

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOHN'S PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 130984

Teacher in charge: Jan Huckson

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell  
1405

Dates of inspection: 4 - 5 February 2002

Inspection number: 220534

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Special - emotional and behavioural difficulties
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	St John's Pupil Referral Unit Glebe Close St John's Worcester
Postcode:	WR2 5AX
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Appropriate authority:	The Worcestershire Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Jackie Tubb, Head of Learning and Behavioural Support Service
Date of previous inspection:	January 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Registered inspector	Science Art Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of unit is it? How high are standards? The unit's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the unit led and managed? What should the unit do to improve further?
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector		How well does the unit care for its pupils? How well does the unit work in partnership with parents?
27409	Susan Hunt	Team inspector	English Geography History Modern foreign language	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
21822	Helen Maskew	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT**

St John's is a pupil referral unit, (PRU), for pupils aged 5 to 11 who have either been permanently excluded from school or who are in danger of permanent exclusion. The agreed maximum roll is 16 and presently 11 pupils attend for all or part of their education there. There are four boys who are on the roll of the unit only, and attend part time. A further five boys and two girls are dual registered attending both at the unit and at local primary or special schools. The unit supports, through outreach work, a further 16 pupils aged between 5 and 7 and 36 pupils aged between 7 and 11. All pupils are white and come from British families. All have been identified as having significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and their attainments on entry to the unit are below the average for their age. None, however, has a statement of special educational need. A high proportion of pupils, 60 per cent are eligible for free school meals and most come from families who live in areas of economic and social disadvantage. The unit aims to support its pupils and give them confidence so that they come to believe that they can be successful learners. It aims for all pupils to return to full time mainstream education or to appropriate special schools in the shortest possible time.

### **HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS**

The unit is very effective. It is led with great clarity of purpose. By thorough planning and very good management, the serious weaknesses, identified at the last inspection, have been eliminated. The unit now has many strengths. Teaching and learning are of very high quality, provision for pupils' personal development is very good and liaison with local schools is excellent. Because of this, the unit achieves its aim of returning pupils to full time attendance in mainstream or special schools within the shortest possible time. It gives very good value for money.

#### **What the unit does well**

- Teaching of very high quality leads pupils to make substantial gains in their learning
- Excellent relationships between adults and pupils and the careful adherence by staff to a well thought out strategy for managing their classes helps pupils to improve their behaviour and develop very good attitudes to learning
- Literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively and pupils are given opportunities to make use of and extend these skills in other lessons
- It makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development
- It supports its pupils very well and takes thorough steps to ensure their protection and welfare
- It is very successful in enabling pupils to return to full time school education as quickly as possible and it offers high quality support to the schools that receive its pupils to make sure that this reintegration is successful
- Leadership is of very high quality; there is a clear sense of purpose and the unit is very well managed

#### **What could be improved**

There are no weaknesses that need to be addressed immediately. However, the local education authority should take into account a small number of more minor shortcomings that are alluded to in the text, when drawing up its action plan in response to this report

*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 was last inspected in January 2000, when it was found to have serious weaknesses. Since then improvement has been very good. Teaching and learning, management of behaviour, the monitoring of the quality of education, assessment of what the pupils know, understand and can do, the recording of assessment and the curriculum and its management are all now areas of strength rather than weakness. The reintegration of pupils into schools is now speedy and successful. Better provision is made to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and teachers' performance is regularly assessed and reviewed.





## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 6	Key	
English	A	very good	A
mathematics	A	good	B
science	A	satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	poor	E

