

INSPECTION REPORT

THE GUILDFORD CENTRE

Guildford

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 124923

Headteacher: Pippa Morris

Reporting inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild
15918

Dates of inspection: 9 – 11 October 2001

Inspection number: 219116

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Range of needs supported:	Excluded, sick, awaiting placement
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer	Pauline Bye
Date of previous inspection:	November 1999

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			Art and design	
9075	Juliet Baxter	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the unit care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the unit work in partnership with parents?</p>
18242	John Godwood	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Design & technology	
			Information and communication technology	
23886	Declan McCarthy	Team inspector	Science	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The Guildford Centre serves the needs of pupils who have been excluded from mainstream or special schools, who are sick or who are awaiting placement in other educational establishments. It is situated in the centre of Guildford. There are currently 25 pupils on roll, although the unit more typically has up to 40 pupils at any given time. Pupils are aged from 11 to 16, and there are significantly more boys (19) than girls (6). Six pupils attend the unit full time and 19 attend part time. Seven pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools and a small number are supported through outreach work in local schools. All pupils are of white heritage and none speak English as an additional language. All are at Stages 3 to 5 of the Code of Practice for special educational needs for their emotional and behavioural difficulties and six have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is a significant reduction on the number at the last inspection. Pupils' attainment on entry ranges from well below average to being in line with expectations, but many pupils enter the unit with very poor literacy and numeracy skills. The unit has started to provide full-time provision for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and is working towards the introduction of full-time provision for all ages by 2002-2003. There has been an increase in the number of pupils being referred in Years 7 to 9, and the unit has more pupils who are attending for short-term respite than at the last inspection. These pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools or reintegrating into college.

As a result of extensive internal building work and redecoration over the summer, the unit had been back in operation in its usual building for only a week prior to the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

The Guildford Centre is an effective pupil referral unit. Pupils achieve well academically and make very good progress in their personal development. Teaching is good and the unit is very well led. It provides good value for money.

What the unit does well

- Pupils achieve well and examination results in Years 10 and 11 are particularly good when pupils' prior attainment is taken into account.
- The unit provides a broad range of learning experiences and pupils have very good opportunities to gain accredited qualifications.
- Teaching is good overall and it is consistently very good in science.
- The head of centre and the local education authority provide very good leadership, and there is a strong emphasis within the unit on developing and further improving the quality of education.
- Very good attention to pupils' social development and to raising their self-esteem enables them to grow significantly in confidence.
- The unit has very good systems for ensuring that pupils are well cared for and appropriately supported.

What could be improved

- Although some assessment practices are very effective, pupils' individual difficulties in literacy and numeracy are not diagnosed precisely enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning could be improved by using the characteristics of the best teaching to inform practice throughout the unit.

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

HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The unit has made very good improvement since it was previously inspected in November 1999. The local education authority has worked closely and constructively with the head of centre. A rigorous collaborative approach has given rise to substantial improvements in the way the unit is led and managed. An effective three-year development plan is in place, the roles of the head of centre and of the area co-ordinator¹ are clear and the management committee now fulfils its role effectively. Improved monitoring arrangements have significantly improved the quality of teaching. Baseline assessment is more thorough than at the last inspection, staff have had training in writing individual education plans and assessment information is used more effectively in planning lessons; the unit acknowledges the need to further refine its system for diagnosing individual needs. Teachers have been trained in the National Literacy Strategy and are to receive further training; provision for literacy is now satisfactory. Reintegration rates have improved and the local education authority has established a very effective system for placing pupils in mainstream schools. Staff have received training in managing challenging behaviour and teachers generally manage behaviour well. Thorough procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are now in place. The unit's latest examination results clearly reflect the positive changes over the last two years.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
English	C	A	
mathematics	B	B	
science	A	A	
personal, social and health education	B	B	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	

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

The unit's examination results in 2001 showed improvement on previous years, with a 100 per cent pass rate in all subjects at GCSE. Of the pupils who took GCSE examinations, six achieved five or more A* to G grades, one achieved eight A* to C grades and another achieved seven. The remainder were successful in gaining at least one A* to G grade. Two pupils in Year 10 gained between three and five passes each at grades C to D. A number of Year 11 pupils were successful in the Certificate of Achievement in English and mathematics.

Pupils achieve well in their time at the unit and progress was good in the majority of lessons seen. Progress is good in mathematics; it is at least satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 in English and very good in Years 10 and 11. From lessons observed and work seen, pupils of all ages make very good progress in science as a result of high quality teaching. Progress is satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) and it is good in the

¹ The area co-ordinator of the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service oversees the work of the unit.

remaining subjects. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in some lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Pupils' attitudes are good. They arrive with negative attitudes to learning but, after a short time, begin to work harder and engage more fully in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of most pupils in Years 10 and 11 has improved immensely and is very good. The behaviour of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory; younger pupils are at times unco-operative and reluctant to work.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make very good progress in their personal development and relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good.
Attendance	The attendance rate remains unsatisfactory.

A small number of persistent non-attenders means that the unit's overall attendance rate is unsatisfactory, although the attendance of most pupils shows a marked improvement on their previous attendance record in mainstream schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good. It is at least satisfactory in English in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. It is good in mathematics and consistently very good in science. Teaching is generally good in personal, social and health education, but it ranges from very good to just satisfactory. All teachers plan their lessons well and share objectives with pupils. Where teaching is at its best, teachers make skilled use of questioning to make pupils think. They have high expectations and introduce exciting resources and varied activities that capture pupils' interest. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning is good and lessons are well structured but pupils are not motivated by the way the material is presented to them, and occasionally work could be more closely matched to pupils' prior learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory, and the unit caters relatively well for the different needs of its pupils. It enables high attaining pupils to achieve well.

Learning is good in most lessons. Some pupils apply themselves well and try hard. They become interested and involved with their work. A minority of pupils, most often in Years 7 to 9 and in Year 10, are disaffected and not easily motivated.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The unit provides a very good range of learning opportunities. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 already attend full time and those in Years 10 and 11 have very good opportunities to gain accredited qualifications.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but pupils' learning needs in literacy and numeracy are not diagnosed precisely enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good and staff do much to increase pupils' confidence. The promotion of social development is very good. Provision for moral development is good, and that for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	The unit provides a high level of care for its pupils. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are very good.

Staff build close relationships with parents and keep them well informed about their children's progress. They are always welcome at the unit and appropriately involved in decisions.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head of centre provides very good leadership and clear educational direction. She is well supported by key stage co-ordinators, and others with management responsibilities fulfil their roles effectively.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	The management committee provides effective support to the unit. The local education authority has involved them appropriately in developments since the last inspection.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	The unit has established effective procedures for evaluating its performance and carefully analyses a great deal of data to identify possible areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	The unit uses its resources efficiently to support the curriculum and to enable pupils to achieve well.

The unit is well resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. It applies the principles of best value effectively.

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 enjoy attending the unit.• They believe that teaching is good and that their children are making good progress.• They believe the unit is well led.• The staff are approachable, and they feel well informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minority of parents consider that behaviour is not good.• Some parents feel their children should be given more homework.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views. Behaviour is generally good and no incidents of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection, although some pupils – more often in Years 7 to 9 – are disaffected. Homework is set regularly and makes a satisfactory contribution to the progress that pupils make. Higher attaining pupils spend a good deal of time on their homework as they prepare for GCSE. At times, homework tasks could be more challenging, and pupils say they sometimes complete their homework in a relatively short time.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and pupils' achievements

1. Many pupils enter the unit with below average prior attainment and limited skills in literacy and numeracy so that, although they make good progress in Years 7 to 9, their overall attainment remains below that expected for their age by the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well and some make very good progress as they work towards accredited qualifications. By the end of Year 11, the attainment of higher attaining pupils is in line with national expectations despite the previous gaps in their education. Boys and girls achieve equally well and there is no difference in their attainment. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in some lessons.
2. The unit's examination results in 2001 showed improvement on previous years, with a 100 per cent pass rate in all subjects at GCSE. Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in the number of GCSEs pupils achieve and in the grades they are awarded. Of the pupils who took GCSE examinations, six achieved five or more A* to G grades, one achieved eight A* to C grades and another achieved seven. The remainder were successful in gaining at least one A* to G grade. Two pupils in Year 10 gained between three and five passes each at grades C to D. A number of Year 11 pupils were successful in the Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics and science. These results are impressive, since some pupils were entered for GCSE and achieved grades in the A* to C range after only a few months of preparation.
3. The unit has greater success in examinations than is typically the case in pupil referral units and in 2001 it exceeded the targets set by the local education authority in the number of GCSE passes pupils achieved at A* to C and A* to G. Its success in examinations is largely due to effective teaching but also to the careful analysis of results. The results of National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. Necessary adjustments are then made to the grouping of pupils and to teaching in an attempt to ensure that any weaknesses are remedied in the future.
4. Parents who expressed an opinion about their children's progress are pleased with the standards being achieved. They say their children are making better progress at the unit than they did in mainstream school and appreciate the way this experience is opening up a future for their children. Pupils themselves believe that they are making good progress and feel positive about the number of subjects they are able to take at GCSE.

English

5. Many pupils enter the unit with significant gaps in their knowledge of English, poor literacy skills and little confidence in their ability in the subject. During their time at the unit, pupils generally achieve well. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In Years 10 and 11, many make very good progress as they work towards accredited qualifications.

