

INSPECTION REPORT

FRANCIS BARBER PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Tooting

LEA area: Wandsworth

Unique reference number: 100994

Head teacher: Tym Ratcliffe

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
1405

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th February 2003

Inspection number: 249480

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 - excluded pupils, school refusers, pregnant schoolgirls
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Franciscan Road Tooting London
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Appropriate authority:	Wandsworth Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Sue Clarke
Date of previous inspection:	19 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Registered inspector	Science, art, history, religious education, vocational studies, special educational needs.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? What could the unit do to improve further?
12289	Sue Burgess	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the unit care for its pupils? How well does the unit work in partnership with parents?
21044	Tom Smith	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communications technology, design and technology, physical education, citizenship, English as an additional language.	How well is the unit led and managed?
22577	Margaret Hart	Team inspector	English, geography, modern foreign language, music, personal, social and health education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Francis Barber is a pupil referral unit in Wandsworth for permanently excluded pupils, those with a history of not attending school, dual-registered pupils who have pastoral support plans, pregnant schoolgirls and schoolgirl mothers. Pupils are aged between eleven and sixteen and there are eighty-one pupils on roll; two-thirds are boys. Most pupils are white with British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. About twenty seven per cent of the pupils are black and come from Afro-Caribbean or African backgrounds and twenty one per cent have both black and white heritage. There are a few Pakistani and Traveller children. On entry, most pupils attain standards below the average for their age in most subjects. This is because of their long-standing non-attendance at school or because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils are drawn from families with significant social and economic difficulties. The local authority looks after a small number of the pupils. The unit aims to enable its pupils to develop their educational and personal potential in a safe and supportive environment where they can make best progress in their learning.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

The unit is effective. It has significant strengths in the good quality of its teaching and the commitment of its staff. Pupils who attend regularly learn well and make good progress; they improve their standards and behaviour. Because of this most pupils in years 7,8 and 9 return to school after two or three terms; those in years 10 and 11 who do not return to school are given good opportunities to follow courses that lead to recognised qualifications and to prepare for further education or work. The unit is well led and soundly managed but more remains to be done to improve attendance and punctuality to make the best use of what the unit provides. It continues to give satisfactory value for money.

What the unit does well

- The quality of teaching is good; teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and manage their pupils very successfully so that they learn well.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities, who attend regularly, make good progress in English, mathematics and science and begin to make up for lost time. Increasing numbers of pupils are successful in achieving grades in GCSE examinations and gaining other certificates.
- The unit makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development.
- There is a calm and well-ordered environment chiefly because of the very good relationships between staff and pupils and consequently pupils behave well.
- The head teacher provides good direction for the work of the unit; good delegation has ensured that all staff members fully contribute to management responsibilities.
- Through the Key-worker system the unit provides a high level of pastoral support for its pupils.

What could be improved

- Attendance is unsatisfactory and has declined since the last inspection; pupils too readily opt out of those aspects of the curriculum that they find 'irrelevant' and the unit has been too slow to counter this tendency by, for example, raising expectations about attendance or changing some elements of what it offers. Strategies adopted so far to counter truancy have proved to be ineffective with many pupils.
- Not all pupils have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum because of the limited number of teaching hours that they are offered or because they opt out.
- The use of teacher time is inefficient on occasions because of timetabling arrangements and the high levels of pupil absence.

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

HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The unit was last inspected in January 1998. Since then its improvement has been satisfactory. It has taken steps to eradicate the weaknesses identified in the last report. The amount of supervised education offered to pupils who have been permanently excluded is now in line with requirements and pupils have increased access to teaching. The curriculum is nominally broader than it was. Teachers now have more scheduled lesson time and the quality of teaching has improved. Good opportunities for collaborative learning that aid pupils' personal development are now provided. Pupils' progress has

improved. However, attendance, especially that of excluded pupils, has declined and this limits the educational opportunities of many pupils. In addition, too little teaching time is offered to some pupils who have not been permanently excluded from school so that the curriculum they receive is neither broad nor balanced.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The judgements in the table above refer to the progress made by pupils who are in regular attendance, whose performance in the classroom could be judged and whose past work could be analysed for evidence of progress. The standards achieved and the progress made by the substantial proportion of pupils whose attendance is irregular and infrequent will not be as good.