All pupils make very good gains in English, mathematics and science in response to the high quality teaching they receive. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very effective and pupils who have previously been unsuccessful in their attempts to read, write and spell, gain confidence, and begin to move forward. Most have developed usable skills in these areas and are prepared to try these out by the time they are reintegrated into school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make very good progress in their science. They learn to ask questions about what they observe and investigate. They readily make suggestions to explain what they see. Pupils make very good progress in personal social and health education in which they learn to recognise and manage their feelings. Good progress is made towards the targets set for pupils in their individual education plans. These targets have recently become much more precise making it much easier to judge whether or not they have been attained.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Very good. Pupils pay attention during their lessons and complete the tasks they are given. They are very pleased when their work is praised and recognised, they enjoy their break times, the attention they receive from adults and the social opportunities the unit provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In classrooms, behaviour is generally very co-operative and at break times, pupils are sociable. During their time at the unit, pupils' behaviour improves and they learn to recognise and control their impulses.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Very strong and effective relationships are swiftly formed between pupils and the adults who work with them. This leads to improvement in the way in which pupils treat one another. Often pupils develop sufficient personal skills to successfully sustain their place in mainstream schools.
Attendance	Good. Pupils show their commitment to the unit by attending regularly and improve their personal attendance record.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Very 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 was very good in the great majority of lessons observed and good in the remainder. Teaching is very good in both English and mathematics where sensible adaptations have been made to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to better meet the particular learning needs of pupils in the unit. Literacy is taught very well. As a result pupils, while they are generally below average in their attainments, become more confident and fluent readers and they extend their capabilities as writers. They improve the legibility of their writing, the accuracy of their spelling and increase the amount that they can write. Numeracy is also very well taught and pupils use their skills in other lessons including science. Teaching is very good in science where the older pupils benefit from having their lessons in a properly equipped science room at another centre. Very good teaching in personal, social and health education enables pupils to confront those issues of personal development that are of greatest significance for them. The quality of teaching in humanities lessons is high. Teachers are well informed about the requirements of the subjects that they teach and they have very clear understanding of their pupils' attainments, their individual needs and the ways in which they learn best. They manage behaviour very well and their classrooms are calm. Lesson planning is thorough and of high quality and the objectives of lessons are made clear to pupils. Teachers go through pupils' work with them, individually, so that they are clear about what they have achieved and what they need to improve which is very good practice. The needs of those pupils who have more significant learning difficulties are very well met. As a result of the very high quality of teaching they receive, almost all pupils quickly develop more positive attitudes to learning. Over the relatively short time they are in attendance, while there are some lapses, their classroom demeanour improves significantly and they learn and practice acceptable behaviour. They become proud of what they have achieved, this is clearly seen in their pleasure at receiving awards for their work, and having it carefully displayed within the unit.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The unit provides a range of learning opportunities that complement those offered in the schools that most pupils also attend. There is a strong and necessary emphasis on the teaching of personal and social skills. Basic skills are taught very well and the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are met well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The unit is very effective in its support of pupils with special educational needs including those with learning difficulties in addition to emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The unit provides clear moral guidance and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Their social development is strongly fostered by the example of the staff and by the way the pupils' time within the unit is planned. Spiritual development is promoted well both within lessons and by the example provided by the staff of calm, patience, courtesy and respect for others. In their work pupils have encountered and learned a little about the beliefs and customs of others and a good deal about art and music from their own culture.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils and the child protection policy and procedures are understood and adhered to. Individual education plans are much improved and very good assessment practices ensure that what pupils know, understand and can do is known to teachers and is used to inform planning. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and promoting good behaviour are highly effective, as are the anger management classes that help eliminate bullying. Pupils are very well supported through the process of returning to full time education in school.

The unit works well with parents and provides them with information of good quality that they value. Parents think well of the unit.

### HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head-teacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership provided by the acting teacher in charge is vigorous and of very high quality. Other members of staff have responded well. They are conscientious in carrying out their duties in relation to the curriculum and liaison with schools in which they support pupils. The unit successfully realises its prime aims; to return pupils to full time education in schools as soon as possible and to equip them with the confidence and skills to succeed as learners.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The local education authority carries out its responsibilities very well and fulfils its legal obligations. The management committee provides a useful source of encouragement and support for the unit and its members are aware of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the unit's work.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The provision made by the unit is effectively monitored and kept under review by the Learning and Behaviour Support Service, of which it is a part and the management committee. Plans to strengthen provision are derived from accurate knowledge of the unit and its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The learning and behaviour support service deploys its staff very effectively to ensure that pupils receive the best teaching and learning support possible. There is a necessary emphasis on using staff that know the pupils to support the process of reintegration. Resources for teaching and learning are used effectively and very good use is made of the accommodation provided for the unit. The local education authority compares the effectiveness of its provision and its costs with those of similar authorities. It strives to ensure that the best value is obtained.

There are sufficient, experienced and qualified staff to meet the needs of the pupils and the requirements of the curriculum. Accommodation is good and the unit is well resourced.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the unit keeps them well informed about their children's progress and works closely with them</li> <li>• That they feel comfortable about approaching the unit with problems</li> <li>• That the unit is well led and managed</li> <li>• That the unit has highest expectations of their children, teaches them well, enables them to make good progress and become more mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small number of parents felt behaviour was a problem and that their children did not like going to the unit</li> </ul>

The inspectors' findings support the very positive views of parents. Behaviour was found to be good and attendance rates and the attitude of pupils firmly suggests that the great majority enjoy being at the unit.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The unit's results and pupils' achievements