6. By the end of Year 9, lower attaining pupils write in short sentences that end in a full stop, but they do not always use a capital letter to begin a new sentence or for a name. Spelling is sometimes inaccurate but it is usually phonetically plausible. Handwriting is usually joined but it slopes in various directions and letters are not always correctly formed. Their written answers to questions about literary texts show a satisfactory knowledge of the plot and they are able to sequence material from the story in the correct order. They are able to write character studies but they do not seek evidence in the text or use quotations. Higher attaining pupils show a good knowledge of the text: for example, they are able to complete cloze procedure² exercises on *Twelfth Night*, and can compare two characters from the play. They are generally secure in their use of simple punctuation, but their work still includes some spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Pupils listen well and they read aloud quite fluently, picking out some phrases from the text that achieve a particular effect. They are able to express their thoughts and feelings in brief sentences using a limited range of vocabulary.
7. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils write in an engaging way, making use of a variety of grammatical structures. Their autobiographical writing is very sensitive, vividly expressing motives and feelings in a way that is highly reflective. Very good use is made of a number of different literary techniques by, for instance, including diary entries and poetry within extended personal accounts. They respond personally to what they read and show good understanding of layers of meaning within a text, for example, when exploring the many different influences on Macbeth. They are able to make inferences and predictions about character. They write convincingly about the literary and historical context of a set text, supporting their argument with well-chosen quotations. Their analysis of others' writing looks at how language is used to convey emotion and meaning, and considers the use of linguistic devices to very good effect. They make apt comparisons between different pieces of writing, which show a subtle understanding of form and content.
8. Lower attaining pupils still have some difficulties with literacy in Years 10 and 11. They use capital letters inappropriately at times in the middle of sentences and are not secure in their use of basic punctuation. Handwriting is usually joined, but some pupils form their letters in an irregular manner. Spelling errors persist, although this does not prevent pupils from expressing themselves, and written accounts are structured effectively with a beginning, middle and end. They show awareness of the main features of a plot and have an emerging understanding of how a writer seeks to control the emotions of the reader. They make some direct reference to the text; for example, a pupil chose from *Dulce et Decorum Est* the words, 'he plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning' as a forceful image of war. In preparation for the Certificate of Achievement and for GCSE, they make good progress in writing for a range of purposes, including letters, poems, narrative and factual accounts.
9. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils speak and listen well. They present a comprehensive and balanced argument, which is clearly expressed and makes use of a wide vocabulary. They sustain the listener's interest and take the lead in discussions, showing perception and assurance. Middle attainers use Standard English competently and respond appropriately to others' contributions. They use varied vocabulary and are able to speak about the intricacies of a plot when

² 'Cloze procedure' involves filling in the missing words in a piece of text.

discussing texts they have studied. Higher and middle attaining pupils read fluently and accurately, with expression. Lower attaining pupils give a factual account of an activity, using some features of Standard English. They are able to express an opinion and contribute to group discussions. They read sufficiently well to distil the main features from a piece of text and can then answer questions about it.

Mathematics

10. Many pupils enter the unit with significant gaps in their mathematical knowledge, poor numeracy skills and lacking confidence in their ability to do mathematics. While in the unit, pupils generally achieve well because the teaching they receive is good.
11. In Years 7 to 9, most pupils attain below average standards but a minority reach levels approaching the national average. The higher attaining pupils make good progress with their numeracy skills, developing appropriate methods for mental and written arithmetic and the ability to calculate at a reasonable speed, though some numeracy weaknesses remain. They become adept at reading and interpreting a range of different graphs and learn to apply their mathematical knowledge to simple problems and investigations. Lower attaining pupils also make good progress, though they continue to have difficulties with numeracy, such as finding half of 28. Some pupils have difficulty interpreting written mathematical problems because of their limited skills in literacy.
12. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well and the majority are successful at GCSE. In 2001, all pupils entered for GCSE gained A* to G grades, with two attaining grade B. Most pupils understand and use simple algebra and gain skills in handling data, such as constructing questionnaires, analysing the results and presenting their analysis in frequency tables and charts. Higher attaining pupils make further progress with algebra, and can convert decimals into fractions, though because of fragmented prior knowledge this learning is not secure. Lower attaining pupils make progress in learning written methods of calculation, but for many their progress is hampered by underlying difficulties with elementary numeracy, such as writing large numbers, understanding the meaning of fractions and confusing the order of subtraction. These pupils need a better understanding of basic numeracy to give them a good foundation to make further progress in mathematics.

Science

13. Pupils' achievement in science is very good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are working towards National Curriculum levels similar to those of pupils in mainstream schools. They identify sources of energy, know that crude oil and coal are fossil fuels, and that the power of the wind, waves and the sun can be harnessed as renewable energy sources. Pupils understand the differences between food chains and food webs. They know the difference between plant and animal cells; that tissues are made of cells and that specialised cells such as root cells or leaf cells are adapted for different functions. They also understand that organisms develop special characteristics in adapting to different environments. Pupils know that heat changes solids into liquids and liquids into gases, and they use scientific vocabulary, such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation', to describe these changes in physical state.

14. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving very well in response to challenging teaching as they work on their GCSE course. In 2001, most pupils in Year 11 were entered for the GCSE single science award and achieved passes at grades A* to G. Two pupils, who were admitted to the unit only two months before the examination, were entered for the GCSE double award in science and achieved grade C passes, demonstrating very high achievement in a short space of time. The pupils' success in such an exceptionally short time scale was the result of the teacher and pupils working extremely hard. The teacher set very high expectations for the completion of homework and course work and ensured that pupils worked equally hard in lessons. Standards are clearly rising, as all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are now following the double award syllabus and are being prepared for GCSE.
15. Pupils in Year 10 understand the functions of the human digestive system, they locate salivary glands, the oesophagus, the stomach and the small intestine in the body accurately. They develop investigative skills further, for example in controlling variables when investigating the effect of exercise on heart rate. They make good predictions, write up experimental investigations scientifically, plot graphs from their results, interpret them accurately and draw the right conclusions. They have a good understanding of the solar system and they know that galaxies such as the Milky Way are made of stars. Pupils make good use of the Internet, for example in researching the features of the planet Neptune. Pupils in Year 11 have a clear understanding of the differences between elements, mixtures and compounds. They formulate good hypotheses for separating mixtures, such as carbon and iron filings based on the properties of these elements, and separate them effectively. In one investigation, pupils accurately separated a mixture of sand and salt using water to make a solution. They filtered the solution to leave a residue of sand and used the scientific terms 'solute' and 'solvent' with accuracy to demonstrate that they knew that the solvent was water and the solute was salt. In a biology lesson, pupils investigated the urinary system using a pig's kidney, which they dissected and compared with labelled images of a kidney making good use of a CD-ROM on a lap top computer. They identified the internal structures such as the cortex, medulla and pelvis accurately and improved their understanding of the process of blood filtration in the kidneys.

Art

16. In Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well in art as a result of good quality teaching. Attainment is in line with expectations but within a limited range of work available this early in the term. Work on display shows good experimentation with colour and technical competence in the production of a range of prints. In Year 11, two pupils have opted to take art at GCSE. One pupil is talented in art and has a sketchbook with good quality drawings in line and tone, although he had been out of school for two years before coming to the unit at the beginning of this term. He uses line expressively and is confident to experiment with techniques and processes. He is working in line with grades A* to C at GCSE. The other pupil is making good progress in drawing and painting after the style of a chosen artist and should be successful in achieving a grade in the A* to G range. Both pupils are under unusual pressure because they have only a few months in which to complete the course.

Design and technology

17. In Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well in design and technology. In Years 7 to 9, pupils learn woodwork skills of measuring, marking, cutting and gluing. They make products such as boxes or puzzles, which are finished to a good standard. Through working with wood, they have opportunities to apply and develop their numeracy skills.
18. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have the choice of studying either a non-examined course or taking a GCSE in design and technology. Pupils following the non-examination course improve their woodworking skills and learn to make joints, using a wider range of tools. Pupils who choose to take GCSE undertake projects that incorporate the full design process, including research, drawing up a design specification, designing and making a product and evaluating the outcome. GCSE pupils use computers effectively in documenting their work.

Humanities – geography and history

19. It was possible to see only one geography lesson during the inspection and no history lessons were seen. However, there was sufficient evidence from analysing pupils' work, scrutinising displays and speaking with the co-ordinator to make judgements about pupils' achievement. Geography is taught to all year groups and pupils' achievement in this subject is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are making good progress in using maps to find specific locations and landmarks, including using a map key and scale. They also use Internet websites which enable them to key in postal codes in order to find maps which give directions from one place to another. In history, pupils in Years 7 to 9 have learned about towns and villages and mediaeval monarchs. Again, they make good use of CD-ROMs and the Internet to further their understanding of historic events. For example, a pupil followed the path of a rat carrying the bubonic plague through the mediaeval streets of London, using a computer-generated simulation. He then developed a greater sense of what it must have been like to live in those times compared with how we live today. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 follow the GCSE syllabus over a period of one year. Year 11 pupils show very good achievement in geography as a result of very good teaching. One pupil who was admitted to the unit only two months before the examination last term achieved a grade A at GCSE in geography. Pupils who have recently started working towards GCSE are developing good geographical enquiry skills by, for example, conducting a survey about shopping trends within Guildford town centre and analysing the findings to draw conclusions about retailing.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

20. Pupils have adequate access to computers and their achievement is satisfactory in ICT. They develop skills in word-processing, in using spreadsheets and in the graphical representation of data. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, and occasionally some in Years 7 to 9, gain certification for their knowledge through entering modules from the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) certificate. Pupils also use ICT in learning some subjects. They use a spreadsheet and database in mathematics in Years 7 to 9, word-processing in English, and they have regular use of an integrated learning package to develop and practise literacy and numeracy skills. As part of the youth worker programme, pupils gain skills in using a digital camera and edit photographs to achieve creative effects.