Pupils who attend well make good overall progress and they begin to make up the ground they have lost. In English, achievement and progress are predominantly good in each year. Pupils with low levels of literacy or specific literacy difficulties make good progress as a result of individual tuition that they receive. In the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in 2002, ten pupils, from the nineteen in Year 11, gained grades in the range C to G in English language. Three pupils gained grade C in English literature. The standards attained by pupils now in Year 11 put them in line to achieve similar results in the GCSE examinations in 2003, if they maintain their attendance. Similarly, in mathematics, pupils in each year make good progress. They do this from a low base, for, especially in years 8 and 9, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge of number and computation. A few pupils in Years 10 and 11 work at a standard approaching the average for their age and those who show their commitment to learning by good attendance make significant gains in their mathematical understanding in response to high quality teaching. These pupils are on course to gain acceptable grades in the GCSE examinations in 2003. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, twelve of the nineteen pupils in year11 gained grades in the range B to F. In addition to GCSE, almost every pupil was awarded a certificate at some level in mathematics. The teaching of science has recently been re-established at the unit. Pupils in years 8 and 9 have patchy knowledge from their previous learning and lack confidence and skill in practical work and investigative procedures. They have made a good start at the unit and their learning is moving forward well. Pupils in years 10 and 11 make good progress and have completed units of work that are eligible for certification under the AQA Unit Award Scheme and which count towards an Entry Level Certificate in science. A group of six pupils in Year 11 are beginning a course for the GCSE single award in science and are making good progress. There is good progress in art in years 10 and 11 and pupils gain awards for completed units of work. A small number, six in Year11, are on course to gain grades in the range C to E in the 2003 GCSE examinations. Pupils also make good progress in physical education where their performance in games is about average for their age. In information and communication technology, however, progress overall is unsatisfactory chiefly because teaching expertise is lacking and insufficient use is made of computers across the curriculum. Pupils make good progress in personal, social, health and citizenship education. They respond well to the diverse opportunities that the unit provides. Pupils who attend frequently and regularly reach the targets set for them in individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Satisfactory: Pupils who attend regularly have positive attitudes to the unit and show this by their participation and good behaviour in lessons but a substantial number do not take full advantage of what is offered by opting out of sessions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: Behaviour targets set in individual education plans are frequently met. There have been no exclusions recently.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory: Pupils show positive aspects of personal development in, for example, the very good relationships many have with staff. These build their confidence and their learning. However, many pupils remain insufficiently aware of the effect of their actions on others.
Attendance	Poor: A substantial number do not take full advantage of what is offered by failing to attend as they should.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching is of good quality overall and is now a strength of the provision made by the unit. A significant number of lessons observed was of high quality. Teachers know their subjects well, plan effectively, and are consistent and highly successful in their management of pupils' behaviour. They have very positive relationships with those they teach, and, as a consequence, pupils are inclined to accept direction from them. This helps in establishing the calm climate for learning that was a feature of the majority of lessons observed. Pupils in most lessons respond well; in a high proportion their interest was sustained throughout the lesson and they worked productively. Good attention is paid to the development of literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects. Teachers expect their pupils to succeed but homework is offered less frequently than it should be. In a substantial proportion of lessons two teachers are present - the subject teacher and the pupils' key worker who is their pastoral tutor. The additional adult presence is effective in ensuring that pupils receive sufficient support to do their work and also in preventing disruptive behaviour. In some areas, for example, physical education, pupils respond well to opportunities to work collaboratively with one another. The quality of teaching in English is good. There is very good teaching of literacy skills to pupils with significant difficulties with reading, writing and spelling and of GCSE groups in Year 11. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is good, overall, with some very good and, on occasion, excellent teaching of pupils in Year 11. Teaching in science is good for those in years 7 to 9 and very good in years 10 and 11. Teaching in personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: Pupils are offered a relevant and varied curriculum but for a significant number of pupils, including those who have not been permanently excluded from a school, the amount of time they spend in the PRU is inadequate, either because a full timetable is not provided, or because pupils choose not to take up the provision offered. This limits their access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
Provision for pupils with	Good: Pupils with literacy and numeracy difficulties get effective help and for a

special educational needs	number of vulnerable pupils a good beginning has been made in drawing them into education.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: The unit makes good provision for pupils' social development through the careful individual guidance it offers and well-taught programmes in personal social and health education and citizenship. Spiritual and moral development is promoted well through the example set by adults and known, positive, expectations about behaviour and conduct. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Satisfactory: Vigilant staff ensure the protection, health and safety of their pupils. Relevant training in local child protection procedures is scheduled in the near future. Assessment of pupils' work and progress is accurate and thorough. The positive expectations of their teachers help pupils to improve their behaviour but a policy for managing behaviour and promoting discipline is still only in draft form. Attendance records are well kept but there is insufficient promotion of the importance of continuity in learning.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: Good leadership by the head has produced a learning environment that encourages and values pupils; staff have values that underpin the centre's work. However, there are weaknesses in management. Plans take too long to implement and more resolve is needed to ensure that pupils attend.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory: The advisory board maintains a watching brief on the work of the unit and through its contribution to the school improvement plan seeks to raise standards. The board has, however, no delegated powers.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Good: There are satisfactory performance management procedures and good systems to monitor the development of teaching and its effectiveness. Both the unit and the local education authority seek to compare this provision with that made elsewhere to help ensure that the best value is obtained.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: The budget is spent prudently with a view to raising standards but the pattern of pupil attendance and timetabling decisions lead to inefficiencies in the deployment of teachers. Accommodation is satisfactory and there are good resources for learning although the large number of computers at the unit and the good practical facilities are not fully used.

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 unit works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress The unit accepts their questions, problems and suggestions readily The teachers expect their children to do well The unit is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A substantial minority of parents believe their children should be doing more home work A few feel that their children do not like school, do not behave well and make little progress A small number do not think the centre helps their child to become more mature and responsible

Parents praise the unit for its openness, the quality of its teaching and the expectations it has of their children. Most think the unit is well managed and enables their children to develop personally and make progress in their school- work. A minority disagrees with some of this and is concerned about behaviour and is dissatisfied with the amount of homework provided. Inspectors' findings support some but not all

of both these views. They find that the unit is open to parents' suggestions and communicates effectively with them. Expectations of learning are appropriately high within the curriculum although not high enough in terms of attendance. Management has good features but some difficult issues have yet to be resolved. Those of their children who attend well make good progress although more homework should be given in some cases to consolidate habits of learning. Behaviour was found to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils who are on roll at the unit have had unsuccessful past experiences of education. Just over half, because of their behavioural difficulties, has been permanently excluded from school. Others, for social or psychological reasons, have been infrequent attenders or non-attenders. The standards they have attained at the time of their entering the PRU are below those expected for their age group in most subjects. In addition a significant proportion of pupils are found, on assessment at the unit, to require the protection of a statement of special educational needs because they have learning difficulties. Across the age range, however, those pupils of all levels of ability, who are sufficiently committed to attend the unit regularly, make good progress in English, mathematics and science and begin to make up lost ground. Pupils who attend well also make good progress in their personal, social, health and citizenship lessons and towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans.
2. During their time at the unit most pupils in years 8 and 9 who have been permanently excluded by their previous schools make sufficient progress to be able to return to mainstream or full time special education with good prospects of success. Those who enter the unit in Year 10 or Year 11 are much less likely to go back to school. These pupils make good gains in a relevant, if limited, programme of subjects and courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications such as Entry Level Certificates, Unit Awards and the General Certificate of Secondary Education, (GCSE). They attend college, have work experience opportunities and move forward as they prepare for their life beyond school.
3. There has been steady improvement in the outcomes achieved by pupils since the last inspection and recent year on year comparisons suggest that this gradual improvement is a continuing feature. Attainment on entry was also below average when the unit was inspected in 1998 but there was evidence of progress especially in Year 11. Pupils leaving the unit were reported to have achieved well, with a quarter of those entered passing GCSE at grades A* to C. Pupils made satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their lessons but in English, progress in writing was, slow. Over longer periods of time, however, progress was unsatisfactory, except for pupils in Year 11, who were given more lesson time. The lack of lesson time was a significant factor in the unsatisfactory progress.
4. In 2002, most of the nineteen pupils in Year 11 gained external accreditation for their learning. GCSE examinations were taken in English, English literature, art, mathematics, information and communications technology and physical education. The fifteen pupils who were entered for the GCSE, together attained forty-two passes, that is, on average, two point two GCSE passes for each pupil. About a quarter of the pupils gained grades in the range A* to C in one or more subjects. This compares favourably with 2001 when the average number of passes per pupil was one point five. In addition, as well as the average number of passes per pupil increasing, there was an increase in the actual grades awarded.
5. While pupils who attend daily and punctually make good progress there is too high a proportion of pupils who choose not to come to school or who are allocated insufficient taught time. Over the past year the average attendance was only sixty five per cent. It is clear that those who attend irregularly or infrequently make less progress. This is also