1. Achievement is very good and in the short time they are at the unit, both boys and girls are helped by first-rate teaching to work harder and accomplish more than they have in the past. Because of this, pupils gain confidence in their own ability to succeed. This has a positive impact on their classroom behaviour and makes their chance of success when they return to school much greater. On entry, pupils' attainments are in most cases below the average for their age. A minority, however, achieve age appropriate standards in some areas. There are fluent readers, for example and a small number with good computational skills in mathematics. Precise targets are set for pupils in literacy and numeracy. These targets challenge the pupils to take the next, necessary, steps towards attaining the standards that they should. In setting these targets, account is taken of the pupils' known accomplishments and degree of learning difficulty. These targets are, in most cases, met within the time prescribed and this provides an important indication that pupils are making very good progress.
2. Pupils make very good gains in **English**. By the age of 11, speaking and listening skills are well developed. The unit places a strong emphasis on promoting attentive listening and encouraging pupils to put their thoughts and feelings into words. There is much discussion in lessons and good opportunities for conversation at breaks and lunchtime. The younger pupils enjoy discussing characters from a 'Big Book' during literacy hour and show their grasp of the functions of words when they are asked to use adjectives to describe characters in the story. One Year 4 pupil described the frog prince as having 'goggly eyes, a pointed nose and a fat face.' Vocabulary increases as pupils encounter new words in their lessons and in the stories they read. Pupils are sufficiently confident to make an attempt at defining unfamiliar words when they have an inkling about the meaning from their previous learning or from the context in which it is written. For example, a pupil accurately defined the word 'riddle' as 'a word puzzle'. By the age of 11, pupils sensibly discuss how to manage their feelings, especially anger, during 'circle time' when pupils work together with their teacher to share their feelings and ideas in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Pupils aged 10 and 11 discuss their previous work with their teacher during literacy sessions. They remember what they have learned and are able to use what they recollect to help with their present learning. They know that words are divided into syllables and the names of parts of speech. They show this knowledge by correctly identifying words in text as nouns, verbs or adjectives. Pupils make very good progress in reading. Many are willing to read aloud in class and most recognise the significance of punctuation. Their reading skills develop very well and the less fluent readers make use of the strategies they have been taught to sound-out unfamiliar words. Writing skills develop very well. By the age of 11, pupils use punctuation correctly and their writing is joined and legible. Spelling is well supported in activities across the curriculum and individual pupils expand the number and complexity of words that they spell accurately. They write simple stories well. Pupils from the age of 8 predict possible endings of stories and write a short description under pictures to describe their content. They also write letters to friends and short, imaginative poems. All pupils' work in English, but especially that related to the literacy skills of reading and spelling, is strongly supported by the precise individual targets that are set for pupils in their individual education plans. These targets bring necessary focus and precision to learning. Pupils are aware of their targets and as these are reviewed, replaced or renewed they develop a clear understanding of their own progress and of the things that they must do next.
3. Although most pupils' attainment in **mathematics** is below average for their age when they come to the unit, standards of achievement are very good and the majority of pupils make much better progress than might be expected. In their work on number, they increase their skills and experience and, by the age of 11, are confident in their knowledge and understanding of tables up to 10. Higher attaining pupils know the difference between regular and irregular fractions, are familiar with the notation used in calculating problems with fractional numbers and clearly explain the difference between numerator and denominator when asked. In their work on shape and space, most pupils confidently recognise right angle, isosceles and equilateral triangles. Younger