21. In word-processing they enter and edit text and develop a reasonable level of skill and confidence in formatting text to create an attractive and accurate document. In their use of a spreadsheet, they use relevant examples, such as holiday expenditure, to learn how to set up a sheet containing financial data and formulae, and to use the sheet to investigate what happens if circumstances change. Through the graphical representation of data course, they learn to present data in bar and line graphs, pie charts and in graphs showing trends. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

22. Pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE) through PSHE lessons, tutorial and social skills sessions, careers lessons and sessions with the youth worker. As part of the induction group³, they gain in self-awareness by reflecting on feelings. They consider their own feelings in a given situation and the feelings of others. They talk about situations when they have lost their temper in the past and look at what happened as a result. In social skills sessions, pupils learn about the skills needed in effective social interaction. During the inspection, they focused on listening skills and made clear gains in their understanding by practising key skills and relating them to experiences in the outside world. They are given opportunities to discuss issues concerning anger and bereavement; higher attaining pupils respond to this with sensitivity and make intelligent comments based on their own experiences. Lower attaining pupils find it more difficult to discuss their feelings or explore their personal qualities. Their narrow vocabulary limits their capacity to discuss their feelings and experiences. In part of their time with the youth worker, pupils improve their collaborative skills and tackle problem-solving exercises. Although some pupils find this challenging, they behave in a civilised way and begin to increase their social skills even when they are working with pupils who they do not yet know very well. In preparing their Records of Achievement, older pupils make good progress in learning how to 'sell themselves' to a potential employer and are able to arrive at personal statements. They are beginning to assess their own abilities, personalities and characteristics. Through PSHE, careers and other lessons, pupils are being effectively prepared for life after school and are increasing their citizenship skills.

Physical education

23. It was not possible to observe any physical education lessons during the inspection but photographic evidence and discussions with the co-ordinator made it possible to judge pupils' achievements. Pupils achieve well in physical education because the unit makes very good use of local resources such as the leisure centre, the youth club, the university sports facilities and the local authority outdoor activity centres, where pupils are taught new skills by well-qualified instructors. Pupils develop their physical skills and co-ordination well through a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities, which include use of high ropes, climbing walls, orienteering and mountain biking. This also leads to an increase in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils gain swimming awards from the Amateur Swimming Association, and they use the facilities of local parks to play competitive team games such as football and cricket. Pupils also have good opportunities to improve their skills in activities such as squash, tennis, basketball

³ Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are placed in the induction group when they first enter the unit. The emphasis within this group is on settling pupils in and assessing their learning needs.

and skating. The unit has introduced a new externally accredited certificate course in physical education so that pupils are able to gain a qualification in physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Pupils' attitudes to the unit are good and it is clear that their attitudes improve a great deal in comparison with those they previously held in mainstream school. Pupils arrive with negative attitudes to staff and learning but, after a short time, they begin to work harder and engage more fully in activities. This enables them to learn more effectively. Most pupils are keen to succeed. This is due in part to the good teaching, which is well structured, and usually at an appropriate level of difficulty. Most pupils care about their work and present it neatly. Occasionally, pupils are unmotivated and unco-operative. This is sometimes due to events that have occurred outside the lesson and occasionally because of frustrations with learning, where the work is too hard for them to be able easily to achieve success or where parts of it are not challenging enough.
25. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 have more positive attitudes to their learning than younger pupils in Years 7 to 9, because they realise that they have a good opportunity to gain accredited qualifications. Many younger pupils display good attitudes for most of the time, and their positive attitude to their work is a consequence of the good teaching in many lessons. For example in a very good geography lesson, a Year 8 pupil who was uninterested in learning and poorly motivated became very interested and involved when he used the computer to locate a map showing his postcode, and then changed the scale of the map so that he could locate the street where he lived. The teacher encouraged him and praised him and challenged him so that he used the Internet with minimum help. He responded by working very hard and following instructions; he enjoyed the activity and was proud of his success. However, disaffection was evident in some lessons in Years 7 and 9 and, more rarely, with lower attaining pupils in Year 10.
26. Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the unit. The behaviour of most pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good and has improved immensely since admission. However, the behaviour of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is only satisfactory because there are occasionally incidents of disruption in lessons, such as refusing to work or arguing with the teacher. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, teachers generally manage pupils well and pupils then generally respond by complying with teachers' expectations. The majority of pupils respond well within a friendly and orderly community, where there is a positive ethos in which all pupils feel valued and respected. As a consequence, fixed term exclusions have been reduced from a high rate at one point in the previous year. Examples of bullying are rare and there are no graffiti or any signs of vandalism around the unit. This sense of community is well reflected during break times when pupils engage in everyday conversations with staff and each other. Pupils behave well around the unit and when they go out on visits. They nearly always walk along corridors between classrooms and activity areas in a mature and responsible manner. This positive behaviour was particularly noticeable when pupils visited the local youth club for music activities. They walked along the High Street in an orderly and relaxed fashion, complied fully with the youth worker's expectations for appropriate behaviour, and behaved equally very well during activities at the youth centre.

27. Relationships are good throughout the unit. The trust and regard that pupils have for staff is reflected in the positive atmosphere in lessons. For example, in a Year 11 art lesson, pupils worked hard and also related very well to the teacher, showing sufficient trust to talk about their personal lives and about what they hope to do when they leave. Pupils show respect for their teachers because they are treated as maturing young adults and their views are taken seriously. Pupils often enjoy interacting with staff and they relate well to each other. Boys and girls treat each other with equal respect and no incidents of sexual harassment were observed. It is the strength of relationships that gives pupils the confidence to stay in lessons and complete tasks. Pupils say that they feel safe and value the more relaxed relationships with teachers. They speak with enthusiasm about their work and express satisfaction that the unit is giving them an opportunity to succeed.
28. There were few examples of pupils showing initiative and these were much more evident amongst older pupils. Pupils worked on their own in lessons with the minimum of support and some helped to clear away practical equipment, for example, after investigations in science lessons. Older pupils take greater responsibility for completion of homework and course work and this enables them to achieve good examination passes in a relatively short period of time. For example, one pupil achieved a grade A at GCSE in geography after only two months in the unit because she tried hard, took the initiative in her own learning and took personal responsibility for keeping to deadlines.
29. The previous report was positive about pupils' behaviour and attitudes but there were more incidents of unacceptable behaviour in lessons. The unit has been successful in maintaining its strengths and in improving pupils' behaviour, because staff manage behaviour more consistently and there is a much greater focus on high achievement.
30. At the time of the last inspection, the unit's overall attendance rate was judged to be unsatisfactory and this situation remains unchanged. However, this is due in the main to a small number of pupils who persistently refuse to attend any form of education. Nevertheless, well-documented systems and records prove conclusively that the individual attendance rate of the majority of pupils improves dramatically, in relation to their prior rate when in mainstream schools, once they have settled into the unit. As soon as they start to become focused and well motivated, their attendance begins to improve, resulting in a very positive impact on their achievement and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

31. The quality of teaching is good and makes a major contribution to the good progress that pupils make and to their personal development. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen; it was at least good in seven in ten lessons, and very good in one in four lessons. Pupils generally respond well to the good quality teaching; they benefit a great deal from the positive atmosphere in the unit and from the constructive relationships that exist between teachers and pupils.

English

32. Teaching in English is at least satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they apply it most effectively when they are preparing pupils for examinations. Teaching is therefore

at its best as pupils are being prepared for National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and as older pupils work towards GCSE and Certificates of Achievement.

33. In Years 10 and 11, pupils receive skilled guidance as they prepare coursework for GCSE and for the Certificate of Achievement, and their work is most carefully marked so that they know exactly what to do to achieve a higher grade. Lessons are well prepared, with appropriate resources, and planning is usually good. Teachers share objectives very well with pupils and use skilled questioning to gain their attention. The best lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are continually challenged to think. Time is used well and there is a high degree of focus, both on the part of the teacher and the pupils. Pupils apply themselves well to written work and take part readily in discussion, especially where questions are closely matched to the next stage in their learning and offer a good level of challenge. Where teaching is at its best, pupils engage in lively discussion and show real interest in learning, as in a Year 11 lesson on *Lord of the Flies*. Although they tend to be fairly dependent on the teacher, checking to see exactly what they are to do next, they take initiative in looking for specific references within the text and quickly get down to written work. In such lessons, teachers praise pupils' hard work in a way that is genuine and well deserved.
34. Where teaching is satisfactory, many of the strengths detailed above are present to some extent but teachers are less successful in gaining pupils' interest. Sometimes this is because pupils display relatively high levels of disaffection; at times, it is because some of the work is not matched sufficiently to their learning needs or is presented in a way that is dull. In such lessons, teachers use effort marks in an attempt to reward and motivate pupils but this does not always achieve the desired effect. Pupils showed disaffection in two lessons in Years 7 to 9. In a lesson in Year 10, lower attaining pupils expressed their dislike of English and showed obvious signs of boredom. Where pupils lack interest, especially in Years 7 to 9, the small sized groups make it more difficult for teachers to stimulate them and keep up the momentum, and teachers sometimes supervise pupils too closely instead of setting them a challenging task and giving them the space to get on with it. In one lesson, the more the teacher praised and encouraged the pupil, the more disaffected he became although he showed pride in previous work that he had completed. Some pupils behave very well, even where work is lacking in variety, and they are patient and co-operative throughout. On occasion, some younger pupils refuse to co-operate and engage in mildly inappropriate behaviour, such as swinging backwards and forwards on their chairs. They then go on to complete the tasks that have been set for them but are determined not to make much effort or to take initiative for their own learning.
35. Teachers who are more skilled in managing pupils' behaviour hold the focus well, remaining calm and persistent in spite of lack of motivation on the part of the pupils. By this method, they often manage gradually to win pupils round so that they eventually show interest and become active in the learning process. There are times, however, when inappropriate behaviour should be dealt with more firmly.

