

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **SOUTH CUMBRIA NETWORK PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Barrow-in-Furness & Kendal

LEA area: South Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112098

Headteacher: Mrs E Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Whitehead  
21061

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2003

Inspection number: 249487

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Pupil Referral Unit
School category:	Special
Age range of pupils:	7 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Newbridge House Ewan Close Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA13 9HU
Telephone number:	01229 894470
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Appropriate authority:	Senior Education Officer
Name of responsible officer	Stuart Goodall
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21061	Mr M G Whitehead	Registered inspector	Science Art Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils. Partnership with parents.
20024	Mr P Wright	Team inspector	English Design & technology Humanities Citizenship	Leadership, management and efficiency.
28106	Ms M Majid	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education Vocational education Equality of opportunity	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT**

This pupil referral unit (PRU) caters for pupils who have been excluded from or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. All pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and some have specific learning difficulties including dyslexia and other associated disorders. The unit occupies two sites, the main site is in Barrow-in-Furness and the other site is in Kendal. Pupils attend from a wide catchment area, which covers south Cumbria. There are 41 pupils on roll comprising 38 boys and 3 girls whose ages range from 9 to 16 years. Thirty-one pupils are dual registered with the unit and their mainstream schools. Within the unit there are 27 pupils who have statements of special educational needs. A very high proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The pupils' attainment levels are very low when compared with pupils in mainstream schools, which is a result of the difficulties that they have experienced due to their special educational needs and previously poor attendance. There is one pupil from an ethnic minority group but there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

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

South Cumbria Network PRU is a very good PRU. The progress made by the pupils is good overall and a significant proportion of pupils make very good progress. The headteacher provides a very high quality of leadership, and is very well supported by her two deputies. They work very effectively together and provide a strong management team. The management systems operated within the unit are effective and very efficient. The school provides a good curriculum that is very relevant to the pupils and their special needs. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the unit, which enables pupils to progress well. Taking account of the very good leadership and the strong management of the unit, the very high quality of the teaching and the good progress that the pupils make, the unit provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and direction for the unit.
- The overall quality of teaching in the unit is very good and enables all pupils to make good progress.
- The unit takes very good care of its pupils and ensures that their welfare is paramount in all its work.
- The unit has very good links with parents and is in close contact with them at all times in order to celebrate the achievements of the pupils and also address any difficulties that may arise.
- The unit provides very good careers and vocational education.
- Very effective work is carried out to develop the moral and personal aspects of pupils' education.

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

- There are areas of the accommodation that have a severely limiting effect upon teaching of information and communication technology, design technology and physical education.
- Formal assessment arrangements are needed so that teachers can make use of the information they gain to set further work geared to improve achievement.
- The unit does not provide enough opportunities for extra curricular activities.

*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 June 1998 and since then it has made good improvement. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and there is now a very high proportion of very good teaching. The quality of the curriculum provided has also improved and this has been facilitated by the provision of a special area for design and technology and a new area for information and communication technology. This improvement in the accommodation has had a positive effect on the curriculum but overall the accommodation remains only satisfactory because there are some areas where space is very cramped.

## 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	A	A	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

Pupils' achievement in science, art and physical education is particularly good as they benefit from specialist teaching that is available to them. Displays of work by pupils and photographs celebrating their achievements enrich the school environment.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Good. Pupils are generally enthusiastic in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Despite the occasionally volatile behaviour of pupils, they behave well in the classroom, at break times and when off site on school activities.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well with each other and with all staff and visitors to the unit. They respond well to the teaching concerning personal development and the guidance that they receive.
Attendance	Good. Many pupils' attendance improves considerably and is markedly higher than their attendance has been or is at mainstream schools.

Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities and appreciate the support that they receive in the unit. Pupils are successful in overcoming many of the difficulties that they have in controlling their behaviour. Pupils gain in maturity and self-esteem as they progress through the unit. Attendance improves for a large proportion of pupils who have had poor attendance records in their previous schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching in English is good overall and the teaching in mathematics and science is very good. Teaching in personal, social and health education is good. Teachers plan their lessons very well and take careful account of each pupil's ability and needs. They set challenging tasks for the pupils and have high expectations.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school and are highlighted in many other subjects. The school has good strategies for meeting the needs of pupils' individual special needs. Teachers are highly skilled in managing the often-challenging behaviour of the pupils and much of this is due to the high expectations that they have of the pupils and the very good relationships that they have with them. Teachers have good and often very good subject knowledge and are very competent and confident in their work. Lessons move at a brisk pace and the pupils are highly motivated as a result of the respect that they are afforded by the teachers and assistants.