pupils know from their work on shape, the names of a broad variety of regular two-dimensional figures and their defining characteristics, such as their number of sides. They use correct mathematical terms when they describe the features of a pentagon and trapezium. Work on three-dimensional geometrical shapes has led to high levels of recognition. Most pupils, for example, when asked, can point out the differences between a cone and a pyramid.

4. In **science**, pupils respond to the advantage of having their lessons in a well-equipped science room by sustaining their interest and developing their curiosity about the world around them. By using a practical, investigative approach, pupils have built up their knowledge of facts and their understanding of physical and natural processes. They make very good progress and they record their ideas and the results of their investigations accurately. By the age of 11 they know that matter can take the state of solid liquid or gas and that by using heat the state of matter can be changed. They become more accurate in their ability to estimate the weight of solids or the volume of liquids. Instruments are used properly; for example, pupils can read temperature using a thermometer. They are aware of the temperatures at which water boils and freezes. Through a lively experiment related to evaporation and condensation, they solve the puzzle of what becomes of the salt when seawater evaporates to form clouds and, subsequently, condenses to form rain. In their work on healthy living pupils come to recognise the importance of a balanced diet and of personal hygiene. They come to know that microbes can be beneficial organisms when they appear in yeast or yoghurt but harmful in other cases where they are the causes of illness.
5. Achievement in **humanities** is good. A new co-ordinator has devised a comprehensive programme of work in history and geography based on advice given by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, (QCA), for pupils who are aged 7 to 11. History and geography is alternatively taught each half term. By the age of 11, pupils have well-established knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development. For example, in their weekly geography lesson, they showed clear understanding of the universal need for water and suggested many ways in which water is used and plausible means by which it could be saved. Pupils' past written work shows that they have a good grasp of geographical and historical skills; pupils display knowledge of map reading, they have made chocolate from an old Aztec recipe and they have produced Aztec calendars. In history, they have learned about significant eras in the development of the United Kingdom including life in the time of the Tudors and during the Second World War. While studying the Second World War, they compared the recreational activities in 1940 to those of the present day and they learned about the hardships that affected the life of ordinary people such as the scarcity of food and rationing.
6. Pupils respond well to the increased opportunities that they are offered to improve their basic skills in **information and communication technology (ICT)**. Each pupil has one session a week of individual teaching by the ICT Co-ordinator. Many pupils come into the unit with poor experiences of ICT since their behaviour in their mainstream school often led to them being excluded from practical lessons. As a consequence, some are very much behind their peer group in the acquisition of basic computer skills. The individual teaching they receive, therefore, has a very positive effect on improving their skills in ICT. After a few weeks in the unit higher attaining pupils navigate around the screen, word-process simple documents, open and save files, use simple graphics, data bases and print their work. Lower attaining pupils navigate around the screen and access software programmes that enable them to improve their reading, vocabulary, spelling, sentence construction and numeracy.
7. **Physical education** is taught as both a discrete, timetabled subject and, more incidentally, through break time activities that are supervised by the teachers. Pupils make significant progress in developing their ability to work effectively with others, to judge and value their own and others' contributions and, within the limited space and resources available, to increase their agility and mobility. In one lesson, for example, pupils were challenged to work as a team to decide how to get over an imaginary electric fence while keeping physical contact with each other. They then were given the further challenge of crossing a 'river' using two 'stepping stones' without falling in. After some discussion and trial and error, they successfully completed both challenges. Pupils join in physical activities very enthusiastically and have a good understanding of the importance of 'warming-up' before any physical exercise.

