

INSPECTION REPORT

GOLDEN HILL PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Leyland

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119106

Headteacher: Sue Parr

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 19-23 November 2001

Inspection number: 253320

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
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Earnshaw Drive Leyland Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Sue Fagg
Date of previous inspection:	28/04/98

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	How well does the unit care for its pupils? How well does the unit work in partnership with parents and carers?
29452	Chris Emerson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design Technology Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1769	Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs English Information Technology Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Golden Hill is a unit for primary aged boys and girls who have either been, or are at risk of being excluded, from their mainstream schools. There are currently 29 pupils on roll, all bar one white and all speaking English as their main language. Seven have statements of special educational need, nearly all as a result of their behavioural or emotional difficulties. A further four are in the process of being assessed. Nearly all pupils have been significantly underachieving in their previous schools, resulting in attainment on entry being well below average. Pupils are drawn from a wide area around Leyland, many from the less privileged areas.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

This is an exceptional unit. In a relatively short space of time, the outstanding headteacher has gathered together a team of excellent teachers, ideally suited and skilled for work with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, pupils make rapid progress. Educational achievement is very high and pupils' personal development is far above expected standards. Pupils are receiving a full time education, with access to all subjects of the National Curriculum. The quality of this education far exceeds that found in most schools. The unit gives excellent value for money.

What the unit does well

- Pupils make very good progress in vitally important areas of the curriculum such as English and mathematics and excellent progress in their personal, social and health education.
- It gives pupils access to exceptional teachers whose mastery of planning, organisation and management of pupils is exemplary.
- Through excellent care of pupils, and very good provision to promote their personal development, it helps pupils to behave very well and reverses their previously negative attitudes towards school and themselves.
- It provides a very good curriculum, virtually the same as that found in mainstream schools, but skilfully adapted to meet the individual needs of every pupil.
- Every aspect of leadership and management by the headteacher and staff is carried out with supreme confidence, efficiency and effectiveness.

The unit has no major weaknesses and very few minor ones

HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The unit was last inspected in April 1998, when it occupied different premises and was known as Shaftesbury House. That inspection reported that pupils made satisfactory progress and that teaching and leadership and management were also satisfactory. There has been an enormous improvement since then. Every issue identified as a weakness has been addressed. More importantly, the unit has set, and pursued with vigour, its own agenda for continuous improvement, far beyond that envisaged by the previous inspection. This is why pupils are making so much progress.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 2	by Year 6	Key	
English	A	A	very good	A
Mathematics	A	A	good	B
Science	B	B	satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A*	A*	unsatisfactory	D

other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A*	A*	poor	E
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* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

These results represent amazing achievement. What must be remembered is that on admission the pupils are often very immature and have very low social skills. As a result, staff must pay particular attention to addressing these needs whilst ensuring that pupils fall no further behind with their work. This is the reason why academic achievement does not precisely match the quality of teaching in subjects of the National Curriculum. There are, however, several higher attaining pupils who are matching, and very occasionally exceeding, national averages for attainment in English and mathematics. Progress is slightly slower in science, where teaching, although effective, is weaker than in English and mathematics. The greatest progress is seen in personal, social and health education. This is because many elements of it are addressed in every lesson, in options and at lunch and breaktimes. As a result, pupils are consistently meeting ambitious individual targets with a very high degree of success. Pupils also achieve highly in all of the other subjects being taught.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Excellent. The main reason for pupils' referral is their very poor attitude to school. Almost as soon as they arrive at the unit they respond positively to the extraordinarily high expectations of staff and the excellent example set by pupils who have been attending for longer. Without exception, parents report that their children like attending the unit and pupils themselves confirm this.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Taking into consideration the history of very poor behaviour prior to referral, pupils make excellent progress in improving it. There are still occasional incidents, some of them serious, but the atmosphere of the unit is calm. When individuals do misbehave it is usually in response to a personal crisis. Other pupils do not join in resulting in minimal distraction from learning. Behaviour at lunch and breaktimes is excellent; only a tiny minority of pupils have difficulty in coping with the extra freedom they are given at such times.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. In many respects, this is the great triumph of the unit. Pupils rapidly develop a set of values as they learn to conform to the expectations of staff. They demonstrate growing maturity through an increasing concern for other people's feelings and learn to help one another when faced with difficulty. Many pupils share responsibilities for improving their own behaviour through involvement in setting their own targets. Many also become willing helpers, performing small tasks to help staff.
Attendance	Very good. Nearly every pupil attends at every opportunity. One pupil accounts for all but one per cent of the unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 - 6
Quality of teaching	Excellent

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.

