

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHWELL PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Kingston upon Hull

LEA area: Kingston upon Hull

Unique reference number: 132026

Headteacher: Julie Shave

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 26th-28th March 2001

Inspection number: 230076

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Ashwell Centre Ashwell Avenue Kingston upon Hull
Postcode:	HU9 5LJ
Telephone number:	01482 798606
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Appropriate authority:	LEA
Name of responsible officer	Colin Herrick
Date of previous inspection:	Not previously inspected

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Alastair Younger (Ofsted number 23587)	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Art Geography History Physical education (PE)	The characteristics and effectiveness of the unit. The unit's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the unit led and managed?
Susan Walsh (13786)	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety. How well does the unit work in partnership with parents?
Michael Holohan (1769)	Team inspector	English Information communications technology (ICT) Design and technology (DT) Modern foreign language Music Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes and personal development. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered in the unit?

The inspection contractor was: QICS

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the unit	
How good the unit is	
What the unit does well	
What could be improved?	
How the unit has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the unit	
How well the unit is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the unit	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The unit's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: UNIT DATA AND INDICATORS	20

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The unit has been open for one year. There are places for up to 25 boys and girls aged between 11 and 14 who have either been, or are facing, exclusion from mainstream schools in Hull. Nearly all pupils have full time placements. About one half remain on the role of a mainstream school. Boys outnumber girls about 2:1. All pupils are white and English speaking, almost one third have statements of special educational need. Most pupils are underachieving on entry and come from less privileged areas of the borough.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

This is a very good unit. Teaching is good, resulting in pupils learning well, making good progress and achieving the targets that teachers set them. Pupils are proud of the unit, display very good attitudes and behave well. The curriculum is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. Costs are realistic and nearly all pupils attend well, thus benefiting from what the unit has to offer. The unit provides very good value for money.

What the unit does well

- Teaching is good, it promotes pupils' learning and helps them achieve well and make good progress
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management
- Pupils are keen to work and behave well
- A very good range of learning opportunities is provided for pupils. There is a very strong emphasis on personal development
- The unit is a safe and happy place

What could be improved

- The unit needs a management committee. The head is being gradually overburdened with work that should be being shared.

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 not previously been inspected

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 16
English	B
mathematics	C
science	C
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A

Key	
very good	A
good	B
satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
poor	E

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

Pupils achieve well and are making good progress. This is because teaching is good and pupils respond well to the very good learning opportunities presented to them. In English pupils achieve particularly well in speaking and listening. Their reading improves, as does their writing, but many pupils remain reluctant to write to any great length. Pupils' literacy skills develop well. Satisfactory achievement in mathematics is consistent in all areas of the subject curriculum and with regards numeracy. There is satisfactory achievement in biology, physics and chemistry, the three main elements of the science curriculum. Achievement is very good in PSHE with pupils building up a very useful body of knowledge to help their personal development. Achievement is good in all other areas of the curriculum except information and communication technology and physical education, where it is satisfactory. All pupils make very good progress in meeting clear and realistic targets related to their individual needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Very good. At the unit pupils show they want to learn and participate keenly in lessons and activities. Many parents express the view that their children are happy and enthusiastic about attending the unit and that this is a unique experience for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils make very good progress. Nearly all pupils quickly overcome their problems but occasional lapses occur and have led to 14 fixed term exclusions in the past year. Improvements in behaviour are one of the main reasons why pupils make good academic progress.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are proud of the unit. They are understanding of the personal difficulties faced by one another. Pupils quickly learn routines and are conscientious in looking after their work. Very good relationships are fostered and pupils become increasingly aware of the effect their behaviour has on others.
Attendance	Whilst attendance does not match the standard set nationally for mainstream schools, pupils make excellent progress in improving their attendance and are proud of this achievement. There is no unauthorised absence, an excellent achievement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	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.

None of the teaching observed was less than satisfactory. 72% was good or better and 20% very good or better. This high standard of teaching motivates pupils and encourages them to work hard. This results in individual needs being met, pupils learning well and making good progress. Teaching is good overall in English and PSHE. It is satisfactory overall in mathematics and science.