8. Pupils make very good progress in **personal, social and health education**, (PSHE), where the main purpose is to enable them to recognise and manage their feelings. Good progress is made towards the targets set for pupils in their individual education plans. These targets have recently become much more precise making it much easier to judge whether or not they have been attained.
9. Pupils now entering the unit have attainments in the same range as those who attended when the unit was previously inspected in 2000. However, pupils presently achieve much more and make more rapid progress than was then the case. Achievement in English, mathematics, science, humanities and ICT is now significantly higher. Pupils raise their attainments while at the unit to a level that will enable them to sustain more effectively their placements in schools.

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

10. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to the unit. During the inspection all pupils arrived with positive attitudes and settled down to work very quickly. They responded well to all staff and they particularly liked the opportunity, at break times and at lunch, to chat among themselves and with adults. The value that the pupils place on their attendance at the unit is shown by the lack of any evidence of vandalism and the respect they give to wall displays. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are interested in their work and particularly enjoy the practical opportunities for learning that they are regularly offered, but, importantly, they apply the advice they receive to their own behaviour. This was shown, for example, in a humanities lesson when pupils were asked to clean their teeth to see how much water was used. While they were gleeful on encountering this unexpected activity in a lesson they still maintained their self control and were very sensible in noting down the amount of water they had used and in discussing ways of saving water and preserving the environment. Again, in a PSHE lesson, where pupils were discussing how to cope with angry feelings, while they were very aware of their own feelings, they still showed keen interest in others and were willing to listen to them and share ideas.
11. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the unit is good because it is managed very well, and consistently, by all staff. The 'green zone' reward system is consistently used in the unit, in the playground and when pupils are receiving their lessons in local primary schools. This is a distinct improvement since the last inspection, when inconsistency in the management of behaviour was reported that led to pupils being disruptive and inattentive. Pupils respond well to the clear structures and expectations of the staff. Because they are clear about the consequences of misbehaviour, they try to help each other. For example, during an English lesson, classmates quickly reminded a new pupil who was attempting to be disruptive, that what he was doing would move him out of the 'green zone' and he would lose privileges. The pupil's behaviour immediately improved.
12. Good improvements in pupils' behaviour, that are the rule rather than the exception, enable the majority to move successfully and quickly back into schools. The unit has not found it necessary to permanently exclude any pupil over the past twelve months.
13. Pupils' personal development is very good; pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and exercise the positive choice to behave well. Initially they are helped by the clear system of rewards and sanctions to make the most beneficial choice, but, eventually, where the unit has been most successful, pupils begin to do what is right of their own volition. Relationships within the unit are very good, staff are treated with respect and there is good humour and positive rapport between staff and pupils.
14. Parents, mainstream schools and other agencies involved with the unit agree that pupils develop in confidence and self esteem during their stay in the unit. This progress is a major factor in the success of pupils reintegrating so well into mainstream schools.
15. Attendance at the unit, for the most recent reporting year, is good and compares well with attendance at the time of the previous inspection. Unauthorised absences are low. The majority of pupils improve their personal attendance significantly during their stay and this directly benefits their efforts to become successful learners.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching since the unit was last inspected. It is now very good and, through their clear knowledge of what they should teach, their great understanding of the individual needs of their pupils and their effective management of their classrooms, teachers make it possible for their pupils to learn effectively and to believe and demonstrate that they can succeed. Because of this, pupils try hard and they meet, in most instances, the high expectations that their teachers have of them. Throughout the lessons pupils keep up their efforts and when they produce good work they are very proud of it. Individual plans are used to set targets both in learning and behaviour and pupils are fully aware of what is expected of them and the extent to which they are meeting these expectations. When, as happens from time to time, individual pupils, who have greater emotional and behavioural difficulties, become uncooperative there is sufficient support provided to allow such pupils to recover their composure away from the classroom, so that the learning of others is not jeopardised. The support given by learning support assistants in both helping to manage behaviour and developing pupils' general learning is of very high quality.
17. Teachers have worked hard to keep themselves well informed about the most effective means of teaching the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. They understand the national strategies, and have adapted them well to meet the needs of the unit. They are careful to ensure that the opportunities to reinforce the skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and spelling that occur in subjects other than English are taken. Likewise numeracy and spatial awareness are reinforced whenever possible in other subjects.
18. Teachers' planning is thorough and, by continually assessing their pupils' attainments, teachers ensure that pupils are given lessons that take them forward and challenge them to achieve more.
19. The management of the behaviour of pupils is very good. Consistent use is made of a system that links privileges to good effort and behaviour. Pupils know where they stand and are clear about what they must do to put things right if they do the wrong thing. Praise is used very well to provide pupils with motivation and feelings of achievement. As a consequence, pupils begin to learn effectively and to respond positively to the chances that they are given to improve their own standards. They quickly develop respect for the simple conventions of learning in a group, such as turn taking and listening quietly to the contributions of others. As time passes, they move past the stage of merely being able to work individually alongside their classmates to a point where they are able to collaborate with others and share.
20. The teaching and learning in **English** is very good and the basic skills of literacy are taught very well. The quality of teaching in English has improved very significantly since the last inspection because teachers have improved their understanding of what should be taught and manage their pupils more effectively. Sessions are extremely well planned. Pupils are assessed immediately on entry to the unit and within each lesson very specific targets are set for each pupil that are based soundly upon their known capabilities. Once these targets are achieved fresh ones are set. Targets in literacy are reviewed as a matter of course every half term. Because of this, pupils are given work that interests them and matches their abilities. This together with very good individual support by the new assessment teacher, the class teacher and support assistants enables pupils to make very good progress. There is a very good range of activities in each English lesson and pupils are fully involved in learning. Good use is made of information and communication technology to help any pupils with a communication problem and all pupils have the opportunity of using a computer to improve their spelling skills. The teaching of reading is particularly effective, well recorded and involves the pupils in recording their own accomplishments. Teachers adopt the good practice of linking reading and writing activities; for example, pupils write short reviews of the books they have read. Learning is fostered and the technical content of work made more accessible by introducing elements of play when possible. Pupils learning about the make-up of words, for example, played a game called 'silly bulls' with their teacher. They soon came to recognise that words may be divided into syllables and that in some cases the last syllable indicates the purpose of the word.