Mathematics

36. The teaching of mathematics is good. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that progress is made towards National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations. Teachers communicate their care for pupils, and manage them very well, which contributes to their generally positive attitudes and motivation. Pupils' motivation

is enhanced by appropriate use of praise and rewards. Progress is carefully monitored, with revision of previous work, homework set regularly to reinforce work learned in class, careful marking, and assessments at the end of each unit of work.

37. In Years 7 to 9, good questioning develops pupils' thinking skills and requires pupils to explain their understanding, thus enabling them to face and overcome their difficulties. One pupil, for example, was led to discover for himself the patterns in the nine-times table, thus making it easier to remember. A good range of resources is available and used to enhance the learning of a topic by presenting it in different ways. The use of puzzles adds variety and interest. Computers enhance learning in several ways. Pupils use a spreadsheet and database when they are applying their mathematics to short projects, such as planning a holiday. They also use programs to practise number work and have regular sessions on an integrated learning package. Most pupils find this work interesting and improve their skills through the regular practice. Occasionally, pupils find it frustrating and de-motivating because the questions presented by the computer are too hard and they resort to random guessing.
38. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is characterised by clear explanations, thorough organisation and very good management of pupils. Pupils gain in confidence through this careful management and the positive feedback they receive. As a result, they try hard and make good progress. Because the course is well organised, many pupils are successfully prepared for the GCSE examination. However, the teaching methods used in most lessons are limited to explanation and practice. Explanations are clear and thorough, but pupils' understanding is not developed as much as it might be if there were more variety in the way material was presented, in order to build on what pupils already know. The questions posed in lessons are designed to test recall of remembered facts and methods more than to stimulate mathematical thinking. Pupils learn to use and apply their mathematics in GCSE coursework tasks, but ICT is currently used very little in Years 10 and 11, pending further staff training.
39. In both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, pupils' learning would be improved if their numeracy skills were diagnosed more thoroughly and if lesson planning took more account of the specific needs of individual pupils.

Science

40. The quality of teaching in science is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use their expertise most effectively to deliver well thought out learning activities based on scientific enquiry. This ensures that pupils acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding quickly and build on their prior learning. Teachers plan lessons very well so that a wide variety of interesting activities, such as demonstrations, direct teaching, investigations, discussions, small group work and individual work are included in each lesson. Resources are well chosen and used very effectively to bring the subject alive. As a result, pupils are well motivated and remain focused on their activities throughout the lesson. In particular, computers are very well used to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils therefore develop good research skills, using the Internet or CD-ROMs, and investigative skills through analysing and interpreting experimental results using databases. In all lessons seen, pupils were given very good opportunities to use computers to record data and produce graphs, and to research scientific topics relating to practical work. Teachers made equally good use of video, for example,

to reinforce the understanding of the principles of the homeostatic mechanisms of the body for keeping warm and losing heat. Teachers manage behaviour very well by setting high expectations for good behaviour, and consistently and effectively following through any misdemeanours with effective action. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson when a pupil who was not making enough effort responded well to the teacher's use of sanctions and encouragement to try harder. Teachers also maintain very good relationships with pupils so that they listen well and follow instructions precisely.

41. Teachers make very good use of ongoing assessment within lessons. Learning objectives are clearly displayed and discussed with pupils at the start, the teacher checks that pupils are on course to achieve them as the lesson proceeds, and discusses how well the objectives have been achieved at the end of the lesson. Pupils therefore have a clear idea of the progress they have made. Any misunderstandings are always clarified and teachers target pupils who need most support with their learning. Homework is set regularly and marked effectively. Lessons are always taught with enthusiasm and at a lively pace so that much work is covered in a short space of time. This ensures that pupils work productively and remain highly motivated.

Art

42. Teaching is good in art and this enables pupils to make good progress. Instructions are clear and learning objectives are shared with pupils. Teachers provide a lot of valuable information, about particular art movements, for example, and have high expectations. They push pupils to think deeply, to plan what they are doing and to evaluate what they have done. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher asked pertinent technical questions such as, 'How do you think the artist originally did this?' They instil in pupils the importance of trying hard and having high expectations for themselves. Pupils are given opportunities to make choices in relation to materials and compositional arrangements. In response, they think carefully about the colour combinations they want to use, or about how to mix a particular colour to achieve a desired effect.
43. Teachers use time well and pupils concentrate and engage well with their work. They show enjoyment even where they have initially lacked confidence in their ability. They are very co-operative and become absorbed in their work. They are keen to do well and take trouble to achieve a good finish. They readily ask questions to clarify what is expected and to explore the opportunities open to them. Teachers relate well with pupils and the excellent interpersonal skills of the teacher was a particular strength in a Year 11 lesson, contributing a great deal to pupils' personal development. At times, as in a Year 9 lesson, teachers stand over pupils a little too much so that they do not have enough space to be truly creative, but this is a problem caused mainly by group sizes being artificially small at this early stage in the year.

Humanities

44. The teaching of geography and history is good in Years 7 to 9, and the teaching of geography is very good in Years 10 and 11 where pupils follow the GCSE course. Features of good teaching include good planning, well-chosen activities and resources that motivate pupils, and good management of pupils' behaviour. Computers are always used well by teachers to enrich pupils' learning experiences and to motivate them to try harder. Where teaching is very good,

pupils' progress is regularly checked against very clear learning objectives throughout the lesson, very high expectations are set for learning and the pace of the lessons is very lively.

Information and communication technology

45. Teaching in discrete ICT lessons is satisfactory. Pupils are given sound individual instruction as they work through CLAIT booklets on word-processing and graphical representation. They are taught the basic skills of entering text, justifying it, editing, using a spell-checker, saving and printing. Higher attaining pupils work quite independently; lower attaining pupils are dependent on direct guidance from the teacher.
46. In other subjects, teachers make good use of new technologies, particularly computers, to support teaching and learning and to increase pupils' motivation. This was seen particularly in science and geography during the inspection, where pupils used databases to record and analyse results from investigations and surveys, and used the Internet or CD-ROMs for research. ICT was also used effectively in music at the youth centre and during the induction lessons at the start of each day.

Design and technology

47. Teaching of design and technology is good. Lessons are planned to meet the needs and skill levels of individual pupils. Pupils who take GCSE in design and technology work quite independently and learn the whole design process under the guidance of the teacher. Where pupils have more limited skills, the teacher provides kits of partly made products, to give them the opportunity to create good quality outcomes. Pupils with a higher level of skill carry out all the processes to make their products. Most of the work is done under a teacher's guidance and is designed to enable pupils to develop skills and improve their numeracy.
48. Pupils are managed well, with due attention to health and safety. Resources are well organised and instructions pitched at an appropriate level so that pupils achieve and are motivated. Support assistants are deployed well in helping pupils to maintain their focus, observe safety rules and achieve their tasks. Most pupils have good attitudes to design and technology, concentrate well and are motivated to achieve a good quality finish. When tasks prove difficult, some pupils get frustrated with the work. Pupils are occasionally more restless and need close supervision.

Personal, social and health education

49. In general, teaching in PSHE is good, although it ranges from very good to barely satisfactory, since some teachers are more skilled than others in teaching the subject. The unit has identified this as an area where some staff need further training and the unit intends to appoint a PSHE specialist in the near future. In the best lessons, learning is well planned and structured, and relationships between staff and pupils are of high quality. Teachers clearly explain the objectives and model key skills for pupils. They work well with support staff in their management of pupils to create a supportive and positive environment. Pupils show enthusiasm in response and readily take part in discussion. Some pupils are happy to talk about quite delicate personal issues and contribute a good deal to the learning of others. Where teachers are less secure in their subject

knowledge, lessons tend to be dull; although they follow an appropriate plan and include appropriate material, they do not at any stage 'come to life'. In these lessons, teachers work hard to manage pupils' behaviour and to contain them rather than providing opportunities for pupils to think deeply and relate learning to their own experiences. As a result, pupils show limited interest and do not fully engage, although they co-operate by going through the motion of doing what is asked of them.

Physical education

50. In physical education, pupils are taught by very well qualified instructors within the local facilities that the unit uses. It is, therefore, inappropriate to judge the quality of teaching.