Pupils make a very good effort in their lessons and this is shown in the standards of work that they produce and the progress that they make. They learn well because they are highly motivated thanks to their improving self-esteem and the high quality teaching that they receive.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils have access to a broad range of learning opportunities. This ensures that all pupils have access to an appropriate education. There are opportunities to take a range of accredited courses. The curriculum is very effective in supporting reintegration and in preparing the pupils for life after compulsory school age.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for the different special needs of the pupils. Work is carefully matched to their different abilities and teachers have a good understanding of learning difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Staff pay very effective attention to promoting pupils personal development. Cultural development is well-supported in art and literature. Pupils' work and effort is valued and their success is celebrated. Staff provide good role models and promote good understanding of right and wrong.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. The school is aware that further improvement is necessary

The school makes extensive efforts to keep in contact with parents and informs them at all times of the progress of their children. Key teachers, who have a pastoral responsibility for a small group of pupils, play a vital and successful role in this work.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction. In managing the unit she receives very good support from the deputy headteachers.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The management committee gains a good picture of what goes on in the unit from the headteacher's report. However there are no focussed visits by the committee to monitor the work and development of the unit.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Good. Much evaluation is undertaken and the senior management team have good understanding of the unit's strengths and of those areas where improvement could be achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staff accommodation and resources are appropriately used and have a positive impact on pupils learning.

Overall accommodation is satisfactory, but there are some issue due to the size of classrooms for the teaching of ICT and design and technology. There are no facilities for indoor group activities. The unit is well resourced and enjoys the new ICT hardware that has been acquired recently. The school is generously staffed by appropriately qualified, energetic and enthusiastic teachers and assistants. The very strong leadership and good management throughout the unit help secure the success of the pupils. The unit works very effectively to ensure that in all its financial dealings it acquires the best possible value.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unit is very approachable and helpful.</li> <li>• The unit challenges their children and has high expectations</li> <li>• They can approach the unit at any time with any problems.</li> <li>• They enjoy a good relationship with the unit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents are concerned about the amount of homework that is set for their children.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents and believe that the unit should make a clear statement to parents concerning homework.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. The attainment levels of all pupils are below the national average because of the difficulties that they have experienced at school. Nevertheless, pupils make very good progress overall and achieve well as they benefit from their new surroundings and the specialist provision that they receive. Many pupils are able to follow nationally accredited courses that lead to the award of certificates on completion.
2. During the last academic year the following certificates were awarded to pupils in the unit:

<b>AQA Unit Award Scheme Certificates of Completion.</b>	
Mathematics: Number	4
Statistics	3
Space	1
Using calculator	5
Calendars, time & money	6
Shape	1
Preparing fresh fruit & vegetables for salad	5
Practical application of food hygiene regulations	5

<b>GCSE 7 pupils</b>					
	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
English		1		2	4
Speaking & listening	1		2	4	
Mathematics				3	3

3. Achievement in English is good. Speaking and listening skills become well developed, helped by a strong emphasis in many lessons on discussion. Reading improves and most pupils read aloud confidently and fluently. Many are willing to read aloud in class and recognise the significance of punctuation. Careful planning of individual reading programmes effectively addresses individual weaknesses. All pupils have daily reading practice. This includes reading aloud and silent reading on their own. Pupils make good progress in writing. They use basic punctuation well, identifying the need for full stops, commas and speech marks. The requirements of the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully incorporated into the English timetable. Pupils use their English skills well to support their work in other subjects. They write good descriptions of practical work in science and make records of work completed in geography. Expectations are mostly realistic, because

teachers know the capabilities of the pupils. However, they are sometimes not high enough for the most able pupils.