true of pupils, mainly those with psychological and social difficulties, who are offered only part time attendance. Although it is acknowledged that the Unit does good work in engaging with some children who have a long term history of non attendance, enabling them to come to a few classes where previously they had attended none, if the good start made in these cases is to be built upon, the amount of taught time offered must increase. Overall, therefore, taking together those who attend frequently and regularly and those who do not, the progress made by pupils on roll at the unit is satisfactory.

6. In English, pupils across the age range who attend regularly make good progress. Almost all pupils have functional literacy; that is they can read and write sufficiently well to cope with the demands of every day life. Their levels of literacy are sufficient in many cases to support their learning in the other subjects of the curriculum. They make good progress in reading, writing and spelling especially where this is supported by individual teaching sessions, as it is for those who, on testing, are found to have significant delay in their literacy skills. Targets specifying objectives in literacy are set in IEPs and records show that progress in reading age scores is good overall and occasionally outstanding. For example individual pupils have made as much as eighteen months progress in reading capability in the course of a single term. Progress, overall, is good for pupils of all levels of ability. Pupils' writing was found to be slow at the time of the last inspection. Use of 'writing frames', that is devices that lay out the order and suggest where ideas may be found for written answers, and the drawing of pupils' attention to the meaning and spelling of important words related to what is being learned, effectively support literacy, extend vocabulary and lead to more confident learning. Partly as a consequence of such techniques the standard of pupils' written work and the progress they make in writing has improved since it was last reported. It is now good. Examination results bear this out and they continue to improve year on year in both the GCSE and the AQA unit award scheme. Pupils in Year 11 make very good progress in their GCSE work on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. They listen well to their teachers and to one another and share their ideas in fluent discussion. They have a good grasp of the plot of the play and an insightful understanding of the characters and their motivation. Those who continue to attend and keep up with their work are well placed to gain grades in the GCSE examinations.
7. In mathematics standards are generally below average although in a few individual cases they approach what might be expected nationally; however, those pupils, in each age group, who come to lessons regularly, make good progress. In examinations in 2002 twelve pupils in Year 11 gained grades in the range B to F and one pupil in Year 10 gained grade D. Pupils also achieved success in the Mathematics Profile and the Achievement Tests for numeracy. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have many gaps in their mathematical knowledge and numeracy skills, in particular their knowledge of number, for example, computation or units of measure is weak. Nevertheless, when they apply themselves and respond to the good teaching and individualised programmes they are offered they begin to make up lost ground. This can be seen in their recent work on probability, in which, in spite of the fact that some find it hard, they are coming to recognise the meaning of and correctly define a range of terms such as "mode", and to understand that data can be represented graphically. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, where teaching is sometimes excellent, show in their lessons and their work a range of mathematical knowledge and skills. In relation to mathematical probability they recognise and understand the principle of independent events and also that events can be mutually exclusive. They use calculators competently and have a grasp of simple statistics. Their numeracy skills support work in fractional numbers and in their work on angular measurement they have become familiar with descriptive terms such as acute or obtuse.
8. Pupils make good progress in science when they attend regularly. In most cases, especially in years 8 and 9, pupils knowledge, skill and understanding is patchy and below average for their age, but because of well planned and well resourced teaching of good

quality gaps in knowledge are filled while understanding, confidence and skill increase. Pupils in years 8 and 9 recall their past learning, remembering the names and functions of the human organs of digestion. They understand that enzymes aid absorption. They carry out a simple practical investigative task with sufficient self-control to ensure safety. Most pupils in these year groups are interested in science and are beginning to move forward well. Their progress is limited, however, by the lack of teaching time they are given. Those in Year 11 include a group who are preparing for the GCSE single award science examination. They respond with high levels of interest and sound application. In their current work on investigative procedures they have understood the necessity for and usefulness of trials that set the parameters for the investigation proper. They appear to be on course to achieve grades in the range C to E. Year 11 pupils who are not entered for GCSE have their learning accredited by the AQA Unit Award Scheme. Individual pupils among this group have completed one unit already and are well into a second. In relation to their level of attainment they are making good progress.

9. Pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education and those in Year 11 achieve well in citizenship lessons. A range of taught sessions provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own situation, values, social awareness and personal responsibilities. Sessions taken by the key workers of pupils in Year 9, for example, use "Quest" as a method of enabling pupils to learn about themselves and improve their self-esteem. In their citizenship lessons pupils in Year 11 display increasing knowledge of the concept of the rule of law and are confident in their contributions to discussion. The few pupils who attended a session of work related learning made very good progress in what they know and understand about several aspects of the topic; in this case, film making.
10. Pupils in years 8 and 9 encounter art as part of their topic work in "project" lessons. In these they have opportunities to develop illustrative techniques but do not become acquainted with the full range of learning opportunities that are specified for the curriculum in art at this key stage. In Years 10 and 11, however, discrete lessons in art are offered and pupils' work is entered for accreditation by AQA as part of the Unit Accreditation scheme. Pupils in this age group make good progress and a small number, six, are entered for the GCSE examination. Should they continue to attend regularly and complete their course work these pupils are expected to gain grades in the range C to E. In 2002, four pupils were entered for GCSE and gained grades in this range.
11. In information and communication technology pupils have a range of competencies but generally their attainment is below average and their progress is at a rate insufficient to make up the ground that has been lost. It is, therefore, unsatisfactory. This is chiefly due to a lack of staff expertise. Despite having a large number of computers exclusively for the pupils' use there is no technician and use of computers in lessons across the curriculum is too limited to give a real boost to pupils' competence and skills. Pupils do make use of digital photography and the recording of work in other formats, for example video, is often very good.
12. The standards achieved by pupils in physical and outdoor education are broadly, average for their age. They make good progress within a range of activities that, especially in outdoor education, contribute well to their personal development. Pursuits such as target shooting and problem solving, as well as more traditional activities such as football, contribute to the emergence of positive traits including teamwork, decision-making and increasing self-confidence. Pupils show consideration for one another when playing as a team, accept rules and show patience with those with less skill than themselves.
13. Pupils with known literacy or numeracy difficulties as well as those who are emotionally vulnerable achieve well in the individual sessions provided for them. They make good

progress in reading, writing and spelling and in knowledge of number and accuracy in computation. The limited time available to them, however, means that they are not able to use their skills to help their own learning in a broader range of subjects.