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

51. The unit provides a good quality and range of relevant learning opportunities in Years 7 to 9 and very good opportunities in Years 10 and 11. The local education authority is making effective progress towards the introduction of full-time provision in 2002: pupils in Years 7 to 9 already attend full time and some older pupils also have access to full-time provision. This is a marked improvement on the time allocated to pupils at the last inspection. The number of subjects offered in Years 7 to 9 exceeds national recommendations for pupil referral units and pupils in Years 10 and 11 have very good opportunities to gain a number of accredited qualifications.
52. Planning of the curriculum is good and it is especially creative in Years 10 and 11. Opportunities for pupils to gain accredited qualifications, via GCSE, Certificate of Achievement and Associated Examining Board tests, together with vocational courses at college, are very good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared for GCSEs and/or Certificates of Achievement in up to eight subjects; most pupils take GCSEs. The subjects offered at GCSE are English language, English literature, mathematics, science (single or double), art, design & technology and geography. The subjects offered at Certificate of Achievement are English, mathematics, science, craft, design & technology, and physical education. Some pupils take a mixture of GCSEs and Certificates of Achievement, are double entered, or take Certificates of Achievement in Year 10 and GCSE in Year 11. All pupils are given the opportunity to achieve a certificate in numeracy and literacy via the Associated Examining Board tests; more able pupils are being entered for the new level four examinations this year.
53. Year 11 pupils have a package tailored to their individual needs and the provision offered in addition to the courses above includes college placement, work experience, carpentry, and personal fitness. A few more able or more mature pupils are entered for GCSE in Year 10, in preparation for college in Year 11. At present, three pupils from the unit are attending the local college of further education. Two are on the BOLD project⁴ that is situated in the college and the other is following a course in ICT. The CLAIT course in ICT is the one vocational course currently offered within the unit but pupils have good opportunities to take

⁴ The BOLD project provides a learning base in college for pupils who have been excluded from school or who are in danger of being excluded, and it gives them access to appropriate courses in the college.

vocational courses at college if they have a particular avenue they wish to pursue; arrangements have been made to enable individual pupils to follow college courses for NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) alongside their GCSEs.

54. At the time of the last inspection, concern was raised about a number of pupils with special educational needs who had been attending the unit for a relatively long period of time. There has been a significant improvement in the length of time pupils remain on the unit's roll. The Guildford Centre is intended to be only a temporary provision: it is now the local education authority's policy that pupils in Years 7 to 9 should attend the unit for no more than six months and then be moved on to appropriate alternative placements. With this in mind, greatest emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy in Years 7 to 9, as most pupils enter the unit with very poor basic skills. The emphasis in Years 10 and 11 is on gaining qualifications, moving on to college, into training and/or work experience, and preparing for life after compulsory school age. All pupils have access to an appropriate curriculum and to public examinations.
55. Improvements in provision for pupils with special educational needs have resulted also from the greater consideration that is now given to the placement of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. The unit is also receiving fewer pupils with Statements as a result of inclusion and through improved arrangements within the local education authority, whereby mainstream schools are contracted to receive a certain number of excluded pupils. The unit has regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs and its provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. Provision would be improved by diagnosing more precisely pupils' individual difficulties in literacy and numeracy, then using the resulting information to devise specific targets in their individual education plans.
56. The reintegration policy sets out effective guidelines for ensuring successful placement in mainstream school. Inclusion opportunities are good and local schools are pleased with the support arrangements provided by the unit. The area co-ordinator for the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service is responsible for setting up liaison meetings with parents and schools, whilst the Exclusions and Reintegration Officer identifies the most appropriate school into which a pupil could reintegrate. The area co-ordinator is working to establish a seamless support system for pupils who are ready for reintegration and the unit is looking to turn pupils round at a much faster rate. There has been an increase in the number of pupils successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools, but the unit has identified this as a continued development priority. As well as having an induction group when pupils arrive, which is a most useful initiative, the unit plans for a 'back to school' group in which classroom conventions and expectations are especially emphasised.
57. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities beyond the classroom. There have been theatre visits, a trip to Chessington World of Adventure, a football coaching session, and a visit to the National Gallery. In addition, there are trips to a number of local sporting venues and all pupils have regular input from the youth service. Youth workers give pupils access to a range of learning opportunities beyond those offered within the unit's own curriculum, including physical activities, musical composition, personal development and experiences that foster co-operation.

58. The unit makes satisfactory provision for PSHE, including sex education and drugs education. The unit is taking part in the Healthy Schools project with other pupil referral units in Surrey. The further development of schemes of work for PHSE is identified as a current priority within the unit.
59. Liaison with both the careers office and the local college is very good. The close working relationship between the unit and the local college of further education ensures that pupils receive good advice and appropriate training at this important time in their education. The careers officer visits the unit regularly under the terms of an annual agreement between the careers service and the unit. Currently, careers work starts with Year 9 pupils and there are plans for it to start with pupils in Years 7 and 8 at some time in the future. All pupils are given one-to-one interviews, some suitable group activities take place and pupils may visit the library in the careers department whenever they wish. Most pupils in the unit are awarded the Careers Challenge Certificate. The careers department works closely with TRIDENT with regard to work experience placements and pupils benefit from this liaison as well. All Year 11 pupils do one week's work experience and staff from TRIDENT make two visits to the unit. Long-term work experience for some pupils was organised for the first time last year and the unit hopes to build on this in the coming year.
60. The curriculum is further supported by good links with the community and with other educational establishments. There are strong links with mainstream schools through the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service, and schools say that successful reintegration is mainly due to the excellent liaison provided by the unit. They appreciate the very good ongoing support that unit staff provide; this enables wary pupils to settle in and ensures that any minor problems are quickly ironed out. Moreover, good use is made of the opportunities provided by a range of external professionals to enhance the curriculum. The unit is working closely with the youth service, as part of an initiative through Crime and Disorder Prevention funding, and this makes a significant contribution to the opportunities available to pupils. The unit liaises closely with an organisation called 'Skillway', which provides practice in manual skills of carpentry, metalwork, glasswork and plumbing; one pupil from the unit is currently attending. The community policeman visits the unit informally and organises trips and events for pupils, as well as working with individuals. A visiting poet has worked with pupils and the unit has recently arranged for pupils to work with an artist-in-residence, in collaboration with a number of local schools and the local museum, in the study of tile designs and the production of a tile mosaic for display in Guildford. As part of their professional development, staff have visited mainstream schools and other pupil referral units to look at aspects of provision, and they have worked with staff from a local special school in the development of a literacy strategy. As well as links with Guildford College, the unit has productive links with Surrey University.

English

61. Curriculum planning is good in English, with a particular focus on preparing for National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE or Certificate of Achievement examinations in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have very good opportunities to gain qualifications in the subject. They regularly practise their speaking and listening skills, write for a range of purposes and read for information, as well as studying literary texts. The unit holds 'book weeks' to encourage pupils and their families to take an interest in books and reading. National Curriculum Programmes of Study effectively inform what is taught in English, and the unit has recently begun to make use of National Literacy Strategy materials to support the teaching of literacy.
62. All staff have been trained in the unit's literacy policy and they are all given responsibility for developing pupils' literacy skills. The English co-ordinator conducted a literacy audit and identified the need for all subjects to contribute to the teaching of extended writing and to focus on key words. There is currently a focus on paragraphing in all subjects of the curriculum and the cross-curricular contribution to literacy development is good.
63. Literacy is taught twice weekly for half an hour within English lessons and includes units on grammar, spelling, reading for meaning, and reading aloud. In the summer term, there are 'fast forward' sessions for selected pupils in Years 7 to 9 to improve their literacy from Level 3 to Level 4. While they are good initiatives, their impact is reduced by the lack of diagnostic assessment, because work is not always matched as closely to individual needs as it should be.
64. ICT is used effectively to support pupils' learning in English and all pupils in Years 7 to 9 regularly use an ICT program that supports the development of skills in reading and spelling, following the tailor-made course that the program produces for each pupil.

Mathematics

65. The mathematics curriculum is carefully planned and is designed to prepare pupils for National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examinations in Years 10 and 11. At each key stage, the curriculum is taught at two different levels of difficulty, to take account of pupils' differing abilities. Pupils who are not ready by the end of Year 11 to enter GCSE are entered for the Certificate of Achievement.
66. While the structure of the curriculum and the good teaching enable pupils to make good progress, a weakness is that the mathematics curriculum does not take enough account of pupils' individual needs, particularly in terms of underlying difficulties in numeracy. Many pupils, because of their previous school history, have significant gaps in their basic knowledge and skills. These weaknesses are not diagnosed in detail and nor is the curriculum designed to ensure that pupils make steady progress towards achieving their own individual numeracy targets.
67. The unit has begun to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy into Years 7 to 9, and this has brought benefits in terms of improved lesson structure and providing pupils with regular practice in mental methods. There is an intention to create a development plan which will introduce some of the features of the Strategy into

lessons in Years 10 and 11 and co-ordinate the support of pupils' numeracy in other subjects. At present, numeracy is developed in science and geography, and in design and technology, where pupils learn and use skills in measuring.

Science

68. Pupils achieve very well in science because the curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very well conceived and planned. Planning includes the wide use of computers. Pupils follow programmes based on the National Curriculum and tasks are matched closely to their ability levels. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the double award GCSE course, which is very challenging when their prior history of educational failure in mainstream schools is taken into account. Older pupils rise to this challenge and this accounts for their success at GCSE.

Art

69. Curriculum planning is good in art and tasks provide appropriate learning opportunities that are well linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This ensures that pupils acquire a satisfactory range of skills and that they increase their knowledge and understanding of art.

Design and technology

70. The curriculum is enhanced by the inclusion of design and technology for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 and by the opportunity in Years 10 and 11 for pupils to take either a non-examination course or a GCSE in the subject. At present, because of limited resources, the curriculum is restricted to designing and making in wood, but there are plans to extend it to include food and electronics. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and the non-examination course in Years 10 and 11 consist of developing pupils' skills, including their numeracy. The GCSE course extends this to include the full design process.