A strong aspect of teaching is the way teachers form very good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour very well. Teachers also question pupils well and mark their work thoroughly and constructively. This helps pupils to understand what they have achieved in a lesson and where they need to improve. There are no consistent weaknesses in teaching but occasionally teachers focus too strongly on what they are teaching and not enough on what pupils are learning.

Overall, basic skills are well taught. Teachers show a particularly good understanding of the importance of promoting literacy skills in all lessons, irrespective of the subject being taught. There is less consistency in the teaching of numeracy, but teachers are growing in their understanding of how to implement national strategies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils have access to a very broad range of learning opportunities. There is a strong focus upon English, mathematics and science and a very strong programme of PSHE figures very prominently. This ensures that all pupils have access to an appropriate education. Links with other professional agencies are excellent. These help pupils to return successfully to school by utilising the expertise of other professionals operating outside the education system.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. About a third of pupils have additional special educational needs, usually moderate learning difficulties. These pupils have full access to the curriculum through a combination of effective learning targets and good quality learning support in lessons. The unit makes good use of assessment to identify pupils' learning difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Particularly good attention is paid to pupils' social and moral education and there is good provision for their spiritual and cultural education. There are visits to galleries and museums and pupils are taught about their local culture. Pupils are encouraged to understand and tolerate the opinions and beliefs of others. Their work and effort is valued and success celebrated.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Very good. The unit is a safe and happy place. There is strong guidance from policy and agreed procedures, consistently applied, help promote better behaviour and attendance. Very strong assessment procedures ensure that individual needs are identified and good use of the information gained is made to provide pupils with appropriate work.

Parents are extremely supportive of the unit and feel their children are making good progress. They admire the headteacher and staff and fully support them.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher shows an exceptional understanding of what has been achieved and what needs to be done. She has played an enormous role in ensuring that in the short time the unit has been open it has achieved a standard rarely found in such establishments. This has been done with considerable support and hard work by staff with responsibilities for subject development.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	There is no management committee. This has resulted in extra work for the headteacher and also for LEA officers acting in the capacity of the appropriate authority. Nevertheless, the unit has been very well supported by the LEA which has clearly stated the role it expects the unit to play, the type of pupils that will be referred and the curriculum it expects them to be taught. In this respect all statutory duties have been very well fulfilled.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There has been frequent and effective monitoring of teaching and the curriculum by the headteacher and the LEA. The newness of the unit means that in some areas, such as academic achievement and behaviour, there has been more monitoring than evaluation but as data builds up they are being well used to raise standards.

The strategic use of resources	Good. The unit controls only a very small budget but it does this well. Resources have been well chosen to support the curriculum. Specialist areas of the accommodation are put to good use.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress their children are making and the regular reports they get about it • The quality of the headteacher and staff • The openness and helpfulness of staff 	A very small minority of parents voiced criticism of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework setting • behaviour • their own involvement

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents but there is no evidence to support the minority views expressed regarding weaknesses.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and achievements

1. Pupils achieve well and are making good progress. This is because good teaching and good pupil response to the very good learning opportunities presented to them is helping them to meet individual targets. Most pupils have been underachieving for long periods prior to their referral. This is usually as a result of poor behaviour, frequent change of school and long and frequent periods of exclusion. Attending the unit is helping all pupils to meet their personal targets and return to school successfully, occasionally after only a few weeks.
2. Full time provision, in advance of statutory requirements, is significantly helping this process. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls or of pupils of differing ability, including those with statements of special educational need. Academic work is very well planned to ensure that, even when delays are encountered in returning pupils to school, they continue to make good progress and achieve well over their longer stay in the unit.
3. Achievement in English is good. Speaking and listening skills are well developed through the emphasis placed on discussion in lessons and the encouragement of dialogue at breaks and lunchtime. An example of high achievement was the quality of discussion when pupils planned a scenario for a film. They proved themselves able to make sensible contributions and to listen to each other carefully. Pupils also make good progress in reading. Many are willing to read aloud in class and recognise the significance of punctuation. Careful planning of individual reading programmes effectively addresses individual weaknesses. Reading skills are further developed through work in drama and poetry which give them rich and varied opportunities to read aloud and to themselves. Pupils make good progress in writing. They use basic punctuation well, identifying the need for full stops, commas and speech marks.
4. There is satisfactory achievement in mathematics. It is consistent in all areas of the subject curriculum and in numeracy. There is a suitable focus on ensuring that all pupils develop mental arithmetic skills and can complete calculations in line with their ability. Most pupils recall multiplication facts from memory; the lowest attaining, from their 2, 5, and 10 times tables, and the highest from all other tables. Pupils know the names of common two and three-dimensional shapes, calculate their respective areas, perimeters and volumes and measure angles accurately. They read a good variety of scales, such as those found on thermometers, meters and gauges and draw accurate graphs and charts using information they have gathered and entered in tables. When solving problems, pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of how to handle money and calculate change from transactions. Where pupils are not achieving enough is with regards developing a sufficient understanding of investigating number and shape patterns.
5. There is satisfactory achievement in science. Pupils identify and name the main bones and organs of the human body and use simple keys to identify small organisms. There is a good focus on experimentation and pupils have tested the speed of their reflexes, recording their results systematically and then converted these data into bar charts in a good link with numeracy. In each lesson, key words are identified, helping pupils to build up a satisfactory science vocabulary. Pupils occasionally use computers to help them present charts and graphs to a high standard. Pupils achieved particularly well in a