14. In their "project" lessons pupils in years 8 and 9 encounter aspects of geography, history, art and religious education. They do not however pursue these subjects to any depth and the structure of the projects means that continuity of learning within these subjects is not well-planned. In their lessons, however, they recall, in most cases, the facts they are taught and gain valuable experience in co-operating with others to produce, for example, classroom displays.
15. Records show that pupils make good progress towards the learning targets that are set for them in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Those pupils who maintain regular attendance enjoy coming to the unit and they generally have good attitudes towards their learning. For a variety of reasons, pupils may have experienced failure in previous schools and come to the unit with low self-esteem and confidence. Those who persevere with their placement enjoy a sense of achievement and success in a very different environment from that of a large school and this is reflected in the positive attitudes to learning observed during inspection week.
17. In the majority of lessons, pupils get involved, show enthusiasm for their work and genuinely enjoy their learning. For example, Year 11 worked hard to expand their understanding of Romeo and Juliet, Year 10 showed good levels of sportsmanship in football and Year 9 enjoyed a class reading of a Harry Potter book.
18. Behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes and around the unit is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and those between pupils are good. This is evident from the relaxed environment in which pupils and staff mix easily throughout the day. However, although there were no recorded exclusions last year, pupils were sent home from time to time if their behaviour proved unacceptable. Some pupils take time out from lessons by arrangement; this is managed to minimise disruption for others. However, this has a negative effect on their curriculum entitlement and they miss important lessons. The essential messages about regular attendance are under-mined.
19. Personal development is enhanced by the increased responsibility that pupils are expected to take for their own attitudes and actions. For a sizeable minority, however, these expectations have a minimal effect because of their erratic attendance. For those whose commitment is higher, personal development is encouraged through an effective personal, health and social education programme and by participation in pursuits such as football, climbing, air rifle shooting, orienteering and problem solving. Pupils are trying many of these activities for the first time and they clearly enjoy the challenges involved.
20. Attendance, at an overall average of 65 per cent for the last complete year, is unsatisfactory and has declined by 13 per cent since the last inspection. Only one third of those scheduled to attend college on Fridays actually do so. A very few pupils in any one term manage attendance of 90 per cent or over. For other individuals, attendance may be as low as 26 per cent, to the obvious detriment of their attainment and progress. No particular patterns emerge from the absence figures except that previous non-attenders at school generally have higher levels of absence from the unit than pupils who are referred following permanent exclusion. Punctuality to lessons is generally satisfactory but only a minority of those expected to attend from 8.30 a.m. actually do so and they come late. Some absence is attributed to difficulties with public transport.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is good overall with much that is very good and none that is unsatisfactory. Of lessons observed, in about a third, teaching was very good or better and in three-quarters teaching was at least good. In the remainder of lessons teaching was of satisfactory quality. The good overall quality of the teaching has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. They become interested and involved in their work and come to believe that if they try hard they will be successful. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when it was, on balance, satisfactory, but with one in ten lessons not meeting this minimum standard.
22. Teachers know their subjects well and effectively plan, in detail, the work that is to be covered in each lesson and over time. The setting of specific learning outcomes for each lesson enables both teachers and pupils to know what is expected, what has been accomplished, and what still remains to be done. Teachers are well informed about their pupils' strengths and weaknesses as learners, and individual education plans are prepared for each pupil. Teachers are particularly successful in managing the behaviour of their pupils. They form very good relationships with them so that, as a consequence, pupils are inclined to accept direction from them. This helps in establishing the calm climate for learning that was a feature of the majority of lessons observed.
23. In a substantial proportion of lessons two teachers are present, the subject teacher and the pupils' key worker who is their pastoral tutor. The additional adult presence is effective in ensuring that pupils receive sufficient support to do their work and also in preventing disruptive behaviour. Key workers report regularly to pupils' parents. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors sometimes gave this as a reason for behaving well in class. The use of two teachers in a class has clear benefits but it does have consequences for the efficient use of resources. If the unit is effective in changing pupils' attitudes and behaviour then the need for the key worker to be present in lessons taught by others should, in most cases, be seen to reduce over the time pupils spend there. Such an outcome would be in line with the high expectations that teachers have for the success of their pupils.
24. Teachers in each subject take good account of the need to promote and develop their pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Devices such as the identification of key words important to the lesson and the use of opportunities for pupils to read aloud from lesson information sheets are used frequently. In project or topic work and in science, in particular, mathematical skills and numeracy are reinforced. There are plans in certain subjects to make use of information and communications technology but little use was made of computers in the lessons observed. Homework is planned and given but not to a regular timetable. Returned work, and work completed within lessons is carefully and accurately assessed and pupils are given a clear indication of the standards they are achieving and what they must do to improve these. Where lessons were satisfactory rather than good this was chiefly because one or more pupils behaved in a disruptive way during part of the lesson so that, despite efforts made by the staff, there was a negative impact on learning. In one or two lessons the initial presentation of the learning task was less clear than it should have been and time was therefore used putting right pupils' misunderstandings.
25. The quality of teaching in **English** is good. There is very good teaching of literacy skills to pupils who have significant difficulties with reading, writing and spelling and of GCSE groups in Year 11.