Information and communication technology

71. The unit has just begun to make significant developments in the ICT curriculum and has only recently been equipped with the computer equipment needed to do this. Until recently, the curriculum has been limited to word processing, spreadsheets and graphical representation of data. A new curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has been planned, which covers the full National Curriculum, including use of the Internet, multi-media and the use of computers to control electronic devices. Current courses in Years 10 and 11 enable pupils to gain accreditation through CLAIT; it is intended to offer broader courses but planning for this is at an early stage.
72. The use of ICT in a number of other subjects is good. At present, very good use is made of ICT in science and geography, and good use is made in English, and in mathematics in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have used a digital camera and a photographic editing program, and older pupils use a computerised music program to compose music for recording onto a CD when they attend music workshops at the youth centre. In the forthcoming year, the existing use of ICT in each subject will be audited and, from this, a whole-school plan will be drawn up and provision will become more tightly co-ordinated. To support the development

of ICT, all staff are undertaking government-funded training to give them the skills to incorporate a range of ICT skills into their teaching methods.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

73. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
74. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and is a current area of development for the unit. During their induction programme, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' feelings in different situations and, in an interview, to consider their successes and areas for development. The PSHE course covers values and feelings. In the induction group, pupils have opportunities to consider their own experiences and to contemplate universal questions such as, 'Why are we here?'. Autobiographical writing in English provides older pupils with very good opportunities for reflection and self-awareness. Music lessons at the Youth Centre also provide opportunities for pupils to experience the wonder of creativity. Some teachers are practised in leading pupils to reflect on their feelings and actions, but others are less skilled. In general, pupils do not have enough opportunities to reflect, to be independent and to take responsibility.
75. Provision for moral development is good. The unit's ethos incorporates clear expectations of moral conduct, and values and respect are explicitly taught in assemblies. The PSHE course includes discussion of right and wrong and of scenarios in which youths might become involved in crime. Sex education includes consideration of sexual morality.
76. Provision for social development is very good. The staff are very good role models, they have very high expectations and have developed consistent systems for encouraging and rewarding good behaviour. This helps to create the good ethos, which contributes to pupils' good learning. Pupils are all given lessons in social skills, covering a wide range of social situations and have a chance to practise these skills. Social skills are also developed through the interaction pupils have with the staff. Pupils and staff take tea breaks together and these are used as an opportunity to learn social behaviour. A breakfast club is a positive further development. Pupils undertake some charity activities, such as running a cake stall for Children in Need and taking part in a Readathon for Cancer Relief. Occasionally, teachers tolerate anti-social behaviour in the interests of maintaining a positive atmosphere and fail to ensure that pupils face up to and make amends for what has been done.
77. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. A number of subjects widen pupils' experience of their own and other cultures, including English literature, art and geography. There is a planned programme of classical music during breaks, with a display giving information about the composer. Trips are arranged to art galleries and the theatre. There are only limited opportunities to prepare pupils for living in a multi-cultural society, though issues of racism are discussed with sensitivity in PSHE.
78. Pupils enter the unit lacking in confidence in their ability to learn and with low self-esteem. Through very positive interactions with adults in the unit and through the individual attention that is made available to them, they gradually gain in confidence to a point where they are able to believe in their ability to succeed.

Some pupils' attitudes are 'turned around' very quickly; it was evident during the inspection that pupils who have been on the roll of the unit for only a matter of a few weeks, and who have fragmented educational histories, are receiving a level of support and encouragement that is enabling them to blossom personally and academically. It is equally evident from examination results and pupils' work that staff create a safe environment in which pupils feel able to apply themselves and turn their attention from their insecurities and behavioural problems to academic achievement. The unit's promotion of personal development therefore has a very positive impact on pupils' academic achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Care

79. Considerable improvement has been made in this aspect of the unit's work since the last inspection.

80. Although the attendance rate overall remains unsatisfactory, the unit has put in place a large number of strategies and procedures to monitor and promote attendance. It has set itself a target of achieving an 80 per cent attendance rate in the first instance. Measures now in place include weekly monitoring with the support of the educational welfare officer, an attendance contract with pupils, regular letters and telephone calls to parents and carers, home visits when necessary and rewards to pupils for good attendance. This is an area of very good improvement since the previous inspection, when less than satisfactory recording systems prevented the unit from monitoring attendance effectively.

81. Another improvement over the last two years has been the unit's consideration of health and safety issues in the old building. Many identified health and safety issues have been dealt with during the course of recent building works and improvements and only a small number remain to be dealt with. The management committee is fully aware of its responsibilities in matters of health and safety, and regular checks and risk assessments are undertaken. Fire drills are held at least twice a term and all but two members of staff have up-to-date certificates in first aid. Child protection procedures are fully in place and clearly understood by all the staff. There is close liaison with social services and health professionals.

82. Pupils value the privileges and reward systems that operate in the unit. These are in the form of certificates, success points and small prizes at the end of the week for anyone who has done particularly well. Pupils' behaviour is managed well, so that the unit is an orderly community, and there have been improvements in the management of challenging behaviour since the last inspection. However, this could be further improved, as some staff ignore behaviour that should not be acceptable and they occasionally praise pupils at the end of lessons when they have not applied themselves sufficiently, instead of challenging them to reflect on their shortcomings. The unit monitors standards of behaviour through behaviour sheets, individual education plans and the DfES⁵ behaviour scales. The key stage co-ordinators check completion of behaviour sheets and this is discussed and analysed at Year 7 to 9 and Year 10 and 11 meetings with the head of centre.

⁵ Department for Education and Skills

83. Pupils' personal development is monitored and tracked continuously in an informal way as well as being monitored formally at regular intervals. Learning support plays a strong part in this process and the key stage meetings⁶ ensure that senior managers have a continuous awareness of progress and provision. A noticeable feature of the good relationships in the unit is the in-depth knowledge staff have of all pupils and this, in itself, is a very positive method of tracking and monitoring pupils' personal development. Most teachers use their knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses within subjects to match activities to their needs, ensuring that pupils make sufficient progress and usually remain focused on their work. The head of centre, key stage co-ordinators and the area co-ordinator formally monitor pupils' progress at regular intervals.
84. The previous inspection report judged that the unit's provision for support, guidance and welfare was sound and that staff were very caring. That staff are caring is not in doubt, and the very considerable improvements made in the provision for pupils' care and welfare over the last two years now make this aspect of the unit's work an important strength.

Assessment

85. The unit makes use of a range of good assessment systems and there is some very good practice, but there is also scope for refining assessment and target setting. Some systems have been introduced recently and are already proving effective as an aid to planning. They include increased opportunities for accreditation through public examinations pitched to the particular levels of pupils' ability such as GCSE and Certificates of Achievement. They also include newly developed Goal assessments, which determine the National Curriculum levels pupils have achieved in English, mathematics, science and information technology, identify areas of relative strength and weakness, and set targets for future learning. These are already being well used on a termly basis to enable teachers to pitch learning activities within particular subjects to pupils' levels of ability. Goal assessments are very well used during a pupil's period of induction to provide information on their attainment, and these assessments are monitored at curriculum meetings every half term. The resulting information is passed on to teachers who can use it as a guide to formulating targets and in planning their lessons. However, not all teachers are using the system as fully as they should to guide their planning, and more detailed assessment is needed in areas where pupils are experiencing difficulty.
86. The unit has improved its system for gathering assessment information from secondary schools prior to a pupil's admission. It now makes very good use of computers to do this, gathering information electronically for more efficient and effective access. Pupils follow a three-week period of induction on arrival at the unit so that their individual needs can be thoroughly determined. This includes the good use of a commercial software package for literacy and numeracy skills and the use of a questionnaire to determine a pupils' learning style. This information is then used to complete a pupil profile as an aid for teachers' planning.
87. Six pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and the unit fulfils its responsibilities for ensuring that it provides for the needs of these pupils as far as it can. Unit staff provide reports and attend annual reviews of pupils' statements

⁶ Key stage meetings are a timetabled slot of five minutes where key stage co-ordinators go into classrooms to discuss with the teacher and pupils how well pupils have done and to find out what they have learned.

in mainstream schools, ensuring that the legal requirements are met, and there is good liaison with relevant professionals such as the educational psychologist. At the time of the last inspection, there were too many inappropriately placed pupils with statements but now this situation is much improved, with better systems in place to ensure that pupils transfer quickly to more appropriate provision. Good systems are in place for monitoring these pupils' behaviour and attendance through individual target setting and review, and the targets form part of a pupils' individual education plan. However, targets set for learning are too broad and there are no specific targets for literacy and numeracy. It is therefore difficult for teachers to use individual education plans in their planning of lessons and impossible to measure a pupils' progress against learning targets. The head of centre acknowledges the need to develop individual education plans for each pupil further so that they have clear, measurable and specific learning targets, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

88. Pupils receive a Record of Achievement which has been completed by themselves and their form teacher, when they leave the unit. This provides good information about the progress pupils have made since admission and helps pupils to evaluate their own achievement.
89. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment in planning, and they complete weekly record sheets for each pupil which detail the progress pupils have made. Examination targets and work experience targets are set for pupils in Year 11, on the basis of their achievements, and teachers usually provide ongoing feedback to pupils during lessons. However, teachers are unable to use their records fully to inform the next stage of teaching because these records are not yet fully developed. Assessment information is used well to plan the curriculum but not yet used as much as it should be within all subjects to plan work for individual pupils within lessons.