21. Teaching in **mathematics** is very good and much improved since the last report. As a consequence, pupils' learning is much better. Mathematics lessons are effectively planned and have a structure that supports learning very well. Clear objectives are set at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what outcomes are expected of them at the end. Very quickly, new pupils overcome initial reluctance to participate fully. The relationship between all staff and pupils has a very positive effect on learning. Pupils want to please the teachers and are generally very co-operative, listen attentively and work hard. On those occasions when behaviour becomes difficult or challenging, the teachers and support assistants are very effective in calming the situation, with minimal disruption of the positive atmosphere in the classroom. Maths lessons are often fun and very good use is made of board games at the end of lessons, to reinforce concepts learned earlier. The teachers challenge pupils to show what they know, understand and can do. Where pupils are confident in an explanation of their work, the teachers encourage them to use their speaking and listening skills with minimal intervention. In a very good lesson on two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes for pupils aged 8 and 9, most demonstrated their past learning by accurately recalling subject related words such as 'vertices', 'isosceles' and 'equilateral' and went on to accurately apply these terms. Where pupils are having more difficulty in understanding, the teachers respond and support appropriately. Learning is well supported by a wide range of stimulating resources. Mathematics lessons are practically based and pupils have many opportunities to touch and manipulate a range of objects to reinforce their understanding of number, shape and measurement. A good range of computer software for mathematics is also used effectively to support learning.
22. The timing of the inspection prevented teaching in **science** from being directly observed. However, the work completed, by pupils still attending the unit, and the assessment records of the teacher clearly show that it is effective. Lessons address a well-planned series of topics covering the areas prescribed by the National Curriculum and they are offered, in a well-equipped science room at another nearby centre, by a specialist teacher of science.
23. **History** and **geography** are taught alternately term by term. The quality of teaching observed in geography is good. The plans seen for lessons in history, teachers' records of pupils' attainment and progress and the past work of pupils confirm that teaching in history is of similar quality. In a good lesson in geography for pupils aged 9 to 11, the topic, water, its uses and how it may be conserved, stimulated great interest in the pupils and the teaching capitalised on this. As a result, pupils are able to suggest cogent reasons to explain why in some areas of the world there are water shortages. They link, for example, the lack of standing water in lakes and pools in some hot countries to evaporation caused by the sun. Sustained interest in this lesson enabled pupils to take in some essential facts. They had very good recall of their visit to a local environmental centre and remembered how the fictitious character 'Walter' had wasted water. In a practical activity pupils cleaned their teeth and measured the amount of water they had used recording this in their books. Throughout the teacher was very well prepared to meet the individual learning needs of all the pupils and displayed good subject knowledge.
24. Although no individual lessons in **information and communication technology** were seen, very good use is made of ICT in almost all other lessons, particularly literacy and numeracy. All staff have skills which enable them to support the learning of basic skills, including the support staff who often work one to one with pupils to reinforce the concepts learned in the classroom. In numeracy, this was used very effectively in a lesson on fractions when one pupil was able to improve her understanding of numerators and denominators using appropriate software. Planning and assessment are very good and the ICT co-ordinator liaises regularly with class teachers.
25. Teaching of **physical education** is very good. This high quality was evident in a lesson where the wet weather prevented the planned outdoor activity. In this instance the teacher made use of a very good contingency plan and transferred the lesson it successfully to the classroom. The teacher led her class by example. Both she and the support assistant changed for the lesson in which activities centred on collaboration, co-operation and taking turns. Here physical education was skilfully used as a means of improving personal development as well as physical skills. Throughout the lesson, because of the quality of the teaching, good examples were seen of pupils sharing equipment, working together to solve problems and listening to each other. Group work



such as this has a positive effect on pupils' social development and increases the collaborative skills they need when returning to mainstream schools.

26. The limited time available for pupils in the unit means that **music** is no longer taught as a discrete subject. However, it is used effectively by teachers to calm the atmosphere when pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, and to assist learning in other subjects. In a literacy lesson, for example, the teacher brought in a metronome to demonstrate the beat of a rap poem.
27. **Personal, social and health education** is very well taught. Within lessons, 'circle time' is used very effectively to help pupils to recognise feelings such as anger and deal with them. This makes a very strong contribution to their personal development.

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

28. The quality and range of the curriculum are good. Improvement has been substantial since the last inspection and the curriculum weaknesses identified in the report have been eliminated.
29. The length of time pupils remain in the unit before being returned to school has been decreased. The unit has well developed plans to make full time provision for all permanently excluded pupils by the time that this becomes a national requirement for all pupil referral units in September 2002. Presently, at the time of entering the unit each pupil has a clear reintegration plan. This helps to ensure that the length of their stay is kept to a minimum.
30. The curriculum has been modified to reflect the unit's very strong emphasis on returning pupils to schools. Appropriately, it now gives priority to work in literacy, numeracy, science, ICT and physical activities. Personal development is also a very important component of the curriculum. Although no longer taught as discrete subjects, art and music are both used effectively in many lessons to enhance learning. Very good improvement has been made in the use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Improvements in literacy and numeracy form the basis for the academic targets set in individual education plans.
31. Work done in the unit complements what pupils are doing in school and enables them to achieve more than they otherwise would when they are in their school sessions. This encourages continuity of learning. Relationships with partner schools are very good. This helps pupils to return to mainstream schools as quickly as possible. From time to time, pupils who require extra support with both learning and behaviour are placed at the unit for assessment prior to their placement in appropriate special schools. This process is carried out efficiently and it is helped by the good links that exist with the special needs and psychological services of the local education authority.
32. The organisation and management of reintegration is excellent. Unit staff continue to work with their pupils in the schools they attend and plan thoroughly to anticipate and remove possible obstacles to successful reintegration. The strategies used to ensure that pupils move from being the shared responsibility of the unit and the school to being the sole responsibility of the school are effective. Local headteachers, who agreed to contribute their views, support and value it. They offered glowing praise for the professionalism of the unit staff.
33. The quality of individual education plans (IEPs) has improved and is now very good. Targets for achievement and behaviour are clear and well monitored. Very good use is made of a proportion of the timetable for all pupils to work individually on learning targets in their IEPs. This is particularly effective in helping to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. Consistent attention is given throughout the day to ensure that pupils are beginning to manage their own behaviour more appropriately and meet the behaviour targets in their plans.
34. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory. Constraints of the timetable and the limited use of a shared minibus mean that pupils do not have access to a wide a range of activities in the wider county. However good use is made of visits within the City of Worcester. Pupils have visited the

local library, Worcester Cathedral and Bishop's Wood Forestry Centre. These visits are used effectively to enrich the curriculum. Visitors are encouraged and include the local vicar, professional cricketers from Worcestershire County Cricket Club and the Community policeman. A saxophone quartet recently played for them and practical music sessions, led by music teachers employed by the local education authority have been provided. There is, however, room for the further development of extra-curricular opportunities.