It is very rare to find such high quality teaching. Virtually all was very good or better during the inspection and almost one in six lessons were excellent. The high achievement of pupils and records of monitoring

support this judgement. In all classrooms, the excellent work of support staff makes an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning. Expectations are sky-high. This results in lessons where it is easy for the visitor to forget the reasons why pupils were first referred and the complexity of their needs. Teachers set ambitious targets for achievement, especially in the basic skills of numeracy, literacy, and personal development then skilfully adapt work and deploy support to ensure that every individual achieves success. Underpinning this is the excellence of teachers' management of pupils' behaviour. This is based upon teachers' heightened perception of potential problems. Teachers also help pupils to learn by planning activities that are varied and of interest. This usually results in pupils becoming absorbed in their work and trying hard. As a result they achieve success and behave very well. Teaching is very good overall in English, mathematics and all other subjects, except science, where it is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum very closely resembles that of a primary school. This is very helpful in preparing pupils for returning to school. There is a very strong focus upon numeracy, literacy and personal, social and health education. To this are added all the other subjects of the National Curriculum. The main reason why the curriculum is not excellent is that religious education is not taught. The unit has no statutory obligation to do so, but there is no good reason for not doing so.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Many pupils have a statement of special educational need and all pupils have reached the stage where extra, specialised help has been sought. The unit keeps a very close check on pupils and identifies needs through its rigorous assessment procedures. Individual plans for addressing needs are of a very high quality.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Particularly strong is provision for promoting pupils' moral and social development. Both of these areas are seen at their best in the nurture group, where need is greatest. Throughout the unit staff demonstrate exceptional skills to help pupils. Spiritual provision is very good, strengthened by the self-respect pupils gain and the opportunities they have to reflect on their own and other's lives; but weakened by the lack of religious education. Cultural development is good overall but weakened by insufficient multicultural education.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Excellent. Child protection and health and safety procedures cover every conceivable situation. They conform to all guidelines and are meticulously observed. Procedures for monitoring and promoting better attendance and behaviour are excellent. Their effectiveness can be seen in the standards achieved. Assessment procedures are of the highest quality, they help teachers to monitor progress closely and plan individual work for pupils

The unit works very effectively with parents. It does everything in its power to encourage them to play as full a part as they can in their children's education. Parents read and contribute to home-school books and commit themselves to attending reviews. Nearly all are very supportive of special events hosted by the unit. Staff often help parents to set 'home' targets for their children.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides leadership of the highest quality. Her clarity of vision, coupled with the enthusiasm to bring about improvement, is largely responsible for this being such an excellent unit. Leading from the front, and providing an excellent role model she has built up an excellent staff team with the collective skill to ensure that every pupil's needs are being particularly well met

How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The management team has provided steadfast support to the headteacher and staff. It is diligent in monitoring the unit through the information and documentation provided by the headteacher but it is not sufficiently involved in collecting information about standards in the unit through its own visits. The local education authority, as the appropriate authority is fully meeting all its statutory obligations.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. An external assessor recently described the unit's procedures for performance management as exemplary. They are. Systems are long established and involve every member of staff. The unit's excellent use of technology is resulting in data about pupils' progress being increasingly precisely evaluated.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The most important resource is the staff. They are deployed with great sensitivity to their particular strengths and they make particularly good use of their time. Time and energy are clearly focussed upon promoting pupils' progress rather than in the production of unnecessary paperwork and meaningless meetings

The accommodation is excellent. Classrooms are large and bright. Staff ensure that they create a pleasant and stimulating environment through varied and informative displays incorporating pupils work. Resources are very good and include plenty of computers.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy and become much better behaved • The quality of teaching and the progress their children make • They are listened to and have every faith in the leadership and management of the unit 	

The inspection team feels that parents are justified in their very positive views about the unit.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve very highly, a great improvement since the previous inspection. This is because they are being taught to an exceptionally high standard in small class groups. As a result, they receive the necessary attention and support to help them overcome their previous underachievement and reluctance to learn. Pupils are developing excellent attitudes to work and attending very regularly, thus giving them access to a very good curriculum. Last year six pupils were entered for statutory tests. One pupil achieved Level 5 in English, two pupils never fell below Level 4 in English, mathematics and science and all but one achieved at least Level 3 in each subject.
2. Achievement is virtually the same for all pupils, irrespective of age, gender or ability. This is made possible by the consistently high quality of teaching and also by the excellent assessment procedures, which are particularly well used to set very precise individual targets. These targets reflect exceptionally high expectations and pupils are meeting nearly all of them. Targets are very regularly reviewed to ensure that once they have been met, others replace them. Over the last year the unit's records show that virtually every pupil made at least good progress in literacy and numeracy, improving behaviour, becoming more mature and improving social skills.
3. Achievement in English is very good. Up to Year 2, pupils make rapid progress, learning many new words, particularly to help them express their emotions. They also build up a much better understanding of how to talk and listen to other people politely. The precision of individual learning targets coupled with constant reinforcement of correct speech in a range of social settings, such as the daily meeting, are an important factor. Higher attaining year 2 pupils speak confidently in front of a group. This progress is maintained from years 3 to 6. By year 6 pupils discuss the meanings of poems, recognising that they must marshal their facts in a convincing way.
4. Pupils' make very good progress in learning how to read. By the end of year 2 higher attaining pupils are able to read complete sentences accurately. Lower attaining pupils can recognise individual words and match pictures with words. By Year 6 pupils have the skills to analyse poetry and read aloud with fluency and confidence. It is noteworthy that they apply their reading skills to other subjects, such as researching Greek Gods in history.
5. Pupils' writing is very good. By Year 2 all pupils copy accurately with higher attaining pupils showing the confidence to write independently in sentences. By Year 6 pupils are writing successfully in a range of different ways. Fiction is written through group work, such as the story "The Haunted House" and in other forms such as play scripts of events such as visiting friends. Younger pupils are developing an understanding of the function of punctuation and it is used with increasing accuracy by older pupils. One higher attaining pupil commented, for example, that the presence of an exclamation mark meant that the sentence "must be read loud." Their technical understanding of language also helps pupils' writing, with Year 6 pupils understanding and recognising verbs, adjectives and nouns. Pupils handwriting does not develop as fast as other areas of English because there is very little emphasis on the teaching of handwriting skills.
6. Achievement in mathematics is very good. Pupils in the nurture group have made very good progress in working with numbers. The youngest pupils count and order