26. Successful lessons in years 8 and 9 focused on the use of accessible texts, such as the stories in the New Windmills series of readers. These have contemporary themes and high interest for teenagers. In a good lesson for pupils in Year 9, for example, pupils listened well as their teacher gave instructions, asked questions or read from the text. Their answers showed that they recalled the story so far. Opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral and social development by reflecting on the lives of the characters were well taken. The teacher built well on pupils' recall, summarising on a flipchart key facts about character and plot. By careful pupil management and sensitive individual discussion the teacher encouraged each pupil to reproduce the substance of their oral answers in legible handwriting. Where pupils were responding and learning well the teacher reinforced this with quiet praise and this helped to ensure that learning time was fully used by pupils. For some pupils, in each year, individual lessons in literacy are offered. These are well structured and built upon a rigorous analysis of what each pupil knows, understands and can do. Ongoing testing confirms the effectiveness of this teaching and pupils begin to make gains in reading, writing and spelling at a rate well in excess of that which would normally be expected.
27. In Year 11 where pupils, in many cases, pursue a course that leads towards GCSE entry, very effective teaching was observed. A lesson on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, was particularly well taught. Pupils were very interested and highly motivated to learn because the initial presentation of the play by video had made an impact. In addition the teacher showed great sensitivity in accepting the pupils' comments, answers and suggestions and in this way facilitated their thinking and self expression. The teacher's use of questions was very skilled, acted to shape and develop pupils' ideas and to confirm their sense of success in an area where they had rarely succeeded before. The teacher, to underpin and extend pupils' personal development, carefully exploited the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the lesson.
28. In **mathematics**, the quality of teaching is good overall with some very good and, on occasion, excellent teaching of pupils in Year 11. In all lessons effective use is made of the good relationships that the teacher has formed with the pupils to challenge them to try hard and stick to their tasks. In lessons with pupils in years 7 to 9 the positive attitude of the pupils towards the subject was noticeable in most cases. The teacher accurately assessed what pupils had accomplished and effectively used the information gained to push learning further. The teaching of pupils studying for the GCSE examinations is mostly very good or better. In an excellent lesson on probability for pupils in Year 11, for example, the expertise and enthusiasm of the teacher shone through. This enabled him to harness the interest of the pupils and led them to achieve as much as possible within the lesson. The session was well planned with clear objectives, each of which was linked to well- devised supporting activities. Explanations were lucid and pupils were continually challenged to recall and build on their previous learning. In dialogue with the pupils the teacher resolved misunderstandings and confusions and pupils made significant gains in their knowledge.
29. Teaching in **science** is good for those in years 7 to 9 and very good in years 10 and 11. The specialist teacher is well qualified and has a good understanding of the curriculum requirements and the syllabuses of the national awarding bodies that accredit the learning of pupils in years 10 and 11. Very effective use is made of the good resource now provided by the refurbished and re-equipped science room. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and, within the modular structure of the curriculum offered, pupils have a continuous incremental experience of learning. The learning strengths and weaknesses of each pupil are well known to the teacher and she engages with them well. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are supported and developed systematically using such techniques as the production of technical vocabulary lists. Through individual dialogue pupils' understanding is reinforced and those, especially in years 8 and 9, who need help

with writing and setting out their work are given it. For those who are able to accomplish the core tasks of the lesson quickly further extending work is planned and offered. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 mostly enjoy their science and benefit from the challenge the subject provides. However they have too few lessons, only one period each week, to ensure that they learn at the best possible rate. Management of behaviour is good but in isolated instances individual pupils do not engage with their work and attempt to distract others. These instances are dealt with calmly and fairly but, while they last, they do interfere with other pupils' learning opportunities. Sessions for pupils in Year 11 who are undertaking GCSE or Entry Level certificate work are practically based, very well conducted and productive. Those entering for GCSE, under the careful supervision of their teacher develop and extend their investigative skills and their ability to communicate clearly to others their investigative hypotheses and results. They grow in confidence as learners.

30. Teaching in **personal, social and health education** and **citizenship** is good. In Year 11 classes, the positive relationships teachers have with their pupils and effective team teaching, promote dialogue between class members and sufficient confidence to share with others their personal experiences relevant to the topic in discussion. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology, for example to produce digital images to illustrate work on body language. Sessions on work-related learning were very well taught. Teaching expertise was high and led to confident exposition. Effective use was made of computers, particularly the Internet as a source of information. A notable element indicating the strength and effectiveness of the teaching in one observed lesson on filmmaking, was the character and the quality of the teacher's questioning technique. The questions asked were thought-provoking and initial answers, while positively acknowledged, were skilfully used to develop pupils' understanding and language skills. Pupils' written work that is of good quality clearly results from the respect that the high quality of teaching has engendered. Teaching of citizenship is effective. Recent work with Year 11 has been about the law and personal obligations and duties. Pupils are encouraged to make effective use of sources such as the press to understand the significant differences in legal and public attitudes to questions such as guns and their availability, in different countries. Teaching is successful in persuading most to engage seriously with these issues although individuals occasionally fail to understand the relevance to their own lives.
31. Teaching in **art** is good overall and very good for pupils in years 10 and 11 where the work done leads to accreditation by national bodies at Entry Level, or, in some cases GCSE. For younger pupils there is good, direct, teaching of drawing techniques and the use of colour; by these means, pupils' understanding and technical vocabulary is extended. Carefully planned sessions lead them to a critical appreciation of the work of significant established artists. Within project topics, pupils in years 8 and 9 are helped to develop a range of techniques to illustrate and enhance their work. Very good subject knowledge, excellent pupil management and careful preparation of resources for selected topics enable GCSE pupils to do so with good prospects of success.
32. In **design and technology** teaching is satisfactory but very few pupils take this subject. There is good subject expertise and relevant opportunities are provided. While teaching in information and communications technology, (ICT), was satisfactory within the lessons observed the specialist knowledge of the subject necessary to improve pupils' standards is not available. The curriculum for ICT is not fully developed and, in years 7 to 9 especially, lacks important elements.
33. Teaching is good in **physical education** and the expertise of the teacher has made it possible to develop a range of outdoor and adventurous activities. Good teaching in games challenges pupils to extend their own performance. The teacher's relationships with the pupils and high expectations have a positive impact and care is taken to include

girls in what could easily be male dominated lessons. Imaginative use is made of the facilities within the local environment to provide pursuits such as rifle target shooting that are rarely offered elsewhere. Teaching in "project" lessons is satisfactory. "Projects" are used as a means to offer to pupils in years 8 and 9 some experience of subjects including art and humanities. Where art is integral to a subject there is good expertise and teaching is successful in developing pupils' skills and learning attitudes. Expertise in other curriculum areas such as geography is sometimes less secure.