4. Achievement in mathematics is good overall and very good in Years 8 and 9. Most pupils can apply the basic principles of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to their work and have a good knowledge of tables. Most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 can multiply numbers up to 100, divide numbers up to 10 and know that nine tenths is 0.9 in decimal notation. They have worked out simple algebraic problems and can find the perimeter of regular polygons. They read charts successfully giving distances from different towns in miles. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 make very good progress because of the teacher's very good planning and use of the national strategy. They understand how to read data from bar charts and line graphs and can find the mode and range of sets of data. They reduce fractions to the lowest terms and understand equivalent fractions. They can use a protractor to measure and draw angles accurately and find the size of an unknown angle using their geometrical knowledge. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take GCSEs or Unit Awards according to their ability. Pupils apply their knowledge of numeracy in other subjects; for example, in a physical education lesson, one pupil could say that he had batted the ball at a 30° angle.
5. Science is also a subject in which pupils achieve well. They make good progress during their lessons, which they find interesting and challenging. One pupil in Year 6 showed, through discussion and questioning by the teacher, that he had gained a good understanding of different forces present when objects are pushed or pulled. He then went on to learn about the force, friction and the impact it has on the grip between the sole of a shoe and the floor on which one walks. Pupils in Year 9 spot fossil shells within a piece of rock. For the pupils, this is an awesome experience, they discuss how very old the rock and fossils must be. One pupil suggests that they must be a hundred thousand years old, whilst others suggest that two hundred years could be the age. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well as they learn about the signs and symbols used on household chemicals. They recognise hazard symbols that are used to show corrosive, oxidising, poisonous, toxic and flammable substances. The achievement is even more pleasing because the pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and respond very well to the barrage of questions that they receive.
6. Achievement in art is very good. Pupils are highly motivated by the very high quality of the teaching that they receive. Senior pupils have embarked upon their GCSE course and are generating very interesting portfolios. They are given a great deal of support and guidance by the specialist teacher and are well motivated. They work in both two and three dimensions using a wide variety of media including paint, pen, pastels, fabric, plaster, papier maché, encaustic art and clay. They are highly motivated by the visits that they make to art galleries and the studies that they make of the work of famous artists. The work done by pupils is photographed by the teacher or by the pupils and these photos are kept as a record of their achievements. Pupils also take part in the assessment of their work at the end of each term. The teacher uses the internet to access information about the work of artists such as Gustav Klimt, Rousseau and Hundertwasser. Pupils then make very good use of the information and develop their ideas appropriately. Pupils also enjoyed a visit by a local artist who spent

some time in the school working with them on a collaborative piece of work, which was a very impressive fabric wall hanging.

7. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good and most pupils make very good progress and are learning valuable skills. They behave well in lessons and respect the new equipment. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not have discrete ICT lessons and opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are limited. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 learn basic operating programme techniques and word-processing, including changing formats and using graphics, giving them the skills to present work effectively. They also learn to create spreadsheets. They are able to use appropriate formulae enter a formulae into a table by using correctly notation such as = and \*. They successfully predict the effects of changing variables or rules. Pupils are able to apply this knowledge to the real world are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of using spreadsheets. Pupils have created a database using different field properties and have shown by written work that they understand the meaning of files, records, fields and fixed and variable length records. All pupils understand that if a computer processes incorrect data the result will be meaningless. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards unit awards in such areas as word-processing, spreadsheets, databases and graphics. Next year, pupils will all have the opportunity to work towards GCSE examinations. Although there have been a few examples of the use of ICT across the curriculum, such as the use of computer aided design in design and technology, there is insufficient use overall and this is an area for improvement. At this time, pupils do not have access to the internet, so lack a valuable information resource.
8. Achievement is satisfactory in design and technology. In practical lessons they use small hand tools and electric cutting and shaping machinery safely and effectively. Pupils learn to follow the design instructions well. For example, when making benches for the playground they pay attention to designing them to be strong comfortable and weather resistant. Pupils are able to explain why certain methods of joining wood are more suitable for some projects than others. However, the task and the pace of the lesson are not always challenging.
9. Because of the organisation of the unit, only a small amount of work in geography and history has been completed so far in this academic year. However, from discussions with the pupils and a scrutiny of teachers' records there is enough evidence to support the judgement that pupils are making satisfactory progress in humanities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to identify the main rivers of the world and understand their importance to the local environment. In Years 8 and 9, pupils locate the main cities and physical features of the British Isles on maps and interpret features that determine the climate of different areas.
10. Pupils' achievement in physical education is very good. They benefit greatly from the expertise of a specialist teacher. All pupils are keen to take part in the lessons and enjoy learning skills. For example, pupils spent time and a great deal of effort in making sure that they had learned to hold a cricket bat correctly and they assume the correct posture before receiving and striking the ball. Their efforts paid off and they then enjoyed a good game of 'quick cricket' before the lesson came to a very successful conclusion. One pupil remarked, "I don't know what is the matter with me, I'm doing well" as he was so delighted with the progress that he was making. Pupils also learn to work and play together in a collaborative

manner. They support each other and help each other to learn. They take responsibility for each other and work very well in pairs as they practise their strokes. Pupils achieve well because the teacher has very high expectations of them and they rise willingly to those expectations.