lesson when they were learning about the use of air pressure to lift objects. They extended their vocabulary, using 'mass' and 'pneumatic' correctly in discussion, performed a simple experiment well and finished the lesson wanting to learn more. Where pupils are not achieving enough is in the designing of experiments and using recognised formats for recording their investigations.

6. Achievement is satisfactory in ICT. Pupils word-process text, using the keyboard and mouse effectively. They alter the layout of their work, changing typeface and size of print to create effect and save documents correctly to give easy access when returning to them. Higher attaining pupils access and use preloaded software to undertake exercises such as the preparation of a newsletter. Although pupils were seen establishing databases, many required significant amounts of support.
7. Pupils achieve well when participating in practical design and technology activities. They use small hand tools and electric cutting and shaping machinery safely and effectively. In a good link to numeracy they carefully measure dimensions and mark out their work, such as when creating 'lap joints' in woodwork. Pupils have produced models of human figures with moving parts and use plastic moulds to make vacuum formed models such as cars or a hovercraft. They have produced land yachts with axles and wheels and have tested them in the playground. In food technology, pupils prepare and serve food such as an English breakfast as part of their accredited ASDAN course. As part of other ASDAN modules they tend an allotment, have re-felted the roof of a garden shed and helped restore and decorate the adjacent community centre. All of these have contributed significantly to the breadth of achievement in practical work.
8. Achievement is good in music. Pupils develop a musical vocabulary with a understanding of words such as tempo and rhythm and this helps them to describe the music that they listen to. They recognise that music can be used to create a mood, such as sadness in a blues lyric, and are aware of how changes in tempo and rhythm create the effect. Pupils name the parts of musical instruments, such as strings and frets of a guitar, and use keyboards to compose and play simple tunes.
9. Achievement is good in art. Pupils are developing good painting techniques. They show a good understanding of colour and select appropriate brushes, such as when they compose good pictures of underwater scenes. In addition to this they show a good understanding of the work of many famous artists and demonstrate this by creating pictures in the style of those such as Monet, Picasso and Van Gogh. Achievement is limited in other areas, such as three-dimensional work, by a lack of resources.
10. Achievement is good in history and geography. Opportunities are created, whenever possible, to combine the two. Pupils recognise the factors that combined to promote the development of Hull and place it correctly on a map of Humberside. As part of their ASDAN studies they have visited the Humber Bridge Country Park. They describe how to get there, citing the distances involved, time taken and the different forms of transport that can be used. Pupils have learned about the history of the building now occupied by the unit but formerly a primary school. They have studied photographs and newspaper cuttings, which they recognise as 'sources'. In a good link with work being done at this stage in mainstream schools, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of life in mediaeval times, predicting whether selected artefacts bore more relevance to rich or poor people.
11. Achievement is very good in PSHE. Much of the achievement is closely allied to ASDAN modules. In a first aid module, pupils have learned about choking and the respiratory system. In an environmental studies module they have sorted household refuse

recognising that much of it is recyclable and that by doing so they can preserve valuable resources. Also in ASDAN, pupils have learned to help others by participating in a 'Community Challenge', helping to improve an adjacent building.

