Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' is used cleverly in a topic on life skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Very effective procedures are in place to ensure the care and protection of pupils. Good attention is paid to health and safety, first aid and the well-being of pupils. Arrangements for child protection are very clear and are known to all staff. Regular fire drills are held and on admission all pupils are made aware of fire procedures.
46. The importance of regular attendance is effectively promoted with pupils and their parents. Attendance is very closely monitored and all unreported absence is followed up rigorously, which keeps the level of unauthorised absence very low. Most parents routinely inform the unit of the reason for any absence. The register is properly kept and individual attendance figures are regularly monitored. This ensures that the good levels of attendance achieved are maintained.
47. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are very good. The unit ensures that all parents and pupils are made very clearly aware of the expectations for behaviour prior to admission. Staff have high expectations of the standard of pupils' behaviour and almost all pupils respond very positively. Staff form constructive relationships with pupils based on mutual respect. All pupils have an individual behaviour plan. Pupils know their behaviour targets and are able to discuss their progress towards them with their tutor. The procedures for eliminating bullying are extremely effective. Staff work very hard and with success to ensure that pupils develop an awareness of the feelings of others. Great attention is paid to the development of social skills and this includes treating others with respect. Any incidents of bullying behaviour that do occur are dealt with firmly and promptly in such a way that the perpetrator is made fully aware of the impact of his or her actions.
48. The unit receives variable amounts of information about pupils' prior attainment when they arrive. Baseline assessment is carried out in English, information technology and mathematics for all pupils, using a range of appropriate tests. All pupils have individual education plans and know their targets. In English, lesson objectives are set and shared with pupils in each lesson and, at the end of the session, pupils evaluate their progress towards them. The quality of day-to-day assessment is outstandingly good and is a significant strength of the unit. Self-assessment is used very effectively to build self-esteem and self-confidence. At the Newcastle base lessons are individually planned on the basis of each pupil's progress and needs but at the Wall Lane base staff are largely dependent on the work sent by the pupils' school. This is not consistently well targeted to the needs of the individual. All pupils receive high levels of individual attention, ensuring that they understand how they have improved and what they need to do in order to improve further. This ensures that all pupils achieve well.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents and carers are very strongly supportive of the work of the unit and value its work highly. Without exception they believe that their child is making good progress in the unit due to good teaching. All those who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting felt that their child was becoming more mature and responsible. The good attention paid to developing social skills was very effective. In some cases, behaviour was vastly improved. All stated that they were kept well informed about the unit and its work, that they would feel comfortable about approaching staff with any concerns and that the unit worked closely with them.
50. All parents have an opportunity to tour the unit before their child is admitted and each base produces a very clear and informative brochure for parents, giving details of arrangements,

expectations and copies of the contracts. At the Newcastle base, the home liaison tutor maintains very regular contact with parents by telephone or letter, while at the Wall Lane base the deputy head attends the weekly parents' support group held in Wall Lane House. Parents are kept well informed about their child's achievements, both academic and personal. An open day is held at the Newcastle base to give parents and carers an opportunity to see the unit and the work their child is doing. Attendance at the open day, and at the leavers evening, is 100 per cent.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

51. The units are very well-led and managed by the headteacher. She provides very clear and decisive leadership and has a clear vision of how to raise standards. She is well-supported by her two deputy headteachers who effectively undertake day-to-day management on the respective sites.
52. The aims of the unit are to provide pupils with a quality of education appropriate to their needs in a safe, positive, supportive and meaningful learning environment. These aims are very clearly reflected in the work at both bases.
53. The development plan provides a clear strategy for identifying improvements needed to raise standards. There are clear and measurable targets set within a three year programme.
54. The multi-disciplinary and cross-service approach is an important feature of the way it functions. However, this is not reflected in the management by the local education authority of the work of the unit. The current arrangements within the local education authority's policy to support pupils educated in pupil referral units and otherwise than at school allows for a named officer to provide a half day support visit per term. The quality of service provided by the named officer is very good and much valued by the staff at the unit. However the policy states that the named officer has responsibility for admissions, transfer, personnel, annual reviews, assessment procedures, day-to-day management and organisation issues and parent issues. This clearly is unsatisfactory as it impinges on some of the responsibilities of the headteacher to manage and lead the unit. Better support for the headteacher and the staff of the unit would be provided from the establishment of a management committee which could include the local education authority's named officers, representatives of the health and social services, parents and teachers. Such a committee could help shape the direction of the unit and support the headteacher by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit in line with the role that governing bodies provide for mainstream schools.
55. The headteacher and senior management team effectively monitor and evaluate the teaching on the two sites. Individual teachers have clear performance management targets which are closely linked to professional development needs. One of the strengths of the unit is the commitment and dedication of the staff employed to provide a high quality of education.
56. Educational priorities are not supported effectively through the school's current financial planning. The unit does not receive a fully delegated budget. The income managed by the unit is effectively targeted to meet the needs and priorities identified within the development plan. Specific grants are very well used. The specific grant for professional development is effectively targeted and the local education authority provides a wide range of courses and support which is appropriate for the needs of the staff at the unit. However, the ability to target the non-delegated budget to meet the unit's planned priorities is currently inefficient. Considerable time and efforts are expended by unit staff in dealing with issues of access and virement from one financial area to another. Consideration should be given to ensure that time of unit staff is not wasted on unnecessary bureaucratic procedures.
57. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the current curriculum is good. However there is limited provision for drama and music. There is an effective strategy to deploy expertise across both sites when practical. In most subject areas the teaching is provided by the subject co-ordinators. Learning resources are adequate. They are good for information technology.
58. Accommodation for the Newcastle site is good and efficiently used. There are some weaknesses in the accommodation provided at the Wall Lane base. There is no designated science room. The number of teaching spaces is adequate but some of the teaching rooms are very small for the number of pupils in lessons. Conditions in some lessons are cramped and restrict the rate of

pupils' progress.

59. In all other respects the unit meets the requirements of the local education authority's policy to support pupils educated in pupil referral units.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards even higher, the headteacher and local education authority should:

Work with the health authority to improve the quality of accommodation at the Wall Lane site to:

- Improve the facilities for the teaching of science;
- Increase the size of some teaching spaces in order that pupils' progress is not restricted by cramped conditions.
(Paragraphs: 6, 58)

Improving the curriculum provisions in the performing arts

(Paragraph: 31)

Improving the targeting of non-delegated funds to meet the priorities of the development plan by:

- Ensuring that the resources available are accessible and targeted to meet the needs identified in the unit's development plan;
- Allowing the headteacher specific responsibilities to accessibility of and the virement of funds.
(Paragraph: 56)

In addition the headteacher and local education authority may wish to include the following less important issues for consideration within the action plan:

Establish a management committee to reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of the work of the unit (paragraph 54);

The use of work set by mainstream schools (paragraph 10,15,20, 41);

Frequency of French lessons (paragraph 31); provision for spiritual development (paragraph 41);

GCSE English literature (paragraph 33);

The time for teaching at the units (paragraph 31).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	57	30	10	0	0	0

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

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	30

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
Unit data	5.3

Unauthorised absence	%
Unit data	0.34

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for last whole term before the inspection

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	29
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.69

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	19.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	319970
Total expenditure	324260
Expenditure per pupil	10665
Balance brought forward from previous year	6376
Balance carried forward to next year	2086

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	30
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	35	0	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	29	0	0	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	35	0	0	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	38	0	0	38
The teaching is good.	71	29	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	88	0	0	0	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	94	6	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	12	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	94	0	0	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	88	12	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	18	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	47	0	0	12