English

90. Assessment is good in English as pupils work towards accredited qualifications and this supports their progress. Assessment sheets convey clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve each piece of work and, thus, gain higher marks. This information is shared with pupils. Results of examinations are carefully analysed and curriculum arrangements are adjusted where necessary to improve future results. For example, National Curriculum results in 2001 showed improvement because teachers had identified the need to put in more work on pupils' comprehension skills and because they reorganised the way pupils were prepared for questions on the Shakespeare text.
91. However, the link between assessment and curriculum planning is not yet properly established in relation to literacy. When pupils enter the unit, some appropriate tests are carried out to establish their reading and spelling age and to check their National Curriculum level in writing. Goal assessments provide valuable information on a pupil's performance in different aspects of English and highlight some areas in which they are performing less well, for example, in punctuation or comprehension, but this method of assessment does not reveal how a particular weakness manifests in a pupil's work.
92. Pupils have a list of generic literacy targets in their folders, matched to the National Curriculum levels to which they are working, and the targets are made available to all areas of the curriculum. The generic targets in these lists, when

marked, are capable of providing an overview of their attainment in literacy but they may or may not highlight their particular literacy needs. Staff are aware of the need to screen pupils' attainment before beginning a literacy unit but they are not yet diagnosing pupils' individual literacy difficulties sufficiently. Some work is, therefore, not properly matched to learning needs and some lower attaining pupils leave the unit without fundamental weaknesses in literacy being remedied.

Mathematics

93. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' performance in mathematics, though these systems need to be developed to include diagnostic assessment of individual numeracy needs. Pupils' attainment in mathematics on entry to the unit is assessed through a series of mathematical tests undertaken in the induction group and through the Goal assessment. These tests give teachers a good measure of the level each pupil has reached in each area of mathematics, and their progress in the mathematics curriculum is assessed by tests at the end of each unit of work.
94. In order to improve pupils' grasp of basic numeracy and thus provide a more solid foundation for making progress with mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills need to be assessed diagnostically on entry to the unit. From such assessment, pupils need to be set individual numeracy targets. Lesson planning needs then to take account of each pupil's numeracy targets and assessment procedures to include regular review of their progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

95. At the time of the previous inspection, the quality of information provided for parents by the unit was judged to be good and it remains so two years on. The unit makes every effort to keep in constant contact with parents and carers. Liaison is by letter and telephone calls on a regular basis. Parents are asked to attend regular review meetings on pupils' progress and parents of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Need are involved appropriately in the annual review and in the individual education planning process. Many parents attend reviews and they are encouraged to add or share any concerns with the head of centre. Indeed, parents are encouraged to make contact whenever they wish. They are also invited to join in outings and trips when they can.
96. The prospectus is a helpful and informative document that supports the system of home-visits prior to pupils starting at the unit. Parents receive weekly reports on pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and are involved in target setting where appropriate. They receive a full progress report twice a year: although reports describe well what pupils' have learned and their attitudes to learning, they are not sufficiently focused on pupils' achievements within subjects in terms of gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding. The head of centre writes a very good annual report about the unit's activities that is sent to parents so that they can see the unit in its whole context and not just in relation to their own children. Parents are invited to attend an end-of-year assembly when certificates and awards are presented to pupils, followed by a celebration tea.
97. The key stage leaflets for pupils' and parents' information suggests that the unit expects 'a small amount of homework to be done at home'. Homework is regularly set but some parents express the view that their children would benefit

from more homework. Inspection findings show that higher attaining pupils spend significant amounts of time on their homework as they complete coursework at GCSE. Older pupils say that the amount of homework is about right but they admit that they are able to complete some tasks quickly and, on these occasions, would benefit from homework that presented greater challenge. Homework is used generally more effectively, however, in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9.

98. The very nature of pupil referral units means that parents are not always able to be as involved in daily activities as they might be in mainstream schools. The date and location of the pre-inspection meeting for parents and carers meant a disappointing turnout and, indeed, few questionnaires were returned. However, the inspection team were pleased to receive a sizeable number of letters from parents expressing their thanks for what the unit does for their children, for the way they are included in its work and kept so well informed of their children's progress. Several of them commented on how much better their children are now doing since they have been removed from the pressures of mainstream secondary education. They are appreciative of the efforts made by the unit staff and are keen to respond and support pupils during their time there.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

99. There have been significant improvements in the leadership and management of the unit since the last inspection. The head of centre and the local education authority have worked together very effectively to remedy weaknesses identified in the previous report and the unit is now very well led and effectively managed.
100. The head of centre provides clear educational direction, which ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff work well as a coherent team, that staff morale is high and that there is a shared commitment to continued improvement and development. As at the last inspection, the head of centre provides a very effective role model for other teachers in the high quality of her own teaching, as well as in her overall leadership of the unit. Other staff who have management responsibilities fulfil their roles effectively and the key stage co-ordinators provide good support to the head of centre. Responsibilities are clearly delegated and well defined. Senior managers work closely, identifying possible areas of improvement and supporting other staff in the development of the unit. Subject co-ordinators provide effective support and guidance for their colleagues.
101. The introduction of quite extensive systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating provision has contributed a great deal to the improvement in leadership and to the quality of provision since the last inspection. Several policies have been written or updated, and development planning – including a three-year development plan – is now capable of supporting further development. Documentation is clear, and coherent systems now underpin the unit's work.
102. A particular strength in leadership is the way the unit analyses its overall effectiveness through the use of an extensive range of performance data, related to the academic progress of pupils, their personal development and other aspects of provision. It analyses its assessment, attendance, exclusions and other performance information by age, gender and in relation to the background of pupils. The unit compares itself with other units by using data issued by the local education authority, moderation of GCSE coursework, joint policy development within the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service, through head of centre meetings with other units, in-service training, county co-ordinators' statistics on attendance,

and examination and reintegration rates. The head of centre has recently completed a self-evaluation exercise, in which each area of provision has been reviewed, in an attempt to identify opportunities for potential development.

103. The unit is making good progress in introducing performance management, and it already has systems in place for monitoring and reviewing teachers' work and setting targets, as well as evaluating whole-establishment performance. A systematic programme to improve teaching by observing lessons and giving feedback to teachers on their strengths and weaknesses has led to good improvement in teaching since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in this inspection, whereas 12 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory in the last inspection.
104. Since the last inspection, there has been a strong emphasis on using professional development to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers have received training to teach the curriculum to pupils with different learning styles, and senior managers have used monitoring to improve the way literacy and ICT are used in lessons. They have also worked to ensure that staff identify clear learning objectives and that they share with pupils the assessment criteria. Monitoring has led to improved behaviour management, and the teaching and learning policy provides useful pointers to teachers. It shows clear understanding of what constitutes good practice. Since most of the teaching is at least good and a significant amount is very good, there is scope for using the characteristics of the best teaching to inform the remaining teaching and to tackle some minor shortcomings in teaching and learning. There is, in particular, much to be gained from comparing the work of individual pupils in different lessons. It was noted during the inspection that pupils are challenged significantly more by some teachers than others and that they rise to the challenge. This shows that there is scope for some teachers to raise their expectations and to learn from the strategies employed in the best teaching.
105. Further monitoring appropriately covers other aspects of the unit's work. The head of centre and key stage co-ordinators review pupils' progress every half term. Subject co-ordinators regularly meet with other teachers of their subject and monitor their work. The curriculum working party has started to monitor teachers' planning, literacy and ICT links, and the effectiveness of the curriculum is monitored through a range of activities, involving feedback from pupils and parents, as well as looking at outcomes. Informal interviews are held with support assistants and pupils, and there is ongoing monitoring through staff meetings. The unit has, rightly, identified the need to begin regularly sampling pupils' work as a way of further ensuring their progress. There is also a need to compare standards between one subject and another, because there is currently some disparity between the level of work expected of the same pupils by different teachers.
106. The findings from monitoring activities are linked well with ways of adapting practice to raise attainment; for instance, the English audit identified the need for all teachers to provide further help to pupils in Years 7 to 9 in structuring their writing. As a result, all subjects are now required to contribute regularly to the development of extended writing skills and a training session has been organised to increase teachers' skills in this area.
107. The local education authority (LEA) has provided extensive and rigorous support to the unit in implementing the action plan that followed the last inspection. The

LEA considered the needs of the unit very thoroughly and support has been ongoing. Regular progress meetings have monitored the progress of action in relation to the plan and the LEA has made expertise available to the unit, which has been linked well to necessary developments. Much internal improvement within the unit has clearly come from the half-termly progress meetings between the head of centre and representatives of the LEA.