34. Teachers take on a pastoral role as key workers for a group of pupils. They come to know their pupils and their circumstances very well and work hard to liaise with families and carers. They are effective in their oversight of the learning and behaviour of their pupils but have less success in ensuring their punctuality and attendance.

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

35. The unit plans a relevant and varied curriculum for its pupils in all age ranges, but in practice expectations of a "full-time" education for all permanently excluded pupils are not fully met. This is because pupils "opt out" by coming late or not attending the day at college that is provided for them each week.
36. In addition, a few pupils who are not permanently excluded receive a minimal offer, for example, being required to attend twice a week for literacy and numeracy sessions. This does not give them equality of access to the curriculum or to education. The reluctance of such pupils to attend more than one or two sessions may indeed be a problem, but it is one that the unit is expected to address. In addition, many pupils choose not to attend some lessons or college courses. This is partly because they do not perceive clear enough expectations that they must attend from the teachers at the unit. They also find the courses offered lacking in interest for them. Interviews with pupils indicated, for example, that some believe attendance at college is optional. Unsatisfactory and poor attendance by many pupils leads to an inadequate educational experience despite the curriculum offered.
37. Requirements for the curriculum have changed since the last inspection; there has been improvement in the provision for PE, but less design and technology is offered. The unit meets the requirements for teaching English, mathematics and science and helps all pupils to attain functional levels of basic skills. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education, citizenship and education about drug misuse. These lessons are interesting and varied and are supported by a variety of visitors, for example, television producers and filmmakers. This helps to engage pupils' interest and provide good motivation. Pupils have access to art and physical education lessons and the unit is working towards teaching information and communication technology, (ICT), as a separate subject. The present provision for ICT is inadequate. Elements of history, geography and religious education are included in project work. There is no provision for music or a modern foreign language, and very few pupils take design and technology. On the other hand, the unit offers a broad range of out-of-class experiences, for example, target shooting, rock climbing and lessons in problem solving and working together, and these increase the breadth of the curriculum. There is appropriate access to careers advice, work experience and work-related education, although this is not generally available for Year 9 pupils. The focus for pupils in years 8 and 9 is on developing good learning habits while maintaining progress in the basic subjects, and the return of most pupils to mainstream schools at the end of year 9 suggests that this is a sound strategy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The unit has done much to enrich the curriculum to a satisfactory level. For

example, in the current school year there has been a poetry workshop, a media production course, a drama workshop, visits to the Imperial War Museum and the “Body World” exhibition. There has been a satisfactory level of contributions made by the broader community. For example, there have been visits from the Young Person’s Health Advisor, from a recovering drug addict, and from staff from St George’s Clinic. Relationships with partner schools are positive and co-operative. The great majority of pupils up to the age of 14 are returned to schools and this is commendable.

38. The planning of the curriculum has shown a good improvement since the last inspection. There are good subject policies and schemes of work, and the format of planning sheets now in use should ensure that opportunities for literacy, numeracy, information technology and personal development are planned into every unit of work.
39. The unit makes good provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection.
40. Although PRUs are not required to teach religious education or to organise collective worship, staff are very thoughtful and aware of opportunities within their teaching to promote spiritual awareness. For example, work on the Coral Reef led to consideration of man’s responsibility for his environment, while a unit of work on the Solar System raised questions about infinity, life after death and the nature of temptation and free will. Provision for spiritual development is good.
41. Provision for pupils’ moral development is good. Staff set a good example of respect for other people’s beliefs and values. They are explicit in their teaching of what is right and what is wrong. The merit systems are helpful in shaping pupils’ behaviour. There is a good choice of texts in English and these give opportunities to discuss issues of truth, deception, responsibility and loyalty; for example, the novel “Stone Cold”, which is about homeless young people, Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet”, and “Shrek”.
42. The unit also makes good provision for pupils’ social development. There are now good opportunities within lessons for pupils to develop collaborative ways of working and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Work experience provides another strand of pupils’ social development. In addition, personal, social and health education lessons, which now incorporate citizenship, offer many very good opportunities for discussion about relationships, social problems, justice and the law.
43. Provision for pupils’ cultural development is satisfactory. While there are good opportunities for pupils to experience poetry, literature and art, including work from different cultures, the lack of musical experience in the education of the pupils is a sad omission. Nevertheless, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when this aspect was judged to be “not well developed”.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. Provision for the support and guidance of pupils is good. The whole staff work well as a team, provide positive role models and know their pupils well. They are sensitive to the many issues that may affect pupils’ attendance, behaviour and progress. The atmosphere in the unit is relaxed and friendly, with very good relationships observed between staff and pupils. At the start of the day, for instance, staff join pupils for breakfast in the common room. In the unit, there is a good level of unobtrusive supervision at all times, providing a safe and secure environment for learning. For off-site activities, pupils are trusted to travel independently and meet staff at an arranged time. The unit enjoys good working relationships with the educational welfare service, the school nurse, the

educational psychology service and pastoral support programme co-ordinators in neighbouring secondary schools. These links, and the well-established keyworking system, all contribute to the high quality of support and guidance offered to pupils.