12. All pupils participate in physical activities and their achievement is satisfactory overall. In weekly visits to a local leisure centre they improve their swimming and play a variety of indoor games, such as badminton, where they learn the rules of the game and improve their technique. Achievement is also promoted through adventure activities such as mountain biking, rock climbing and abseiling.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the unit. Informal meetings with staff at the start of each day are relaxed and enjoyable. Pupils enjoy opportunities to mix informally with staff at break and lunch times. The value that the pupils place on their attendance at the unit is illustrated by the lack of vandalism and the respect shown for wall displays. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, with interest being shown in classroom and practical situations. For example, in a design and technology lesson where pupils were making vacuum formed plastic models they used cutting and moulding machinery with care and were engrossed in their work. In an English lesson where pupils were discussing gender stereotypes, they showed a keen interest and willingness to share ideas and to listen to others.
14. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is good. This represents very good progress from the extreme behaviour that made their referral necessary. Pupils respond well to the clear structures and consistent expectations of the staff. Behaviour is at its best in interesting lessons when pupils show themselves to be perceptive and highly motivated. In a history lesson about mediaeval times, for example, pupils listened with keen attention. In an English lesson pupils discussed their work in a mature fashion, paying attention to others' ideas and contributing their own ideas with confidence. When pupils are away from the unit and being taught by non-unit staff, behaviour occasionally deteriorates. Nevertheless, improvements in behaviour enable a significant majority of pupils to reintegrate successfully and quickly into mainstream schools.
15. There have been 14 fixed term exclusions since September 2000, many for only a day or less. This accurately reflects the clear expectations of the unit staff and effectively demonstrates the initial difficulties that several pupils have in conforming to those expectations and their weaknesses in self-restraint.
16. Relationships within the unit are very good. Staff are treated with respect and the positive rapport between staff and pupils is demonstrated by the good humour which characterises the atmosphere of the unit. Pupils respond well to free time during the unit day and use it well to mix socially. Parents, mainstream schools and other agencies involved with the unit agree that pupils develop in confidence and self-esteem as they move through the unit. This progress is a major factor in the success of pupils reintegrating into mainstream schools.
17. Whilst not matching the standard set nationally for mainstream schools, pupils make excellent progress in improving their attendance and are proud of this achievement. Many pupils have recorded 100% attendance over the past term. No unauthorised absence has been recorded this term, an excellent achievement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good. Of the teaching observed none was less than satisfactory. 72% was good or better and 20% very good or better. This high standard of teaching motivates pupils and encourages them to work hard resulting in individual needs being met and pupils learning well and making good progress.
19. Pupils respect teachers and this helps in the formation of strong relationships. In turn this means that pupils listen to reason, knowing that teachers are not being unreasonable in their demands, and this significantly promotes good behaviour. Lessons are well planned and teachers question pupils very well, in a manner that ensures that pupils of differing ability should be able to answer the questions they are asked. This helps motivate pupils, gives them confidence and creates a sense of achievement for all.
20. Work is marked thoroughly and constructively. This helps pupils to understand what they have achieved in a lesson and where they need to improve. Good summing up at the end of lessons also helps this process, as, for example, at the end of an art lesson where all pupils contributed constructive criticism and the teacher pulled this together, adding useful snippets of theory to broaden pupils' understanding.
21. Many lessons incorporate good opportunities for pupils to participate in activities that they enjoy and which contribute to their involvement. Thus, when pupils sort of refuse in a PSHE lesson, the experience promoted a good degree of discussion and raised issues that might not have been identified in a more formal and theoretical lesson. There is extensive use of worksheets. During the inspection these were often used well to support teaching and to help pupils overcome difficulties with recording but the amount of worksheets in pupils' files suggests that there is occasional overuse and that there should be a greater expectation on pupils recording their work in more imaginative ways.
22. All teachers take great care to try to incorporate opportunities for promoting the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in their lessons. A particularly good understanding of the importance of promoting literacy skills was seen in nearly all lessons. Teachers are identifying key vocabulary and regularly reinforcing it. Good marking ensures that correct spelling, writing and presentation is encouraged. There is less consistency in the addressing of numeracy, but teachers are growing in their understanding of how to implement national strategies and incorporate numeracy targets into lessons.
23. In each lesson there is at least one teacher aide. These contribute well to the effectiveness of lessons. Sometimes, as in science, they help with classroom organisation; in other situations they support individual pupils with either more pronounced behaviour or learning difficulties. Lessons of 35 minutes are long enough for teachers to address learning objectives and reinforce what has been learned, they also take into account the limited attention spans of pupils and this helps maintain good behaviour.
24. There is a good, innovative, approach to homework. Recognising that conventional systems for setting homework have often failed in previous mainstream schools the focus of homework has become closely linked to PSHE. At the beginning of each week, pupils are set appropriate exercises, usually related to English and mathematics, by their form tutors. The exercises are collected and marked at the end of each week and achievement celebrated. The most important feature, however, is the promotion of expectation and responsibility.