11. The achievement of many pupils is clearly reflected in the high rate of successful re-integration, as many of the pupils have returned successfully to mainstream education

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

### **Attitudes**

12. Overall pupils have a good attitude to the unit and appreciate the opportunity to re-engage in education, gain qualifications and learn skills. Year 6 pupils, practising cricket skills for a physical education lesson, all demonstrated that they had worked hard at home to practice how to stop a ball, hold the cricket bat and take a defensive stance, after lessons at the unit had stimulated their interest. In a Year 9 science lesson, pupils were immediately fascinated by the age of a fossil that the teacher showed them, and this interest was sustained throughout their lesson on rock formation and defining different rock types. Pupils may often have been out of the habit of regular attendance and participating in lessons, before attending the unit, and they enjoy the chance to engage in the social aspects of education, such as for example eating lunch together or playing a cricket match at break time. Photographic and documentary evidence of pupils on for example, Duke of Edinburgh activities, show confident and committed pupils who are enjoying the opportunities open to them through the unit.
13. Pupils' behaviour across the unit can vary, but overall in the unit, and when out on visits, it is good. They can change rapidly from being explosive to charming, abusive to considerate, violent to gentle. There are points of the day such as break and lunch times that a few pupils find particularly difficult to manage their behaviour, but taken as a whole, the unit is orderly and pupils are polite and cheerful. A few pupils walk out of lessons as a way of removing themselves from a difficult situation which they may be managing badly. When this happens, they always apologise to the teacher for their behaviour or lack of respect. In a Key stage 3 mathematics lesson that also covered social behaviour, four pupils vied with each other in an attempt to be the most disruptive. Despite their totally inappropriate behaviour, the pupils were polite as they spoke with the teacher, always addressing him as Sir or by his name. By the end of the lesson, all four pupils apologised spontaneously, they had completed their worksheets and engaged in mental mathematics exercises. During the previous unit year there have been six fixed-period exclusions and no permanent exclusions. This is very low for a unit of this type.
14. When considered as a whole, pupil's personal development and the relationships that they form, mainly with staff, are very good. Pupils' work is displayed attractively in and around the classrooms and there are very few cases of vandalism or defacement. Pupils negotiate their behaviour logs and work closely with their key teachers when reviewing their work. Although this could be a potential flashpoint for a few pupils who may disagree with their teachers' judgment of how well they have met their targets, for the most part pupils have a

very realistic view of how well they have done, and accept their scores maturely. Pupils engage well in the range of small-team games that the unit emphasises in the physical education and in their leisure time. This has led to a few pupils making approaches to teams in their home areas and opens up the possibilities of them enjoying sociable pursuits in their community. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to access rural activities such as coppicing and dry stone walling in their Duke of Edinburgh activities, and make a contribution to environmental improvement in their community. They show they can work together well and for a common purpose. The development of the unit's garden and leisure area by one pupil in particular, but also with the contribution of many other pupils in the unit, demonstrates a strong commitment by pupils to improving their own environment, and also wanting to provide pleasure and an improved work facility (in this instance, the greenhouse project) for others. Pupils on alternative learning activities in the community, relate well to their individual learning packages, leading for example, to one pupil now pursuing a full time motor vehicle course at a local college of further education.

15. Attendance overall is good. It has not improved significantly since the previous inspection (when it was also judged good), but it is well above average for a unit of this type. There are a few pupils with poor attendance records, and in the previous term, one pupil who refused to attend at all. Many of the pupils have had very poor attendance records prior to their entry to the unit and many still refuse to attend the mainstream school as part of their dual registration requirements, but they do attend the unit and can demonstrate a strong commitment to improving their attendance record. Most pupils are very punctual for the start of their lessons and there is little time slippage between lessons. Occasionally transport difficulties can cause a pupil to be late, but the unit monitors this unpunctuality. During a pupil's pre-admission visits to the unit, the Headteacher finds out whether a pupil will have difficulty coming to the unit on time and ensures that these problems are sorted out and transport arranged before a pupil starts.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. Teaching in English ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is mostly good. Lesson planning is very good. Teachers work well together as a team, ensuring that pupils receive individual support when it is needed. Lessons have clear objectives that are related to previous work and are well matched to pupils' varying abilities. Behaviour management is usually good because of the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Sometimes, especially in basic skills lessons, pupils are given work that is too easy for them, when more effective use of additional support would enable pupils to achieve more.
17. Teaching of mathematics is good and often very good. The teacher has very good subject knowledge, plans very well and sets the pupils challenging tasks. He ensures that the work is interesting and this, together with his excellent relationship with pupils and very high expectations of behaviour, results in pupils concentrating very well on their work and achieving well.