45. There are, in practice, very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The rewards system of stickers, certificates and prizes is understood and valued by pupils. Key workers keep a record of pupils' behaviour in the common room. Assessment and integration- progress sheets record gradings in twelve separate areas of each pupil's personal development. These include attendance, behaviour towards staff and other pupils, working in a group and general attitudes towards their work. These detailed records provide the basis for target setting at termly reviews. Key workers' regular meetings provide opportunities to exchange information on each pupil's progress and to share concerns. The unit has not, however, put in place a definitive policy for managing behaviour. While no poor behaviour was seen during the inspection, the lack of agreed policy could lead to inconsistency in the way in which pupils are handled.
46. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are very good. Office staff check each pupil's arrival and departure against very detailed daily attendance sheets. Key workers monitor their group's attendance and make contact with parents if cause for concern is recognised. Reasons for absence, where these are known, and any action taken on attendance are recorded in pupils' contact books. The Education Welfare Officer is asked to follow up any long-term absence.
47. However, despite these very good monitoring systems, and rewards for those who achieve 90 per cent attendance over a term, efforts to improve attendance have not proved successful and the average figure has fallen since the last inspection to the current poor level of 65 per cent.
48. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. Issues are managed sensitively and confidentially but training for all staff, including the designated co-ordinator, needs to be updated as a matter of urgency. Following a recent reorganisation of accommodation, there is an acknowledged need to formalise health and safety checks and procedures, such as fire drills, so that they are regular and recorded. This should be done as soon as possible.
49. The procedures and practice in assessing pupils' academic progress are very good. The unit makes systematic and detailed assessments of pupils' skills and attainment when they are admitted. Reading, spelling and numeracy and free writing are tested. Progress is carefully and regularly monitored and pupils meet their key worker frequently and discuss progress towards their targets, which will include both academic and behaviour goals. Teachers' marking of work is thorough and very helpful and appears to have undergone good improvement since the last inspection. There is good ongoing informal assessment during lessons and teachers know the pupils extremely well and are able to use their assessment well to boost achievement and progress. Pupils do not participate in the national standardised assessments at age 14. At age 16 pupils are offered appropriate courses leading to examinations and accredited awards. Many pupils take GCSE exams. The unit also offers alternative accreditation at different levels in keeping with the needs and abilities of the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are, in general, very supportive of the Unit. Almost all of the sixteen questionnaires returned recorded approval of the unit's provision. A few, however, did not agree that pupils receive the right amount of homework. Those who came to the pre-

inspection meeting felt that their children now had better attitudes to learning and that their behaviour had improved since starting at the unit. All those present appreciated the fact that staff have such a positive outlook and they felt that the key worker system was an excellent means of communication between home and school. Some of those at the meeting were so impressed with the work of the unit that they would like their child to stay there rather than be re-integrated to school.

51. Both the quality and quantity of information for parents are satisfactory. Prior to a pupil's placement at the unit, parents are invited for a meeting with staff so that the work of the unit can be fully explained. No placement is completed unless a meeting has taken place. Parents receive a brief information leaflet and, once a pupil's admission and timetable have been agreed, a note of the unit's attendance policy and information about the pupil's key worker. Although they contain the necessary information, both these leaflets are dull and uninteresting in appearance. Review meetings are held each term, to which parents and pupils are invited, to discuss progress towards agreed targets. On average, 75 per cent of parents attend these meetings. Written reports are provided in advance. These are personal to the pupil and include targets for improvement and comments on personal development. However, there is, in general, too little information about what pupils know, understand and can do.
52. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the unit and their contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory but is inevitably limited as most families live some distance away. Key workers try very hard to maintain an effective link with parents and much information is exchanged informally by phone. If problems arise, parents are invited to the unit for a meeting with their child's key worker to discuss a way forward.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. While the head teacher has been effective in communicating his educational values and beliefs to those who work at the unit, some aspects of management can be identified for improvement. The head teacher provides good leadership of the centre. He has a clear view of how pupils should be worked with that emphasises mutual respect between adults and pupils. He has created an ethos in which the efforts of pupils are acknowledged and appreciated. Because the staff also subscribe fully to this, the outcome is that the centre has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The head teacher has also responded to comments within the last inspection report and has further strengthened the provision through improved accommodation, better baseline information and better curriculum planning. He has also improved the teaching through appointment of specialists in areas such as art, design technology, physical education and science. This has had a good impact on the quality of both teaching and learning.
54. The aims of the centre are clear and all staff support these. They carry out their tasks with high levels of professionalism – often under very challenging circumstances. As a consequence the centre continues to maintain good levels of support for pupils in their effort to come to terms with their behaviour and emotional maturity. The potential for further improvement is satisfactory
55. While areas of management clearly have particular strengths, in some aspects the work is incomplete. In particular there is a need to provide full access for all pupils to a curriculum that involves twenty-five hours of planned and supervised educational activity. It should be acknowledged that the centre has been successful with many pupils in improving their previously negative views of education. The attendance levels of a

significant number of pupils need re-examination. When considered as a whole, the leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory.

56. Senior staff, as well as those with subject responsibility, perform their roles assiduously and with great attention to detail. As a result they provide consistent forms of monitoring that have benefited the centre's work, such as pupils' improved behaviour. The key worker role has been particularly successful in this regard because it has moderated the previously negative views of pupils toward their education and helped improve their behaviour.
57. The management, through the local advisory group, has established clear aims for the work of the centre. Their monitoring of its work is satisfactory and achieved primarily through reports provided by the head teacher and other staff at the centre. Although this is a workable arrangement it has an inherent weakness, in that there is little first hand validation of these reports. The advisory group has no delegated powers.
58. Since the last inspection the senior management have put in place good systems that monitor and develop the teaching within the centre. In addition to informal visits to each classroom, members of the senior management team also formally observe teaching practice on at least one occasion each year. The results of these observations contribute towards a professional development plan for staff. The outcome to this has been twofold – the standard of teaching has risen since the last inspection and the staff can now expect to be supported through access and opportunity to good quality professional development. The head teacher is ambitious for his staff and encourages them to pursue qualification to Masters level.
59. Staff new to the school receive satisfactory support. However, the means by which they receive this could be more rigorous. There are no formal mentoring systems through which teachers new to the school or the profession receive appropriate support. In practice, the absence of such systems is minimised by use of performance management arrangements but new staff may require more active and planned support and its absence is at variance with the thorough practice in other areas.
60. Procedures for performance management are satisfactory. These follow the guidelines put in place by the local authority and result in appropriate objectives for teachers designed to raise standards across the range of the centre's work. The outcomes are effective because they have raised the quality of teaching. Staff leaving the centre for other employment, have invariably gone to posts which represent promotion.
61. The priorities for the development of the centre are satisfactory and these are identified within the improvement plan. The rate at which some of these priorities are achieved is unsatisfactory - for example, the intention to make a full offer of education has not been fully realised because pupils do not take up the full offer that is made to them.
62. In many other ways the improvement plan is thorough. The local education authority, through its advisory group, identifies priorities for whole centre development and other individualised items provide staff with clear direction on what they need to do to improve provision and raise standards. The identification of named staff to achieve significant developments, such as special needs or key skills, is a strength of the strategy because all staff become aware of the overall planning intention and know where they might contribute or take complete responsibility. For example the planned intention for the development of special needs provision has resulted in better standards for these pupils since the last inspection.