25. There are no consistent weaknesses in teaching but occasionally teachers focus too strongly on what they are teaching and not enough on what pupils are learning. This happened, for instance, in a science lesson where, although pupils were interested, the work that was planned was over-optimistic for lower attaining pupils. This resulted in too much being done for them, and a lack of emphasis on what they could investigate for themselves.
26. Teaching in English is good. Lessons are well structured with high expectations of work and behaviour. Elements of work are individual to each pupil and this, together with good individual support, enables all pupils, including those with special needs, to make good progress. Emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' independence through extended pieces of writing, such as stories which rely on developing situations such as being alone or devising a scenario for a film. Teachers have a clear understanding of the teaching of literacy and using assessment procedures to ensure a close match between individual work and pupils' abilities. Very good records of reading are kept and these are supported by the pupils' own book reviews. Questions are used well to consolidate and to extend learning. Very good relationships and interesting work ensure few problems with behaviour and a calm hardworking atmosphere.
27. Mathematics teaching is satisfactory. It is shared by five different teachers, none of them specialists. The impact of the lack of specific subject knowledge is limited by very thorough planning and tightly structured lessons. It is, however, evident in the lack of confidence with which teachers enter into dialogue with pupils to enthuse and guide them, the pace of lessons and the setting of precise learning targets. Nevertheless, lessons often incorporate practical activities to help interest pupils. Using a mail order catalogue, for instance, when researching 'cheapest' and 'most expensive' helped pupils to relate what they were learning to a real life situation that was of relevance to them. Individual needs are being well met by sensible deployment of teacher aides, as when a more withdrawn girl was encouraged to participate and did so because she was confident that she was being personally supported and prompted. A weakness in the teaching of numeracy is the over-use of worksheets.
28. Science teaching is satisfactory overall, varying between very good and satisfactory in observed lessons. At its best it creates a very high level of interest from pupils. A particularly well taught lesson in which pupils were separating a mixture of iron filings, sand and salt, the practical activity reflected high expectations, tailored the method of recording carefully to pupils' ability, and helped extend scientific vocabulary. Behaviour was very well managed in the lesson by keeping the pace fast, deploying support well and maintaining very good dialogue with pupils. In a less successful lesson the teacher ended up doing more and more for the lower attaining pupils because he had overestimated their ability and understanding. This was the result of planning which did not recognise the specific needs of individuals.
29. Teaching in design and technology is good. Lessons are well planned with a range of interesting activities. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and the very good relationships and clear instructions mean that they do so safely. Discussion is used effectively to resolve problems and good support is provided. There are high expectations for pupils' attention and application. Progress in pupils' skill development is well recorded and is linked to the tasks undertaken.
30. Teaching of ICT is satisfactory. Subject recording procedures are good and the scheme followed is well matched to a non-specialist teacher. Whilst there are high expectations of behaviour there are occasions when pupils are slow to start and spend too little time on the allocated task before being allowed to use games. The subject is well resourced

and teachers use resources well. Teacher aides are effective in ensuring that pupils with special needs can participate in the lesson.