35. Provision for personal development is very good. The unit provides clear moral guidance and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Their social development is strongly fostered by the example given by the staff of calm, courtesy and respect for others. Also there are supportive structures within the unit including the 'zone board' behaviour management system and the time spent in PHSE lessons on anger management. Targets for improving attitudes and behaviour are shared with individual pupils and they are well aware of what they must do to improve. Spiritual development is promoted well, both within lessons and on the many occasions when pupils are given opportunities to reflect quietly. Within their lessons pupils have chances to experience moments of awe and wonder, for example when they discover that they can make 'rain' inside a sealed container in their work in science. Teachers ensure that, in the course of their work, pupils encounter aspects of their own culture. They become familiar with the work of renowned Western artists and listen to the music of great composers such as Mozart. They also spend a little time learning about the beliefs and customs of other peoples. Recently, in anticipation of the Chinese New Year, they have completed work on the traditional Chinese calendar. A useful link has also been made, using electronic mail, with a teacher who has moved to Ghana. It would be advantageous if more planned opportunities of this sort were offered to the pupils so that the very limited experience of the customs and beliefs of other cultures and ethnic groups is extended.

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

36. The unit has very good policies and procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. These are significantly improved since the last inspection. Thorough training in child protection procedures has been given and all staff know their responsibilities. Very good liaison on these matters is maintained with the local social services department. There is keen awareness of the need for confidentiality in these matters and sensitive documents are kept securely.
37. A staff member has been trained to properly oversee health and safety procedures. In accordance with the unit's written policy detailed risk assessments are made. Portable electrical apparatus is safety tested and fire prevention equipment is properly checked. Regular fire exercises are held and escape routes are well marked and accessible. There is a trained first-aider who also takes the responsibility for giving out medicines and recording the distribution.
38. All pupils are picked up from home by special transport. An attendance register is maintained in detail and there are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Where pupils are unaccountably absent, parents are contacted by no later than 10.00 am of that day. The educational welfare officer is used well to follow up cases of unauthorised absence.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating that of an oppressive nature are very good. There is a simple system of rewards and sanctions known as the 'zone board.' By reference to this and to the targets set for them pupils know if their behaviour is acceptable and if it is improving. There is an appropriate restraint policy. All staff have recently attended a positive handling course. A good feature is that those who escort the pupils to and from the unit are also trained to observe behaviour and this makes for great consistency in the way in which pupils are managed. Because pupils are never left on their own bullying rarely arises. However, pupils can talk privately to staff if they have fears or concerns. Pupils are sufficiently confident to discuss some of their concerns during circle time or at assemblies. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are very good. The personal, social and health education programme provides opportunities for staff to work on and record pupils' progress towards mastering their feelings and collaborating with others. The transport staff

also provide a 'tea and toast' service during morning break which is very much appreciated by pupils and staff. This provides a focus point for social interaction between pupils and between pupils and staff. Overall, the unit provides its pupils with a very calm and safe environment in which they can flourish.

40. Procedures for the monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. When pupils first come into the unit, teachers thoroughly assess their levels of attainment in basic skills. The information that this provides forms a good basis for teachers' planning and target setting. Teachers continually monitor pupils' progress and speak to them about how they are getting on and what they must do to improve even further. Pupils are made very aware of what their targets are both for their academic progress and the improvement of behaviour.

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

41. The majority of parents and carers have very positive views of the unit. They believe that it is well run and that it works closely with them. They feel very well informed about the progress their children are making and they feel comfortable about approaching the unit with a question or problem.
42. The unit still provides good quality information for its parents as it did at the previous inspection. Each parent is given a clear and detailed information booklet. When pupils are reviewed and when individual education plans are made parents are invited to contribute. Parents are informed about how they may have access to staff and in most cases there is good communication by telephone, home visits by the staff or visits by parents to the unit. All pupils have a home/school dialogue book that provides daily communication between school, unit and home. Most parents find that this is very helpful. When their child leaves the unit, to commence school-based education, each parent is sent an end of placement report.
43. The contribution that parents make towards their children's learning at the unit and at home is good. Attendance at pupil reviews is very high and parents do have the opportunity to come in and sit with their children, sometimes taking time off work to be with them. There is a constant flow of correspondence between staff and parents about how the parent can best help their child's learning. For example, by helping at home with reading.
44. The unit has highly effective links with parents and this aspect of its work has improved since the last inspection. This contributes towards the success of their children's learning.