numbers to 10 whilst older pupils in the group can order numbers to 20 and carry out addition to 20 using blocks to help them. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop their skills in numeracy very well and begin to apply them to solve problems. For example, high attaining Year 4 pupils can solve simple written problems involving multiples of money. They identify quarters and halves in a whole shape and write them numerically. The oldest pupils in the unit can tackle a broad range of mathematical problems and work with decimals and fractions. They represent information in bar charts and plot co-ordinates to construct shapes. A third of Year 6 pupils reach the national average in mathematics.

7. Achievement in science is good. The youngest pupils are encouraged to observe their environment, for example, by looking at the weather. They know the names of parts of the body and when preparing snacks they taste and discuss the textures of different foods. By Year 2, pupils have built on this and identify foods that help them grow and those that keep them active. They have also completed very good work on dental care. Older pupils recognise that the shape of their bodies, and those of other animals, is dictated by their skeletons. They name the major bones of the body and the different types of joints that hold them together. By year 6, pupils have used simple keys to identify mini-beasts and recognise that plants can make their own food whilst animals have to eat plants to get energy. Pupils also start to handle simple apparatus and develop an understanding of the meaning of a 'fair test' in experiments, such as investigating factors which effect the rate at which water evaporates.
8. Pupils' achieve highly in information and communication technology. The increase in the number of computers and their efficient deployment means that pupils have ready access to them in a range of subjects. Pupils start from a low level of skill but by Year 2, higher attaining pupils are able to use the mouse to access programs and manipulate images whilst lower attaining pupils are developing good mouse skills. By Year 6 pupils can work independently, using the computer to underrate word processing in English and research skills in history. Very good use is made of ICT across the curriculum. In maths, for example, pupils undertake exercises such as matching fractions and in science pupils understanding of the lesson is tested by a computer quiz to test vocabulary, such as the meaning of "translucent" and "opaque".
9. Pupils achieve very well in history. By the end of Year 2 pupils have an understanding of time and the structure of the school day. Exercises that require pupils to put pictures and events into the correct order also enable pupils to develop a sense of past and present. Between Years 3 and 6 pupils develop an awareness of other historical cultures such as the Greeks and Romans. A strength of the teaching is the way in which the concept of the past is explained through art and a range of artefacts. Pupils make models of items as diverse as a Greek temple, masks worn by Roman actors and the armour of a Roman soldier. The use of computers to encourage the development of research skills is also well integrated into the teaching and learning of older pupils.
10. Achievement in physical education is very good. Pupils in the 'Nurture Group' often have great difficulty controlling their behaviour in the large space provided by the school hall. They require intensive support and very clear guidelines to ensure that they participate properly in physical education lessons. With this support, pupils follow a short story tape to link movements together in a simple sequence. By the age of 11, pupils behave very sensibly and responsibly in the hall and show initiative in assembling the apparatus. They design sequences of three symmetrical balances using the floor and apparatus. They demonstrate the difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical balances. Higher achieving pupils are well co-ordinated and follow routines well. These pupils are achieving in line with national expectations