31. Teaching in music is good. There is an emphasis on discussion and group participation. Tasks are interesting, for example writing the lyrics of a blues song, and behaviour is well managed, being gentle and based on the strength of relationships. Teacher aides are well deployed and provide an effective contribution.
32. Art is well taught. A good, creative atmosphere is established in lessons by the relaxed approach of a knowledgeable teacher. Pupils are treated in a mature fashion and good attention is paid to encouraging choice as well as promoting technique. A wide range of resources, such as videos and books, is used to inform and encourage pupils and conversation is well focused on the artistic merits of work. The very good pace of lessons and the relationship between teacher and pupils result in lessons where errant behaviour does not become an issue. What weakens teaching somewhat is that the hand of the teacher is all too often apparent in the work of the pupil and the balance between encouragement and interference is not sufficiently recognised.
33. The observed teaching of history was good overall. At its best it created a high level of interest, as when pupils studied the class system in mediaeval times. High quality questioning by the teacher helped involve every pupil and demonstrated a comprehensive subject knowledge. Very good use of praise and a humorous, light-hearted approach helped maintain good behaviour. A weaker lesson tried to repeat the same topic with a less co-operative group of pupils and the teacher's lack of confidence became evident in the lowering of expectations rather than adapting the lesson to better suit the needs of individuals. No geography was being taught during the inspection but evidence shows that pupils are achieving well and the subject is taught by the same teachers, leading to the judgement that teaching of both subjects is of a similar standard.
34. Teaching in PE is satisfactory. Only one lesson could be observed and this was disrupted by an organisational problem, not of the teacher's making. The strengths of the teaching were that every pupil was involved and teachers set a good example by being appropriately attired. They offered individual attention to pupils and encouraged co-operation in a game of badminton. The main weakness in teaching relates to subject knowledge. Thus, whilst pupils were offered simple skills coaching, there was not enough attention to other aspects of PE, such as scoring or health.
35. PSHE is very well taught. Much of the programme is closely allied to ASDAN modules. Clear targets are set. Thus, when pupils were planning an outing, their targets included important social aspects such as 'listening to other peoples' ideas'. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. This helps to motivate them and on occasion creates excitement. Consistently good questioning ensures that the teacher identifies any pupil who does not understand and then ensures that good additional help is offered by support staff.

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

36. A very good range of learning opportunities is provided. The local education authority has produced a curriculum policy statement and the unit has used this to develop a good quality curriculum statement showing how it will deliver its stated objectives.

37. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. It broadens their experiences and helps them to make up for what they have missed in previous schools. There is a good match to the subjects of the National Curriculum but no foreign language or religious education is offered. A very good emphasis is placed on the teaching of English, mathematics and PSHE, with daily sessions for each group. Provision for developing literacy skills is good, being both imaginative and well matched to pupils' individual needs. The curriculum for developing numeracy skills, whilst satisfactory overall, is less effective and is over reliant on work sheets and repetitive exercises. Planning is well developed in all subjects. The provision of good schemes of work is helping to monitor progress in all subjects.
38. Careers' education provision is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements but links with the local careers' service are underdeveloped. Vocational opportunities, through links with a local college, are provided for long-term pupils but as most pupils only attend the unit for six weeks, opportunities for vocational education are limited.
39. There is a very good programme of PSHE, which reflects the pupils' needs and experiences. Part of this work consists of ASDAN modules. Pupils who are in the unit for a six-week placement complete the First Steps unit and pupils who stay longer are able to work towards their bronze awards. The unit also delivers very good sex and drug education using experts from the wider community.
40. About one third of pupils have additional special educational needs, usually moderate learning difficulties. These pupils have full access to the curriculum through a combination of effective learning targets and good quality learning support in lessons.
41. The unit has excellent links with the local community and makes very good use of the resources available in the local community. This is especially evident in the ASDAN programme. Pupils tend a local allotment and enjoy growing vegetables. They visit a local country park for cycling and walking and have had experience on the local indoor climbing wall. Pupils have redecorated a room at the local community centre with murals involving cartoon characters. Local residents appreciate their hard work.
42. There are excellent links with other educational establishments. There are plans to extend the unit day and many local agencies are involved in these plans. Local secondary schools are very appreciative of the unit's work. Communication between the unit and the pupils' mainstream schools is very good. This includes very high quality written information. The quality of these links is a very significant factor in the successful reintegration of pupils. The reputation of Ashwell in the local community is high. The positive learning opportunities that are offered are recognised as being of great value to the pupils.
43. The unit make good provision for pupils' spiritual development through subjects such as English and art. Although there is no formal religious education, opportunities are provided in humanities lessons for pupils to consider spiritual issues. Pupils have also written perceptive poetry and stories in which they explore their and others' feelings.
44. Moral values are very well promoted. Clear expectations of behaviour, supported by a readily understood code of conduct and the very good role models of staff, result in a very good ethos. All staff positively encourage pupils to have respect for each other and to value each other's opinions. The high value that staff place on each pupil's contribution is an important element in giving pupils the confidence to discuss moral values and sensitive issues.