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

45. The last inspection identified significant shortcomings in the leadership of the unit because there was no permanent teacher in charge. In addition, the management committee for the unit had not, at that time, begun to meet. Following the inspection a permanent teacher in charge was appointed and carried out her role until recently, when, for personal reasons, she resigned. Efforts have been, and continue to be, made to appoint a teacher in charge but at the time of this inspection these duties were being carried out by a team leader from the county Learning and Behaviour Support Service, who would in any case have responsibility for closely monitoring the performance of the unit.
46. The leadership provided by the acting teacher in charge is vigorous and of very high quality. She knows the staff very well and has deployed them so as to make the best use of their strengths. She has acted decisively to monitor and improve the quality of the curriculum and teaching and ensure that effective means are in place to manage behaviour. She has very clear understanding of the purpose of the unit and has successfully communicated her vision of the educational direction it must take to all the staff who work within it. Through her support and encouragement the teachers within the unit have broadened their understanding of the unit's purpose and successfully taken on leadership roles in aspects of the curriculum and in liaison with schools and other agencies. All members of staff have responded well and are conscientious in carrying out both their curriculum-related duties and their liaison with schools in which they support pupils.
47. Because of very good leadership and management, the unit is successful in achieving its aims. Pupils return to full time education in schools as soon as possible and they do so equipped with the confidence and skills to succeed as learners. The management of the complex business of liaising with many schools and providing qualified staff to meet a wide variety of learning needs is carried out very effectively. As a consequence, parents and children receive, in full, their entitlement to a suitable education while they are out of school or attending part-time.
48. The local education authority (LEA) carries out its responsibilities very well and fulfils its legal obligations. The management committee now provides a useful source of encouragement and support for the unit. Members are aware of the strengths and the few relative weaknesses of its work. The LEA, through its Learning and Behaviour Support Service, monitors provision made by

the unit effectively and keeps it under review. Through this service, also, a policy for managing performance is applied to the unit. Targets are set for teachers and for senior managers and their work is monitored and reviewed. By these means weaknesses in what is provided are readily identified and can be addressed to ensure that the provision improves steadily. Resources are used effectively and the LEA takes steps to ensure that best value is obtained.

49. There are sufficient qualified and very experienced teachers to deliver the full curriculum and to provide a valuable service to local schools. Support assistants including two transport staff play an invaluable role in enabling pupils to succeed in their lessons. Teachers' expertise in their subjects is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There is now very good knowledge amongst the staff about effective means of managing behaviour.
50. While the unit is given strong leadership by an acting teacher in charge, there are plans to make a permanent appointment shortly.
51. Arrangements for the professional development of staff continue to be as good and effective as they were at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and support staff have access to courses and training that are relevant to the needs of the PRU and their own professional development.
52. There is good clerical support and the complex administration necessary to ensure the smooth running of the unit is competently handled by the PRU's administrative officer. Good use is made of information and communication technology.
53. Resources are good and support learning well, particularly for basic numeracy and literacy skills. The library is small but well equipped and provides a place for reading and quiet reflection.
54. The accommodation is good. It is well maintained and staff make it very attractive. It provides a good environment for pupils to work in; at the present time, it provides enough teaching space for the number of pupils attending. There is now an ICT suite containing seven computers and printers. The area at the back of the unit provides a very well equipped attractive adventure playground for the pupils. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

55. The unit has made very significant improvements since it was last inspected. The serious weaknesses that were then reported have all been eliminated and areas that were weak are now strengths within the provision. There are no weaknesses of such significance that they must be addressed at once. There are, however, a small number of more minor short-comings mentioned in the body of the text and identified below, that the LEA and the teacher in charge might wish to take into consideration when drawing up the action plan in response to this report.
56. Minor issues
  - (A) There are a few planned opportunities within the subjects of the curriculum to encounter the work, belief and customs of peoples of diverse ethnicity and culture and these should be increased. (Paragraph number 35)
  - (B) There are some, but not many, extra-curricular opportunities and these could be further developed. (Paragraph number 34)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

13

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	4	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	70	30	0	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 more than one percentage point.

### Information about the unit's pupils

#### Pupils on the unit's roll

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the unit's roll

11

#### Special educational needs

No of pupils

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register

11

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%

Unit data

13

#### Unauthorised absence

%

Unit data

2

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	74,082
Total expenditure	74,082
Expenditure per pupil	6,735
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	1.7
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	2.4

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

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	13
Number of questionnaires returned	5

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	40	20	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	60	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	0	80	0	20	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	40	0	0	40
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	100	0	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	100	0	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	100	0	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	20	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	40	0	0	20

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Those who attended the parents' meeting were extremely supportive of the PRU. There were no comments written on the returned questionnaires. The inspectors' findings support the positive views of parents. Inspectors also found that all pupils who were asked enjoyed attending the unit and standards of behaviour were good.