11. Achievement in art is very good. Pupils in the 'Nurture Group' work hard to develop their pencil and brush control. They make simple representations of familiar things, for example in their painted portraits of family members, which are clearly recognisable as faces and show appropriate use of colour. Older pupils work in a range of media. They have established skills in observational drawing using pastels and chalk and painted colourful pictures of sunflowers in the style of Vincent Van Gogh. Pupils demonstrate growing confidence in creating and applying designs. For example, they use a wide range of stamps and small tools to decorate their clay candleholders.
12. Pupils achieve well in a range of practical experiences that in a school would constitute design and technology. Pupils in the nurture group make and sample different foods and use construction toys as a simple introduction to designing and building. Older pupils develop these skills, mainly in art and craft. For instance, when making their candleholders they enter into very good discussion about how important it is for them to be safe, what size they should be and how to decorate them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes are excellent. Given their previous histories of having very poor attitudes to school, pupils respond quickly and positively to the high expectations of staff and the example set by other pupils. Nearly all make a positive contribution to the unit's calm and settled atmosphere. This was seen in nearly all lessons, for example, when Year 6 pupils showed great enthusiasm playing music or pupils from the Nurture Group took part in a cookery lesson. Positive attitudes are reflected not only in the politeness and consideration shown to each other and staff, but the humour so often evident in lessons. Pupils have high expectations of themselves. This is occasionally reflected in excitement when individuals are told they will be returning to school. Mutual support was illustrated when pupils heartily congratulated a fellow pupil who had received the news of his return to school. The other side of the coin is that many pupils become so attached to the unit that they become very upset when told they have to leave.
14. Pupils achieve great success in improving their behaviour in a very short time. The youngest, most recently admitted pupils were seen, for example, walking sensibly to the hall for physical education and, on arrival, sitting and waiting sensibly without having to be told. There are occasions when pupils find themselves unable to cope in class. However, the vast majority of such incidents are short lived and pupils quickly return and settle to their work. What helps this successful return is that other pupils do not join in such incidents, but remain concentrated on their work. There are few incidents of bullying on record but, when they do occur, pupils respond well to the positive handling of staff and such incidents are speedily and successfully resolved. There has been one fixed term exclusion in the past year. The atmosphere at lunchtime is happy and chatty. Older pupils show consideration to younger pupils, such as by making way for them in lunch queues and when tidying away at the end of the meal. At break-times pupils play happily and constructively, sharing opportunities to take part in games such as skipping. Newer pupils occasionally have difficulty in dealing with less formal situations but they quickly respond to the positive atmosphere. As one Year 6 pupil said, "I like it here."
15. Personal development is excellent. New pupils quickly develop the ability to be part of a group. Increasing confidence gives them a growing awareness of their own behaviour and a willingness to accept criticism constructively. Through involvement in setting and discussing behaviour targets, pupils become increasingly responsible for their own actions. This excellent progress is well illustrated in pupils' participation in the unit's daily meeting where they very sensibly discuss their own, and other's, behaviour. They accept fair criticism and show pride in their achievements. This

demonstrates amazing progress. In these meetings the warmth, mutual regard and sense of community, in which pupils feel safe and confident, is seen at its best. For example, staff and pupils nominate one another for reward, either for good work, such as drawing a nice picture, or helping with a problem. Year 3 pupils were happy to demonstrate their work and read poetry and a Year 2 pupil felt confident enough to make an amusing complaint against the headteacher. The self-awareness and confidence that pupils develop equips them well for their successful return to school.

16. The recorded rate of pupil attendance falls short of the national average for all schools but the vast majority of pupils have a very good level of attendance. In such a small unit, the continued absence of a single pupil accounts for almost half of the total absence, and nearly all of that which is unauthorised. Several pupils significantly improve their attendance when compared to that in their school. Their very good attendance has a very positive impact on their achievement. Pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day. Nearly all late arrivals are the result of transport difficulties and delays. Lessons invariably start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is excellent and meets the needs of all pupils. This is a great improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. What makes it so good is that all teachers are consistent in their teaching and approach to pupils. Pupils quickly become accustomed to lesson after lesson of teaching which during the inspection hardly ever fell below very good and which was often excellent. Pupils come to expect the best teaching and respond to it by concentrating hard, putting in the maximum effort and making very good academic progress. Most importantly, teachers also pay the closest attention to pupils' personal development in every lesson and when a pupil experiences difficulty give this the priority it needs. As a result, whilst the teaching of most subjects is very good the overall outcome in terms of academic and personal progress justifies the inspection team's view of excellence in teaching.
18. Teachers are hugely supported by very high quality classroom assistants who help in all areas, including planning, assessment and maintaining the high standard of behaviour in classrooms. Occasionally, such as when using visual aids to promote discussion in a Year 6 personal and social lesson, they worked with up to half the class, thus giving each child much greater opportunities to speak and be heard. In such instances, teacher and support plan and work so closely as to ensure a tremendous consistency of learning. Classroom assistants also often help individuals, for instance with recording their findings in science experiments.
19. Teachers have the highest of expectations. In nearly every instance they think only of solutions and not problems. They expect pupils to learn and behave just as they would in a small primary school. When they do, they are roundly praised and when they do not, teachers have the courage to accept responsibility rather than blaming the pupil. Each individual is set ambitious targets for achievement, especially in the important areas of numeracy, literacy and personal development. It is looked upon as a joint quest to achieve these targets in the shortest possible time. To this end, teachers skilfully adapt work and deploy support to ensure that every individual achieves success. Throughout lessons, teachers constantly check to ensure that pupils understand what has been taught and question them to confirm what they have learned. In a Year 3 science lesson, for instance, when a pupil suggested that glass must be soft because it breaks easily the teacher very sensitively addressed the error of his judgement and took time to discuss his viewpoint. At the end of lessons, teachers take time with each pupil to sum up very clearly what he or she has learned and how they have behaved.