45. Provision for social development is very good. Breaks and lunchtimes are shared experiences, with staff and pupils enjoying each other's company. The emphasis on group discussion in lessons is successful in teaching pupils how to present an argument and to listen to other's views. The very good quality of the personal and social education lessons provides pupils with structured opportunities to discuss social matters. The very good relationships between staff and pupils gives the unit a strong sense of community and shared purpose.
46. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn of their own and others' cultures. Visits to art galleries and museums develop pupils' awareness of art and the history of their own area. Music gives them an insight into other cultures through the study of American music and interesting displays of the previous history of their building give them a sense of continuity with the past.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The unit fulfils its aims by emphasising the care of the pupil. It provides an environment where pupils feel safe and valued, are encouraged to feel better about themselves and start to believe that they can achieve.
48. There are very good procedures in place for child protection and to ensure that pupils are safe. The child protection policy is of very good quality and the unit follows locally agreed procedures. The named person and the second person have both had appropriate training. Very good links are being forged with social services. Each pupil is assigned a contact teacher who is responsible for pastoral care. They have considerable responsibility for monitoring pupils' personal development and discuss targets with pupils on a daily basis.
49. Arrangements for assessment are very good. For many pupils, information about their prior attainment is limited. The unit has quite rightly recognised the importance of establishing exactly what pupils can already do and there is careful assessment of reading, writing, numeracy and behaviour and social skills. Ongoing assessment procedures in English and science are very good, allowing targets, closely matched to individual needs, to be produced and used. Mathematics assessment is satisfactory. The quality of assessment enables teachers to write very high quality pupil profiles which provide mainstream schools with detailed information prior to reintegration. Mainstream schools appreciate the quality of information and support they receive prior to reintegration.
50. Very good arrangements are in place for monitoring attendance and promoting good attendance. These have been very effective in reducing unauthorised absence. The attendance of each pupil is carefully monitored. Parents are expected to phone the unit if their children are absent. Most are conscientious about this. If they forget to call the unit contacts them on the first day of absence. A computerised registration system is very well used to monitor attendance data. Pupils receive awards for improving their attendance rates. Excellent improvements in attendance rates are not just achieved because of very good monitoring systems. Pupils actually like attending, they enjoy the positive atmosphere of the unit, the very good supportive relationships and the interesting lessons.
51. The unit has very good systems in place for monitoring behaviour and promoting good behaviour. Parents and pupils are told of the high expectations of behaviour. Pupils'

social behaviour is carefully assessed as soon as they start to attend. There is a good quality behaviour policy and a clear set of rules and expectations for pupils. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect, fairness and equality. Pupils' behaviour is reviewed on a weekly basis and new targets are set. Staff work together to develop very good quality behaviour strategy plans and the outcomes of these plans are regularly reviewed.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS?

52. Parents are very satisfied with the unit. Many are anxious that their children should not be permanently excluded from school and are relieved that at the unit they are improving their behaviour. Parents are encouraged to become more involved in their children's education. The unit works hard to reinforce the habit of working at home. Several parents have been involved in supporting their children's reading.
53. Information for parents is excellent, both in quantity and quality. Parents are expected to attend a pre-admission meeting and their views are valued. They receive a very informative prospectus that is very well written and a very high quality personal letter that sets out the unit's philosophy and approach. Parents value the regular phone contact. They appreciate being told when their children do well at the unit as well as the times when there are concerns. Teachers also write letters to parents should issues arise. Parents receive copies of the weekly review sheet and are invited to add their own comments. There are leaflets for parents which encourage them to support reading, homework and a healthy lifestyle. When pupils leave the unit to resume their education in mainstream school, parents are invited to reintegration meetings. They receive copies of the subject review which gives parents very good quality information about how their children have made progress in their lessons and with their behaviour.
54. The very good relationships with parents make a very important contribution to pupils' learning. The unit has achieved substantial improvements in pupils' rates of attendance and standards of behaviour; gaining parental support is a very significant factor.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher offers excellent leadership and management. She has very quickly established a unit which compares exceptionally well with other such units nationally. This has been achieved through her very high expectations of what can be realistically achieved and by her ability to motivate staff and pupils to achieve these. There is, throughout the unit, an atmosphere of pride and success. The headteacher shows an exceptional understanding of what has been achieved and what needs to be done in the future. This has resulted in a unit improvement plan which embraces the principles of extending the unit day, further multi-agency collaboration and increased involvement with mainstream schools. All this has been done with considerable, effective support and hard work by all staff and especially those with responsibilities for subject development.
56. A weakness in the leadership and management is that there is no management committee. This has resulted in extra work for the headteacher and LEA officers acting in the capacity of the appropriate authority. It also means that there is no independent critical party between the headteacher and staff and the LEA which employs them. Nevertheless, the extremely strong links with other organisations and professionals in the community do ensure that the views of other parties are heard and where relevant acted upon. The unit has been very well supported by the LEA which has clearly stated