63. There are sufficient staff at the centre and since the last inspection the range of expertise they have has widened – this is particularly the case for art, physical education and science. The essential learning needs of pupils are served well by the expertise of staff within the centre. In addition to those teachers located within the centre, other staff provide support to groups who work away from the centre – for example there is good support for girls of school age who have become pregnant. Additionally, a learning mentor also provides an effective service in liaising with pupils on work experience - as well as those in need of additional support, even though they may still be on the roll of their mainstream school.
64. An issue within the last report identified some inefficiency in the deployment of staff in the line of their teaching duties. Whilst the basic principle of team teaching is sound the low numbers in some groups make this a continuing inefficiency. Anomalies of timetabling also contribute to this inefficiency. For example, while there are specialist teachers of art and science, pupils in years 7, 8 and 9, receive too little direct teaching in these subjects, because the specialist teachers are deployed to other duties.
65. The accommodation of the centre is satisfactory and has been improved since the last inspection through the addition of a science facility. The amenities are of good quality and the pupils, who show considerable care toward them, respect them. Weaknesses exist in the provision for physical education – a subject that encompasses much of the curriculum time. Because there are no facilities within the centre the need arises for pupils to travel to sports facilities within the borough. Generally, this is done by bus but it is wasteful of time and reduces the opportunities they have for learning.
66. The strength of the accommodation is that teaching areas are generally large, but where this is not the case they are at least adequate for the numbers who use them. All rooms allow a variety of teaching and learning methods to be used. Staff have made considerable and successful effort to make these rooms into stimulating learning environments, through display of relevant subject material as well as pupils' work. Around the centre, pupils' artwork is displayed with care showing pupils how much their effort is valued. The well-equipped facilities for design and technology are, however, underused.
67. Resources for learning are good and have been accumulated through time, so that they now represent an effective bank of material to support a range of learning. There is a good selection of reading material, much of this located within the new library facility which reflects both the interests of pupils as well as the multi-ethnic nature of the pupil roll. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well provided for because there is a high ratio of computers to pupils. Use of this technology does not match its quality. In part this is because development of the network had stalled (though its final installation was imminent) but mainly this was because few teachers used ICT in the normal course of their lessons.
68. The day-to-day administration of the centre is good. The school bursar uses rigorous accounting procedures that enable school management to keep a close eye on budget spending. A potential weakness in the system is that there is no electronic link with the local authority and over time, unsatisfactory practices arise. Some of these were identified in the most recent auditor's report (Oct. 2001). However, these issues were not of great significance, and were promptly put right by the management.
69. The head teacher and senior management tightly control costs at the centre and manage the budget effectively. They ensure that delegated monies as well as grant funding are used to support their intended developments. Costs of the provision are calculated in line with the local authority's requirements. These indicate that sessional costs (a session being half of a day) have risen by small amount within the last three years. In comparing

these costs the management are handicapped by the absence of reliable data that refers to similar establishments. The head teacher is very aware of this but the notion of best value needs further consideration. The local authority also call the centre to account through its own performance indicators but some of these are not relevant to the particular circumstances of the centre; for example, the requirement to answer a telephone call within five rings is negated by the centre's need to use an answering machine at certain times.

70. The centre provides satisfactory value for money because it provides good learning opportunities for its pupils and is generally successful in preparing those pupils who take care, for their future life and learning. This judgement is tempered by the pace at which some agreed developments occur and the high levels of absence of a significant number of pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to build upon its strengths in the provision it makes for teaching and learning and pupils' personal development the head teacher and the senior managers of the unit should:

- I. Take additional steps to improve the poor level of attendance and punctuality by raising pupils' awareness about what is expected of them and by changing what is offered, such as the courses at the local college, where it is clear that these do not stimulate the interest of pupils and lead to poor attendance. (Paragraphs 5, 35, 36, 47 and 57).
- II. Ensure that the maximum possible amount of supervised education is offered to all pupils by providing suitable induction for permanently excluded pupils who are challenging and difficult to manage, that requires them to make full attendance from the time that they join the unit. In the case of vulnerable pupils who presently attend only a few sessions each week, take steps to increase what is offered to them as soon as possible. (Paragraphs 35 and 36).
- III. Revise timetabling arrangements so that the best use is made of teacher's time by ensuring that specialist expertise is used to the full. (Paragraphs 29 and 66).

In addition to these important issues the local education authority, the head teacher and the senior staff of the unit may wish to consider the following matters when drawing up their action plan in response to this report:

- IV. Improve the quality of the curriculum in information and communication technology so as to improve the standards achieved and the progress made by pupils of all ages. (Paragraphs 32, 36 and 69)
- V. Increase the amount of time given to the teaching of science for pupils in years 7,8 and 9. (Paragraphs 8 and 29)
- VI. Make fuller use of the good facilities provided for design and technology. (Paragraphs 32 and 68)
- VII. Introduce a formal policy and process to support the induction of new staff members. (Paragraph 61)

VIII. Complete and implement the behavioural management policy and strategy presently under review. (Paragraph 46).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	12	7	0	0	0
Percentage	3.5	28.5	43	25	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	81

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	81

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	5

Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	30

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

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

In 2002 of nineteen pupils in Year 11, sixteen completed and received accreditation for their Records of Achievement. Under the AQA Unit Award Scheme thirteen pupils were awarded

forty certificates between them for completed units of work. Twelve pupils gained certificates of achievement in literacy and numeracy. In mathematics five pupils were awarded certificates for their mathematics profile work. The Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts, certificate in life skills, was gained by sixteen pupils. In GCSE examinations ten pupils were awarded grades in English, two at C and the others at D to G. Three pupils gained grade C in English literature. In mathematics one pupil was awarded grade B and eleven were awarded grades from D to F. In art, one pupil was awarded grade C and, three others, grades D or E. In PE, four pupils were awarded grades F or G and in ICT nine pupils were awarded grades in the range D to G.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	15
Black – African heritage	8
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	39
Any other minority ethnic group	17

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7- Y11

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

*Based on 72 pupils on roll, including full and part time attenders, in 2001/2002

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	627, 000
Total expenditure	627, 000
Expenditure per pupil *	8, 708
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	1.8
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	2.0

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	82
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	31	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	31	25	6	13
The teaching is good.	56	44	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	25	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	19	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	19	0	0	13