20. The excellence of teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is evident in every classroom. It is based upon the awareness that prevention is better than cure. Teachers very quickly observe the signs that suggest that pupils are struggling. In a Year 6 music lesson, for instance, the teacher quickly realised that pupils were moving from excitement to silliness as they played their compositions on chime bars. In a very calm manner she skilfully contained this, addressing pupils by name and being very specific in her demands. This meant that the silliness abated but not the enthusiasm.
21. Teachers nearly always take great care to make lessons interesting. The importance of this was seen in two contrasting science lessons. In one, pupils learning about the characteristics of materials were presented with a good selection of objects to look at, feel and smell. Pupils quickly became engrossed, behaved well and made perceptive comments. In a second lesson the teacher used his own extensive knowledge to explain how muscles create movement. The problem here was that pupils had no pictures or models to help them visualise what was being explained. As a result, they became increasingly restless and learning slowed.
22. In English, teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is characterised by high quality planning based around precise learning targets. Rigorous assessment is also an important factor in the highly effective teaching. The strength of relationships and pupil management gives pupils the confidence to try new activities and the very high expectations of staff are also an important factor. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, the subject of the daily news and phonic work was taught in a interesting way, using puppets and other visual aids in a comfortable carpeted area. Pupils responded extremely well to this approach, entering into discussion about recent events before enjoying the story of "The Three Little Pigs." A Year 6 lesson on the analysis of poetry also demonstrated the high expectations of staff and the presentation of English in a stimulating and interesting way. The discussion of the poem "Colin" with its key phrase of "its not fair" struck a chord with many pupils.
23. Teaching in mathematics is very good. It is based on very good planning, which is extremely well adapted to take account of the individual needs of pupils. This means that all pupils, including low attaining pupils and those with additional special educational needs, learn very well. Because expectations of behaviour and learning are exceptionally high, pupils try very hard and take tremendous care with their work. Lively presentation and effective use of stimulating resources motivates pupils very well so that they concentrate hard on finishing their work. Teaching of basic skills in numeracy is excellent. Teachers explain new concepts very clearly and use questioning extremely effectively to ensure that pupils have understood. Excellent support is provided by classroom assistants, who help ensure that lessons run smoothly and all pupils participate fully. The quality of teaching enables pupils to make very good progress despite the fact that their mathematical skills are often weak when they are admitted to the unit.
24. Teaching in science is good overall. It is however variable, ranging from excellent to satisfactory. This is the result of the different teaching methods being used. Where teaching is most successful, as in a Year 3 lesson on the characteristics of materials, the teacher uses wide range of different activities to teach and reinforce learning. These include practical work in small groups, discussion, group recording using a flip chart for visual impact and computer quizzes to check what pupils have been remembered. Where teaching is less successful, as in a Year 5 lesson on muscles and movement, the teacher talks too much and pupils do not do enough for themselves. This results in pupils becoming restless and losing concentration.
25. The very good quality of information and communication technology teaching and learning is best illustrated by a Year 2 lesson in which pupils were using a clip-art

programme to illustrate a poem. The well-structured lesson, with an emphasis on high standards of behaviour and expectations of work, resulted in pupils giving their best efforts. By the end of the session all pupils had selected appropriate images with higher attaining pupils working independently to alter the image to fit the page. High expectations were illustrated by the follow up task which required pupils to select a poem and work independently over the next few days to develop their own illustrations. Teachers are regularly using computers well, in lessons other than information and communication technology.