the role it expects the unit to play, the type of pupils that will be referred and the curriculum it expects them to be taught. In this respect, all statutory duties have been very well met.

57. There has been frequent and effective monitoring of teaching and the curriculum by the headteacher and the LEA. A closely attached senior advisor has offered invaluable and constructive support since the unit opened. A recent unit review conducted by LEA advisers offered good guidance on points for further development. The newness of the unit means that in some areas, such as academic achievement and behaviour, there has been more monitoring than evaluation but as data builds up they are being well used to raise standards. The unit is making good use of computer technology to gather and present data, such as attendance figures, in a way that is easily interpreted.
58. The unit controls only a very small budget but it does this well. The office is run with staggering efficiency, which ensures that any required information is easily accessible and that all financial transactions, including the use of specific grants, are closely accounted for. The unit improvement plan identifies the likely cost of its intentions. There are occasional inefficiencies in the deployment of staff. At present there is a generous number of teachers whilst the unit awaits the imminent arrival of a significant number of new pupils. Most teachers do, however, use their generous non-contact time well for planning, preparation and recording.
59. Resources have been well chosen to support the curriculum and include a good range of textbooks for most subjects. There are good resources to support practical activities in the workshop, art room and laboratory. There is however, a slight shortage of good quality reference books to stimulate pupils' interest and support more independent study. Good, specialist, accommodation has been provided for science, art and practical activities and classrooms are large and light. High quality displays of pupils' work are informative and help celebrate achievement. Pupils are clearly motivated by the displays and are proud to pick out their own contributions. The weakness in the accommodation is its external appearance; a blot on the landscape, desperately in need of repair and redecoration. Whilst this does not impact on the educational standards being achieved within the building, it does nothing to promote the self-esteem of pupils and staff nor does it accord the unit with the status it deserves.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to further improve the unit the Local Education Authority should:

- Follow the advice of the Secretary of State, as contained in DfEE Circular 11/99, and establish a management committee with a clear role in supporting and guiding the headteacher in areas such as admissions, attendance, discipline, curriculum and post-inspection action. These have not been identified as areas of weakness but the headteacher is being gradually overburdened with work that should be being shared.

A minor issue that should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan for improvement is the improvement of the external appearance of the unit

PART C: UNIT DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	16	52	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	24

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	24

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

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
Unit data	15.4

Unauthorised absence	%
Unit data	0

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

Exclusions in the last unit year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0

Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	24
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	14	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

Financial information * the unit has only a very small devolved budget and has no powers to carry money forward. The budget holder is the LEA.

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	N/A
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Education support staff: Y7 – Y9

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

	£
Total income	N/A
Total expenditure	N/A
Expenditure per pupil	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	24
Number of questionnaires returned	11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes the unit.	46	46	0	0	8
My child is making good progress in the unit.	55	36	9	0	0
Behaviour in the unit is good.	27	37	9	0	27
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	27	9	9	8
The teaching is good.	46	46	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	91	9	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the unit with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The unit expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	18	0	0	0
The unit works closely with parents.	64	27	9	0	0
The unit is well led and managed.	73	18	0	0	9
The unit is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	36	9	0	0
The unit provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	91	9	0	0	0