18. Science teaching is consistently very good and is enhanced by the specialist knowledge and experience of the science teacher. She is very enthusiastic and has high expectations of the pupils. Lessons are very carefully planned in line with National Curriculum programmes of study and the appropriate attainment targets are listed clearly within the very good lesson planning. The teacher is constantly reinforcing literacy and numeracy during the lesson. She makes sure that the questions are couched in terms the pupil can understand without them appearing condescending. The teacher is very skilled in assessing the pupils' work as the lesson progresses. This is possible because there is a very good relationship between the teacher and the pupils. There are very clear boundaries set for behaviour and the teacher does not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour. The lessons are challenging and move at a brisk pace thanks to the confidence and competence of the teacher. These qualities help to ensure that there is a perpetual interest shown by the pupils for this subject. The room is due to be refurbished very soon and it will then provide an excellent facility for this specialist subject.
19. The teaching of art is very good and there is a great deal of evidence around the school showing the exciting and high quality work of the pupils. The teacher is very skilled in ensuring that the questions that she asks are so phrased as to present a challenge to the pupils that they cannot resist. They have knowledge and experience and the teacher uses this to 'stretch' their thinking about their work and the words they use to describe it. Within the relaxed atmosphere that the teacher has created there is a clear urgency and purpose. One Year 10 pupil who was creating a Batik design on a piece of fabric, was highly motivated by the questions and the support that he was receiving. The teacher was very effective in her imparting of new skills and the pupil was very excited and pleased with himself. The teacher skilfully disguised a couple of wrongly placed drops of wax as extra bubbles within the fish design. This eliminated any possibility of rejection of the work or disappointment on the part of the pupil. The teacher is also very successful in supporting language development during the lessons. She encourages pupils to speak and discuss feelings and ideas. She also teaches very effectively about the roles and functions of art within the wider world.
20. Teaching is good and often very good in information and communication technology. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and the lessons are well paced. The teacher has very high expectations of behaviour and ensures that pupils are interested in the tasks. One pupil responded with wonder when his data was transformed into a graph by the spreadsheet programme. He ensures pupils are aware of the need for accuracy in entering data. The ICT room is very small but the best use possible has been made of the available space. There are clear rules for behaviour in the room displayed on the wall and these are enforced during lessons.
21. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory. Lessons start with a good introduction to the task. Good use of praise and encouragement keeps pupils interested and involved with the task set. Facts learned in previous lessons are recalled through satisfactory use of questions. The teacher has a good rapport with pupils and this has a positive effect on pupils' willingness to learn and make progress. There are high expectations that pupils enter the room sensibly, settle quickly to work and work safely. The teacher's good subject

knowledge is clearly evident in the organisation of the comprehensive range of tasks that pupils are set.

22. Geography is well taught. Activities are well planned and a good range of methods is used to make lessons interesting. There is careful checking of what pupils have remembered from previous lessons before moving on to new topics. A high level of discussion is successfully encouraged in lessons but it is not always matched by similar expectations of written work. History was not being taught during the inspection.
23. The quality of teaching in physical education is very good. The teacher's expert knowledge and very high levels of skills are greatly admired by the pupils. He has a very clear understanding of the difficulties that the pupils have to face and overcome when working in close proximity to each other. His very high expectations and trust result in pupils being willing and able to work constructively and supportively in pairs or small groups. The space available is inadequate and does not allow for formal games to be played and for competitive matches to be played. Nevertheless, pupils do enjoy learning the skills and some of them join local sports clubs. The teacher pays very high regard to issues of health and safety and the pupils respect the rules about jewellery and watches – they must not be worn during physical education lessons. Lessons are very carefully planned and the individual needs of all pupils are taken into account. Lessons usually begin with a rigorous time of questions and a clearly presented statement about the lesson objectives. During or at the end of each lesson the teacher assessed the work and progress of individual and made a careful record of his findings.
24. Teaching assistants provide very good support for both teachers and pupils throughout the unit and play a vital role in the success of these pupils. Teaching assistants work with both the most difficult pupils and those who are highly talented. For one pupil, this enables him to develop even further.

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

25. A good range of learning opportunities is provided at both bases of the unit and the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and helps them to make up what they have missed in previous schools. In Years 4 to 7, schemes of work are based largely on individual need as seen by the unit and the pupils' mainstream school. The basic skills are stressed to help the pupils to achieve well and re-integrate. In Years 7 to 11, there is a good match to the subjects of the National Curriculum but music, a modern foreign language and religious education are not offered. There is a proper emphasis on the teaching of English, mathematics and science. The provision for developing literacy and numeracy skills is good, with particular effective use of the numeracy strategy in Years 7 to 9.
26. It is difficult for the unit to offer extra-curricular opportunities for pupils who travel considerable distances and share transport, but, but it is recognised that this is an area for development. However, pupils now have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of

Edinburgh award scheme, which was introduced in September 2002. Six students have completed the Service element of the award. They took part in a conservation project in collaboration with the British Trust over a period of three months.