26. The very good quality of the teaching and learning in history is illustrated by a lesson on Greek gods given to year 6 pupils. The emphasis on the teaching of research skills, requiring pupils to discover information for themselves, not only heightened pupils awareness of history but also provided very useful practice in literacy and computer usage skills. The teacher's use of practical approaches was an appropriate way to engage and maintain pupils' interest. In this lesson, for example, pupils completed their research work by designing a shield with a motif of one of the gods. Geography was not taught during the inspection but the same teachers teach it and planning is of similar quality to history so there is no reason to suppose that teaching is not of the same high quality.
27. The teaching of physical education is very good. Teachers and support assistants make it very clear to pupils that they have extremely high expectations of behaviour and performance in physical education lessons. Because of this positive attitude and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils they are able to help them to control their behaviour and learn to behave appropriately when they engage in a range of sporting activities. Consequently, pupils make extremely good progress in their individual performance and learn skills to enable them to participate successfully in team games and competitive sports.
28. Teaching in art is very good. Teachers place a very appropriate emphasis on helping pupils to develop basic technical skills. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and staff are extremely skilful in building up pupils' confidence so that they feel able to experiment with colour and texture and try out their ideas. Pupils respond very well to the excellent framework for managing behaviour. Consequently, they use equipment and materials sensibly and are very well focussed in lessons. Pupils' enthusiasm for art is evident through their attendance and hard work in the voluntary art 'Option' sessions.
29. Music teaching is very good. Its success lies in the careful consideration of grouping pupils so that they each get the opportunity to play instruments and to help one another. This gives them the chance to play and to listen and keeps them all involved in learning. Praise is used well to encourage pupils to try hard and to recognise their achievements. The use of a tape recorder adds excitement as pupils listen to their performances. This excitement is well contained by the teacher's speedy intervention when pupils get too noisy.

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

30. There is a very good curriculum. It is much improved since the previous inspection. A strong focus upon English and mathematics and very good strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy is helping pupils to make progress in the most important subjects of the national curriculum and preparing them well for returning to school. Excellent provision for personal, social and health education further strengthens the curriculum because it systematically addresses the issues that have led to pupils' referral. The inclusion of all other subjects of the National Curriculum, except design and technology, makes a significant contribution to ensuring that the unit curriculum is

providing pupils with rich and varied learning experiences. Many elements of design and technology are incorporated into science and art and craft planning. This fulfils the recommendation that pupils have access to practical experiences.

31. There is one minor weakness. Religious education is not taught. Units such as this do not have to, but given that it provides so well in every other area there is no good reason why it could not add religious education to the timetable, thus broadening spiritual provision for pupils.
32. The curriculum fully satisfies all statutory requirements. It closely reflects the local education authority's curriculum policy for pupil referral units. A major strength is that because it so closely matches the mainstream curriculum it is strongly facilitating an early return to school when a placement can be secured. The unit is successful in working with secondary schools to ease the transfer of at the end of Year 6 and also special schools when transfer to mainstream is considered inappropriate.
33. Pupils with statements of special educational need are receiving very good support. There is an acute awareness that this provision is not envisaged as a permanent solution to these pupils' problems. Over a half of statemented pupils have been attending for less than two months and many pupils are found places in special schools when the unit's excellent assessment procedures confirm that this would be appropriate. In the interim, pupils are given access to a broad range of additional support including psychotherapy and counselling.
34. The previous inspection identified a weakness in the 'options' system at the end of each day. This period has been reduced in length and has become an important part of the curriculum in that it promotes moral development through links to the reward system, personal development through the exercising of choice and social development through the opportunity to relax at the end of the day. The curriculum is further enlivened by many visits to places of interest.
35. One of the four classes is a nurture group for the youngest and most recently referred pupils, whose immaturity and weak social skills are the main hindrance to their academic achievement. This class has a slightly modified curriculum. Early on in their placement there is a greater emphasis on developing personal and social skills through play and social interaction in well-structured family type activities such as breakfasts and snack-times. As pupils' skills develop the amount of time spent in numeracy and literacy lessons is gradually increased. This process is managed extremely well, ensuring a smooth transition into the main unit curriculum.
36. Staff place a great emphasis on the social and moral development of the pupils. The provision for this is excellent and there has been a big improvement since the previous inspection. Very high expectations coupled with a caring and supportive atmosphere are a significant element in the rapid progress pupils make in improving social and moral awareness. When behaviour is either rewarded or reprimanded the reasons are made very clear to the pupils. Sensitive and consistent use of the behaviour points system further reinforces pupils' understanding of their behaviour. Behavioural targets are relevant and phrased simply so that pupils easily understand them. The effectiveness of these approaches is particularly apparent in the Nurture Group.
37. The daily meeting of all staff and pupils allows pupils the opportunity to discuss their behaviour and also to offer solutions as to how to improve it or make amends. Staff provide role models of care and understanding whilst insisting on behaviour which both enables pupils to learn and to make a contribution to a strong sense of belonging. Staff have a high regard for pupils and the pupils respond with trust, liking and loyalty. When pupils misbehave, issues are speedily resolved. The sensitivity of

staff is an important element in ensuring that pupils retain their dignity and are speedily returned to class.