108. The unit receives regular visits from its attached LEA inspector and support from the inspectorate has focused on a number of important aspects of the unit's work. Recently, there has been a focus on support and training for the introduction of the Key Stage 3 literacy and numeracy strategies. The unit's ICT co-ordinator is receiving support in the development of the subject and there has been staff training in ICT. The link inspector has worked with the head of centre and the area co-ordinator in clarifying their roles and responsibilities, in development planning and in reviewing the behaviour policy. Inspectors have also supported senior staff in the observation of teaching, and provided training in assessing teaching and learning. At the LEA's instigation, the head of centre and area co-ordinator have undergone management training for a Diploma in Educational Management since the last inspection.
109. The area co-ordinator of the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service works closely and constructively with the head of centre. The area co-ordinator is responsible for detailed monitoring of the unit's work, whilst the county co-ordinator regularly monitors the work of the unit in comparison with other pupil referral units within the authority and is involved in the effective strategic management of the unit. The LEA is kept aware of the unit's work through regular receipt of statistics and other information, and through ongoing meetings between the head of centre and the area co-ordinator where the unit's overall effectiveness is monitored and evaluated. The area co-ordinator has copies of all paperwork, and samples the effectiveness of procedures against documentation. She has a thorough knowledge of the unit's work and makes a major contribution to its effectiveness, including through her involvement in admissions and reintegration.
110. Much improved admissions procedures ensure that the unit receives only pupils who are likely to benefit from what it has to offer, and this has resulted in a dramatic and appropriate reduction in the number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need who are referred to the unit. Although increasing the proportion of pupils who are reintegrated into mainstream schools remains an area of further development for the authority, there has been an increase in the number of pupils who have successfully returned to mainstream school from the Guildford Centre and the area co-ordinator is working with teachers within her service to achieve 'seamless' support when pupils reintegrate. The introduction of a school weighting system by the LEA, whereby secondary schools are expected to accept a given number of pupils for reintegration, does much to support the re-admission of excluded pupils into mainstream schools. The reintegration team and the county co-ordinator evaluate the success of reintegration at regular intervals.
111. The management committee is effective in supporting the work of the unit and its membership has a useful multi-agency focus, including a number of secondary school headteachers. This means that the committee is able to provide valuable expertise to the unit, for example, in the review and development of policies, in producing a report to parents, in contributing to staff interview panels and taking part in health and safety visits. Since the last inspection, appropriate terms of

reference have been drawn up for the management committee, and sub-committees have now been established to increase the focus of its work. Members of the management committee have had access to training and the LEA has involved the management committee in developments since the last inspection. The head of centre provides the committee with regular reports and it is kept informed about the unit's work. There is now scope, as identified by the newly appointed chair, for members of the management committee to become more closely involved by making visits to classrooms to see the unit's work at first hand.

112. There is a good match between the qualifications and experience of teaching and support staff and the needs of the curriculum. There are six full-time and four part-time teachers. Teaching staff are experienced and the unit's staffing arrangements are, overall, very stable. Teachers' qualifications include a good range of expertise to cover the wide-ranging curriculum and the unit is fortunate to have a specialist design and technology teacher. At the time of the inspection, it was a teacher short, and this vacancy was filled by temporary staff and by other staff taking on additional duties. This arrangement did not have an adverse effect on pupils' progress or on the quality of provision.
113. The unit lacks some expertise in ICT, although several teachers have the skills to teach the subject at a basic level. The unit's ICT co-ordinator has a good grasp of the issues involved, but is not a specialist and has many other responsibilities. A subject leader was appointed to the Behaviour and Support Service with responsibility for ICT from September 2001. It is intended that the assessment and progress of pupils in ICT should improve through this appointment, and that the role of the internal ICT co-ordinator will be further developed with continuing support from the ICT inspector. The unit's ICT co-ordinator is to go on a three-day course to develop teaching in the subject, and all contract staff at the unit and one support assistant began government-funded training in ICT the summer term. With further training and support, the unit's staff have the potential to make significant developments in teaching ICT and in applying it further to the learning of many subjects.
114. A well-established system for reviewing the performance of individual teachers, including regular professional development interviews, means that training is well matched to staff needs and to the unit's identified development priorities, and that the head of centre has detailed knowledge of the work of every member of staff. She manages staffing well, adjusting roles and responsibilities and the amount of time worked in order to accommodate the changing needs of the unit. There is evidence of careful planning for professional development when a member of staff takes on a new role. For example, the teacher who has just taken on the role of special educational needs co-ordinator is to attend a course, liaise with a mainstream school, and spend time in the education office within the LEA in order to become familiar with the special educational needs team before beginning her responsibilities. The impact of training on provision is carefully considered as part of the unit's self-evaluation.
115. Good access to training is available to both teaching and non-teaching staff, and the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service co-ordinates training in behaviour management and in raising pupils' motivation. There has been a significant amount of training in literacy since the last inspection and staff are to have further training in the teaching of extended writing across the curriculum. The head of centre is aware that currently a number of teachers would benefit from further

training in personal, social and health education and that one of the two mathematics teachers is yet to be trained in the National Numeracy Strategy. Induction of new staff is effective: they are provided with a folder detailing all policies and procedures and, where necessary, support and mentoring are made available to them.

116. Non-teaching staff provide teachers with useful support and make an effective contribution to the progress that pupils make. There are two learning support assistants, one of whom is qualified in special educational needs, and a part-time ICT technician. A youth worker is attached to the unit and provides pupils with valuable opportunities for social interaction and activities beyond the normal curriculum.
117. The premises have undergone extensive refurbishment since the last inspection and now provide good facilities for the number of pupils on roll. Internal spaces have been re-modelled to create more teaching spaces of a suitable size for small classes, two additional teaching rooms (a specialist ICT room and improved facilities for art and science) and improved storage. There is also now a separate room to exclude any disruptive pupils for short periods of supervised time, which has led both to a reduction in exclusions from the unit and improvements in behaviour.
118. The head of centre has a number of plans for further developments to the accommodation, including provision of cooking facilities and the refurbishment of two more areas which are not currently used by the unit. Most of the premises have been redecorated, though the social area and two other rooms are in need of decoration. There is no outdoor area for use by the unit and the accommodation does not have access for the disabled.
119. There are sufficient learning resources to support the curriculum and the level of resourcing has improved since the last inspection. ICT resources in particular are much improved: a room has been equipped with ten up-to-date computers and Internet access, and there are three laptops for use in other classrooms. Resources are satisfactory for most subjects. They are good for English, as the co-ordinator also co-ordinates the subject across the Behaviour and Pupil Support Service and so shares resources between the two aspects of provision. The unit does not have a library but there are sufficient books in classrooms. Resources for design and technology are limited, although they have been recently improved to include new tools and benches; there are adequate resources for work in wood, but they need to be expanded for food and electronics.
120. In an attempt to counteract any gaps in its own facilities and resources, the unit makes very good use of external resources to extend the range of experiences open to pupils. Many local facilities are used for physical education, such as Guildford Youth Centre, sports centres, local tennis courts, and the climbing wall at the university. In addition, pupils go into Guildford to use the library, to the theatre and cinema.
121. Financial planning is good. There is a fixed budget to develop the curriculum within the unit, and the head of centre consults widely in order to achieve best value in spending decisions. Specific grants are used well, for example, in training staff to manage behaviour more consistently. This has led to an improvement in teaching and improvements in the behaviour of pupils.

122. Internal procedures for controlling income and expenditure are good. Although the unit has a computerised system for managing its accounts, and staff have had good training, the system cannot be used at present because the regional office is waiting for its computer system to come into operation. Therefore, manual systems are in use for managing the limited budget and this is done effectively. Staff, accommodation and learning resources, including new technologies, are used well to support the curriculum and teaching and learning.
123. In view of the very good progress pupils make in their attitudes and behaviour, their good achievement, the good quality teaching and significant strengths in the curriculum, the unit provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

124. In order to improve further the quality of education, the head of centre and staff with management responsibilities should:

- (1) Refine assessment practices by:
 - ensuring that pupils' individual difficulties in literacy and numeracy are diagnosed precisely;
 - using the resulting assessment information to devise individual learning targets and to inform lesson planning.
(Paragraphs 6, 8, 11-12, 55, 63, 66, 85, 89, 91-94).

- (2) Use the existing characteristics of the best teaching and learning to inform practice throughout the unit, particularly ensuring that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations;
 - provide work that is closely matched to pupils' prior learning;
 - make use of stimulating resources and a variety of learning activities capable of motivating pupils;
 - set homework tasks that offer sufficient challenge;
 - ensure that sampling of pupils' work includes a comparison of standards between one subject and another, to remove any disparity between the level of work expected of the same pupils by different teachers.
(Paragraph 104).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- (1) the unit could make better provision for pupils to reflect on their own attitudes and on issues of emotional and spiritual significance;
(paragraph 74)
- (2) some staff need training in how to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on personal and spiritual matters;
(paragraphs 74)
- (3) pupils' awareness of multicultural issues could be increased;
(paragraphs 77)

- (4) especially in Years 7 to 9, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to take initiative in their learning;
(paragraphs 74)
- (5) at times, some staff ignore inappropriate behaviour and do not respond to it with sufficient firmness
(paragraphs 34, 82).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	17	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	47	28	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents three percentage points.

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	25

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	25

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	12.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	16.8

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

There were too few pupils for results to be reported.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

GCSE 2001	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Certificate of Achievement
English	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4
Speaking & listening	1	2	2	3	2			
English literature	1			2	1	1		
Mathematics		2		3	1	3	1	1
Science – single award			2	1		2	1	
Science – double award			2					
Art							2	
Design & technology					1	1		
Geography	1			1				
Religious education						1		

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	25
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	29	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.57

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	18,805*
Total expenditure	18,805
Expenditure per pupil	-
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	-

*This amount was delegated to the unit. The total LEA income related to the unit was £321,880

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	2.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Only a small number of parents and carers returned questionnaires but several wrote letters expressing their views about the work of the unit. Parents' comments are therefore summarised below.

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

- Parents are pleased that their children like attending the unit.
- They believe that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress.
- They feel that the unit expects pupils to do their best and that it provides an opportunity for them to 'turn themselves around'.
- They find the unit approachable and feel that they are kept well informed.
- They consider that the unit is well led.
- They appreciate the work and commitment of the staff.

- A minority of parents feel that behaviour in the unit is not good.
- Some parents feel their children should be given more homework.