27. Careers' education provision is very good and there are very effective links with the local careers service. Pupils have regular discussions with the 'Connexions' adviser and there are vocational opportunities through links with a local college. The unit and the adviser work hard to ensure that pupils leaving the unit are placed in some form of further education or employment.
28. There is a very good programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) which has been recently developed and which reflects the pupils' needs and experiences. It includes personal safety, first aid, conflict resolution and current affairs. Elements of citizenship such as crime and justice are incorporated in the programme. There is also planning for units on different religions in the world and Britain as a diverse society. The unit also fulfils the requirements to deliver sex and drug education.
29. The unit has good links with the local community and with other educational establishments. Lancashire Football Association have provided a coach to train pupils once a week as part of Lancashire FA coaching scheme and pupils respond well to a "real" coach. Pupils get opportunity to take the Junior Football Organisers Course, which is specially devised for older pupils. There are close links with the primary schools where the pupils are dual registered. As part of the individual package for Year 11 pupils, pupils spend time in both the unit and their mainstream school and do access courses at a local college of further education. One pupil has a full time Princes Trust placement which was set up and organised by the unit. Pupils follow courses in construction work and painting and decorating at a local training agency.
30. Communication between the unit and the pupils' mainstream schools is good. The quality of these links is a very significant factor in the successful reintegration of pupils.
31. The unit make good provision for pupils' spiritual development through subjects such as English and art. Although there is no discrete provision for religious education, the pupils' own spiritual development is enhanced through the extensive programme for their personal, social and health education and citizenship. This encourages them to discuss their feelings and beliefs and also provides opportunities for pupils to explore social and moral issues related to modern-day living. Because their work is valued, many pupils take pride in their work for the first time in their school career.
32. Moral values are very well promoted. Good provision is made to ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. Moral issues are frequently raised in the course of the Unit's working day and pupils are encouraged to judge for themselves whether actions are right or wrong. Clear expectations of behaviour, supported by a readily understood code of conduct and the very good role models of staff, result in a very good ethos.

33. Provision for social development is good. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and friendly and pupils are encouraged to respect staff and each other. Breaks and lunchtimes are pleasant experiences, with staff and pupils enjoying each other's company. When involved in sporting activities, such as football matches, pupils are encouraged to be sportsmanlike. The very good relationships between staff and pupils give the unit a strong sense of community and shared purpose.
34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have opportunities to learn of their own and others cultures. In art pupils are encouraged to appreciate a variety of art forms in their own culture and that of others. A good range of visits and visitors help promote pupils' cultural development and broaden their horizons. This enables them to understand more about local and national identities.

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

35. Procedures for child protection in the unit are very good and in line with those of the area child protection committee. All staff in the unit have received basic training in child protection procedures. Staff are very sensitive to child protection issues, and they are a regular feature of the twice-daily staff briefings. The unit has good links to the education welfare service and social services, and is regularly involved in case conferences and in working with relevant agencies and professionals where there are concerns about pupils and their families.
36. Health and safety procedures follow the local education authority guidelines and the unit has recently responded very promptly to a very positive health and safety audit of the unit's health and safety procedures and risk assessments. All staff have received first aid training. Clear health and safety procedures are in place. The unit permits a few pupils, who have their parents' permission, to smoke outside, under supervision, at break times. This practice does not support the concept of promoting health education for pupils, or follow national guidelines on health education. The unit is aware of maintaining a high staff/pupil ratio when out on unit visits and activities, to maximise pupils' safety. The teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
37. The personal support and guidance offered to pupils is very good and there is a clear and definite structure for the monitoring of personal development. The unit offers a safe environment and a secure routine that ensures all pupils feel supported. From the time when pupils come into the units at the start of the unit day, pupils are with staff all the time, and this leads to staff knowing pupils very well and being able to build up a good working relationship that underpins any necessary disciplinary action or adds credence to any rewards. Staff are unfailingly polite with pupils, encouraging, friendly and expect the best of them. The unit is well supported and advised by a wide range of local education and outside agencies. Good efforts are made to provide pupils with work experience opportunities and careers information for when they leave the unit. The dual registration opportunities between the unit and mainstream provision, give pupils the experience of integration with their peers in mainstream schools and colleges. The unit's certificate reward system promotes social and behavioural achievements, as well as academic achievements. It is thoroughly understood by

all pupils and the behaviour log acts as a useful measure of a pupil's personal development in a lesson. Pupils discuss the ways in which points have been awarded and have a very good understanding and appreciation of the system. The awarding of first, second and third certificates (which carry a five pound reward) matches the performance of pupils' as they progress towards their individual targets. Time is structured into each day for counselling sessions with key teachers, and this is used to very good effect in managing behaviour, promoting personal development and working on the relationship between the key teacher and pupil. A key feature of each day is the toast and milk provision for pupils at break times. This is eagerly anticipated by pupils and is a very positive social experience for them.

38. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good. Registration takes place twice a day, in line with statutory requirements, and arrangements are in place for phoning a pupil's home or carer to check on their absence. The cover teacher for each keeps a very close check on individual pupil attendance at each lesson and tracks pupils that are in or out of the unit. The unit has established links to specific education welfare officers to follow up their concerns over pupils' absences. Home visits are made to the families of pupils who are not attending regularly, and this is judged to have had a beneficial effect for a few pupils in promoting attendance. The unit's administrative office plays an exemplary role in monitoring and tracking the attendance of individual pupils. Their work is to be praised for its effectiveness. Through these systems, the unit can demonstrate the improved attendance of pupils who have previously had poor attendance records in mainstream education.
39. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are very good as are those to eliminate bullying and oppressive behaviour. The unit maintains detailed records of incidents and all staff are required to use agreed methods of restraint across the unit and all staff are trained in this procedure. The unit is generally opposed to exclusion, but has had to use it occasionally as a strategy during this academic year. On each occasion where positive handling strategies are used, the restraint incident is recorded. The unit is in the process of updating its procedures for recording major incidents and restraints to follow best practice guidelines. There are points of the day such as break and lunch times that the unit has identified are potentially difficult times for pupils to manage their behaviour, and the unit structures and supervises this time, for example with cricket matches and football games, very tightly, so that there are fewer opportunities for inappropriate behaviour to occur. The unit is open in acknowledging that harassing and racial incidents occasionally take place in the unit, and is continually working to identify procedures, risk assessments and strategies to eliminate these incidents. The pre-admission meeting for pupils sets out very clear parameters about the high standard of behaviour that is expected in the unit and the zero tolerance of bullying or any form of harassment. The unit based at Kendal focuses on offering discrete social skills programmes for pupils to improve their behaviour in mainstream units and society generally.
40. The effectiveness of the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. There is a clear policy outlining procedures, but these are not all fully implemented. Some of the targets in pupils' individual education plans are not precise enough to enable teachers to make clear assessment of progress. There is also room for further development in the use of assessment results to guide the future lesson planning and teaching approaches. Records of pupils' achievements in the core curriculum and personal,

social and health education are appropriate and give a clear picture of the progress being made by pupils.

41. The day to day assessment of pupils' achievement is good, as work is marked regularly and pupils know through verbal feedback how well they are doing. In English, reading tests identify pupils who need the reading recovery programme. In mathematics, self-assessment sheets are used, so that pupils know what they will be learning and what they have achieved. The subject manager has identified this as an area for further improvement.
42. Although individual computer programs are used in English and mathematics, they are not used effectively to diagnose problem areas or achievement, although pupils are aware that they are making progress. In science, the teacher has a clear understanding of the pupils' attainment and progress, but there is no clear system for formal recording. Assessment in other subjects is satisfactory overall and good in art and physical education, where pupils' work is assessed on a regular basis and the results are used to make sure that future teaching matches the needs of the pupils.
43. The pupils have not taken end of year tests in Year 9 but these will be taking place next year. In Years 10 to 11, assessment is related to external accreditation programmes.
44. The headteacher is aware that assessment needs developing and is taking the necessary action immediately.

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

45. Parents' views of the unit are positive and they support the unit's teaching of their children and the efforts it makes to promote their personal development and help them become mature and sensible. They are very satisfied with the ease with which they can contact the unit. Parents feel comfortable when talking to staff especially the key teachers involved with their children. They are aware of the special difficulties their children have faced in their education, for example saying, "He does hit out sometimes because other pupils look at him funny or they trip him up." However they are very impressed with the turnaround in their children's attitudes once they attend the unit saying, for example, "From day one he's enjoyed every minute of it." They appreciate the staff's skills and expertise in meeting the needs of their children, "The teachers are great and know how to handle them" and they are aware that the behaviour that would get their children excluded from mainstream schools is managed appropriately in the unit. A few of the parents have concerns over the amount of homework that is set, and the consistency of these arrangements. They feel that where it is set, it is usually completed in unit time and not at home.
46. Efforts made by the unit to keep in touch with parents are very good, and it is a recognised responsibility of key teachers to speak to parents when there are difficulties over behaviour, attendance or issues that are affecting pupils work in unit. Administrative staff speak to many parents on a daily basis about their children's attendance, and behaviour, and establish very strong links, and support, for parents. The unit sends out parental questionnaires to discover