38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and runs as a thread through the life of the unit. In English, for example, pupils' write plays collaboratively. These consider issues of relationships and the meaning of friendship. Pupils join in periods of reflection both in their classes and as a whole community. The absence of religious education does, however, inhibit pupils' awareness of an understanding of a range of religions, particularly in relation to how and when other people celebrate, reflect and give thanks.
39. There is good provision for pupils' cultural development. In English pupils are made aware of a wide range of poetry and literature. In a wider context, good use is made of break and lunch times to make pupils' aware of traditional games such as skipping. Geography, history, art and music all contribute to pupils cultural awareness, though in the latter two subjects the focus is more on the acquisition of skill and technique rather than the cultural impact of great artists and musicians. Insufficient attention is paid to making pupils aware of cultures other than their own and preparing them for life in a multi-cultural society.
40. The unit has good links with the community; this aspect has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Visits to nearby places of interest are regularly organised and these enrich pupils' curricular experiences. The immediate community area, such as the local park, is used well to develop pupils' social and play skills. Local people were, at first, less than enthusiastic about such a unit being located in their neighbourhood. Great steps have since been taken to reassure them with the result that many are now very supportive of special events, such as the Christmas show and summer fete. There are, however, no visitors to the school, for example by representatives of local churches or organisations.
41. The unit has good links with the primary schools from which pupils transfer and return to. Schools are kept well informed about pupils' progress and arrangements for possible future education and are invited to review meetings. Last term the outreach team that works in mainstream schools was split from the unit. This has removed an important link with schools and has recently slowed the return of pupils because there is no outreach worker to accompany pupils while they settle back into the routine of school life. The unit has plans to raise funding to provide this service and also to explore the possibility of pupils joining in with local schools where they could benefit from visitors, such as artists in residence. Very good support and liaison arrangements are in place with outside agencies, such as health professionals, education psychologists, education welfare workers, therapists and social workers.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. All staff, including the secretary, mid-day supervisors and classroom assistants provide an exceptional level of care for all pupils. This has improved tremendously since the time of the previous inspection. Each pupil is highly valued, encouraged to try their best and helped to overcome their difficulties. The success of care arrangements makes a considerable contribution to improvements in pupils' behaviour, self-confidence and achievement.
43. Arrangements for promoting and monitoring behaviour are excellent. They are based on clear values and high expectations, which are communicated very effectively to pupils. The points system, together with teacher's excellent behaviour management skills underpin the whole process of encouraging pupils to modify their behaviour patterns. The reward system enables pupils to understand immediately the impact of

any unacceptable behaviour or attitudes. This is because time is taken at the end of each lesson to award points and relate them closely to individual targets. All staff consistently and fairly apply the system. Despite their many difficulties, pupils try very hard to collect the necessary points to enable them to participate in the end-of-day option choice, or the Friday bonus treat.

44. There are excellent procedures in place to deal with harassment or bullying. Excellent relationships, mutual trust between staff and pupils and the values of co-operation and respect are promoted very well from the outset and contribute hugely to the success of these procedures, as do elements of the excellent personal, health and social education programme. The atmosphere of the unit promotes positive behaviour and self-discipline. It is an orderly, happy and friendly community, where pupils feel safe, cared for and protected. Meticulous attention is given to excellent child protection arrangements.
45. Procedures for promoting the health, safety and well being of pupils are excellent. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are very well managed, carried out on a regular basis and monitored against any agreed actions. Risk assessments are also carried out, where appropriate, on individual pupil's behaviour. All staff are fully aware of fire evacuation procedures, which are regularly carried out. Several members of staff are qualified first-aiders. The medical needs of pupils are extremely well catered for.
46. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent. The unit follows up unexplained absences by telephoning home on the first day of absence and by following this up with a letter. This helps to ensure that unauthorised absence is kept to a minimum. Where pupils have longer-term absences the education welfare officer and other support agencies are involved at an early stage.
47. Procedures for improving pupils' behaviour are excellent. They are well understood by everyone. Behavioural targets are carefully drafted to meet pupils' specific needs. They contribute greatly to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. The display of these targets in classrooms and their linkage with the points system for good behaviour and hard work is highly effective in improving pupils' self image. A particular strength of the targets is the allocation of a specific member of staff to ensure their implementation. This ensures that progress towards targets is monitored in a fair and consistent manner. Serious incidents are always recorded, so it is possible to closely monitor trends and patterns of behaviour.
48. Excellent procedures are in place to support the assessment and monitoring of pupils' achievements and learning. Detailed records are kept of the work covered by pupils and this is carefully assessed to monitor progress. Pupils' literacy and maths skills are thoroughly assessed on entry and close links with former schools mean that all previous assessment information is available. These procedures result in individual learning targets being very closely matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils return to an appropriate school, either mainstream or special, is greatly aided by the quality of assessment procedures and the information made available to receiving schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS (including carers)?

49. The unit works very effectively with parents. Nearly two thirds returned the questionnaires and all were very supportive of the unit. Parents have a great deal of praise for the unit's work because they see rapid improvements in their children's behaviour and attitudes at home and are provided with high quality information about their learning at the unit. This is a big improvement since the previous inspection.

50. Because pupils come from a very wide area it is not always possible to have all parents regularly involved in the life of the unit. Nevertheless, the unit does everything in its power to encourage them to play as full a part as they can in their children's education. Following on from a questionnaire, sent to parents just after the unit opened, staff often help parents to set "home" targets, such as observing bed-times, for their children. Library and reading books are regularly sent home and home/school diaries show that parents listen to their children read. Nearly all parents attend regular reviews to discuss their children's progress; where there are difficulties the unit helps with transport arrangements. Parents regularly contribute constructively to home/school diaries. When a phone call is considered more appropriate than a letter, the unit phones parents, either to celebrate achievement or to discuss concerns. Because of this parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress. Nearly all parents are very supportive of special events such as the Christmas concert, sports day and summer fair.
51. A very good range of information is provided for parents through the induction meeting, review meetings, unit prospectus and newsletters. Parents believe they are kept well informed about the work of the unit and the progress their children are making during their time there.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

52. The excellent headteacher combines a sparkingly clear vision of what needs to be done with the energy and determination to do it. She is largely responsible for this being such an excellent unit. What she has done since the previous inspection is to build up an exceptional staff, which works closely as a team, shares responsibility and enjoys its work. The deputy head is a particularly strong teacher, and sets all other staff a fine example through her planning and management of pupils. The major strength of this team is its consistency. Pupils quickly learn that there is no weak link. In addition to her administration duties the headteacher provides an excellent role model through her teaching and through her cheerful presence in the building. This is a happy unit, where laughter is a defining characteristic. This is particularly important for pupils who have all too often not seen the lighter side of human nature.
53. The management team has made an invaluable contribution to the unit by taking a hand in the appointment of each member of this successful team. It is supportive of the unit, with members attending special events, such as the Christmas concert and Summer Fair. Individual members assume important responsibilities, such as touring the unit to check health and safety standards. A sub group of the committee is involved in exclusion procedures and a mainstream school representative plays a role in supporting links with local schools. The management committee gains a very clear view of the unit's strengths and weaknesses by its thorough monitoring of school documentation, including a termly report from the headteacher but members rarely visit classrooms to check for themselves the standards of pupils' work and the progress they are making.
54. The local education authority, as the appropriate authority, is fully meeting all its statutory obligations. It has provided a comprehensive curriculum and complaints policy and stated clearly what the unit's primary role is in the provision of support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It has ensured that the unit occupies excellent premises and supports it well through monitoring visits by advisors and outside agencies such as educational psychologists and education welfare officers.
55. Six months ago an external assessor visited the unit to check the unit's procedures for performance management. In summing up he described these as "an exemplar

model of performance management of performance management, with rigorous monitoring and evaluation” One of the main strengths is that the procedures are long established, and thus tried, tested and productive. They also involve every member of staff, not just teachers. The unit makes excellent use of computers to relieve administrative burdens. Every piece of documentation, including schemes of work and policies, is accompanied by the computer disc, on which it is saved. The ready accessibility of these means that minor adjustments and improvements can easily be made. Detailed data about pupils’ progress, personal development and attendance is being built up on databases and is being used increasingly, as is financial information.

56. The unit has control of only a small proportion of its finances. It manages this with great efficiency, ensuring that all grants are spent appropriately and meticulously accounted for. All day-to-day administration is handled by the unit secretary with the same, exemplary, degree of professionalism as seen elsewhere in the unit. The unit is acutely aware of the principles of best value and seeks it out diligently.
57. The staff’s exemplary level of professionalism is a significant feature in the success of pupils. It is also reflected in their ability to provide much sought after training for other professionals. Training and professional development of staff is an important feature of the unit. The clear system for induction of new staff enables them to settle into their work and quickly become an effective part of the team. The excellent accommodation provides a cheerful and welcoming environment, ideally suited for the needs of pupils who have previously disliked school. Displays of pupils’ work, framed pictures and flower arrangements all contribute to the positive atmosphere. A large hall and playground provide excellent facilities for physical education and constructive play. The caretaker takes great pride in maintaining the premises to a very high standard. Learning resources are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The number and quality of computers has been considerably improved and are now more readily available for pupils’ use. Other subjects are well resourced, with a wide range of appropriate books and equipment. There are many, high quality and interesting reading books and a small, well stocked library.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The unit has no major weaknesses and few minor ones. In its next unit improvement plan it should consider:
- The introduction of religious education into the curriculum
 - Introducing a more thorough approach to multicultural provision
 - Increasing the involvement of the management committee in monitoring standards

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	16	0	1	0	0	0
Percentage	15	80	0	5	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 four percentage points].

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	29

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	29

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	4.88

Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	5.45

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	28
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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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	1	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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	186.5

Financial information* the unit does not have a fully devolved budget

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	25,518
Total expenditure	25,518
Expenditure per pupil	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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	26
Number of questionnaires returned	9