parents' views of the unit and to enable the unit to respond to issues that worry parents. Home visits are occasionally made by key teachers if this is considered necessary for the pupils well being. Information in the record of achievement reports and annual written reports to parents is personal to the pupil involved and useful to parents and carers. Because of the long distances many pupils have to travel, few parents are involved on a day-to-day basis. Parents are encouraged to come into unit, however, to help manage their children's behaviour if this is felt to be useful. Attendance of parents at reviews is variable across the unit, but the unit is always willing to arrange transport for parents and carers if this poses a difficulty. Parents attend their children's pre-admission meetings and this formulates strong links with the unit. From then on, the units' main communication with parents is by telephone; for example to be told how well their child is doing, or to hear if there are any problems. The record of achievement that parents receive from the unit at the end of their child's time is informative and enables parents to judge the progress their children have made.

47. In making appointments for meetings with parents, the unit is very careful to ensure that these times are convenient for parents and that they have a range of contact numbers for each pupil's family or carer so that they can always be contacted. Unfortunately, parents do not always help the unit by providing reasons for their child's absences. Overall parents consider that whilst at the unit their children's behaviour and attendance improves.

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

48. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction. In managing the unit, she receives very good support from the deputy head teachers. The headteacher shows very good understanding of what has been achieved and what needs to be done in the future. The Unit is very effective because staff work very well together as a team and are united in their commitment in providing the best they possibly can for the pupils.
49. The unit's aims, values and policies are reflected clearly in all areas of its work and are consistently applied by staff. This has a strong and positive impact on the progress that pupils make and on the ethos that pervades both of the sites. Teaching is monitored effectively and support for the developing curriculum is good.
50. Co-ordination responsibilities for subjects and aspects of the Unit's work are clearly designated. However some of these roles have only recently been filled or are in the process of being filled and not all staff are clear about how to fulfil their responsibilities.
51. The unit analyses its attendance, exclusions and other performance information. The curriculum offered is also reviewed to ensure it matches the interests, ability and special needs of all its pupils. In addition to senior staff meetings and weekly whole staff meetings, there is a daily whole-staff briefing and debriefing each day. These meetings provide an opportunity for staff to be fully aware of relevant pupil information and to evaluate and review their practices. Feedback from partner institutions and professionals, from parents

and carers, and from pupils is also discussed and this enables the unit to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.

52. The LEA is extremely supportive. The management committee fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. The senior education officer works closely in support of the unit. The role of the unit is set out clearly in the policies of the LEA and is closely reflected in centre practice. The management committee is very supportive of the headteacher. It gains a good picture of what goes on in the centre from the detailed headteacher's reports. However, it currently meets only every six months and considers issues mainly relating to provision rather than playing a full part in monitoring the work and development of all aspects of the unit. Its terms of reference should be much more specific, which would clarify its role and further support the work of the unit.
53. Funding is very carefully managed and, so far as is possible, best value is sought. The unit has a large reserve at the moment as this is money that is assigned for further development of the building and science facilities, which is planned for the forthcoming summer holidays. Specific grants for training are used effectively to support development priorities. There is very good administrative support for the work of the unit, particularly in relation to the production of documents and reports, financial accounts, reception duties, contact with parents and schools and the following up of absence.
54. Staffing is very good. There are sufficient teachers to ensure that class groups can be kept suitably small to ensure that individual needs can be met as fully as possible. The staff work very well as a team, with teachers, teaching assistants, administration and caretaking staff all contribute greatly to the support and management of pupils. Additionally, a number of staff also hold specialist qualifications in outdoor activities. Several staff work and/or liaise on a part-time basis in primary and secondary schools, supporting individual pupils. This is beneficial in terms of professional development. All staff have relevant job descriptions which accurately reflect their duties and responsibilities. Staff are given frequent opportunities to discuss the development of their roles. Opportunities for in-service training are regular and relevant to staff development and the needs of the unit. New staff feel well supported by the schools induction procedures and value the mentoring sessions provided by the senior management team. The unit deploys its staff effectively to support the curriculum and integration, and it makes good use of the support assistant in lessons. However, the deployment of staff, who at times have no pupils to support, is not sufficiently thought through or planned. Performance management procedures are fully implemented.
55. Teachers have access to good resources to help them make lessons interesting. The building in which the unit is accommodated places limitations on the curriculum and limits the scope for some of the positive initiatives the staff would like to introduce. The building is well maintained and the unit makes imaginative use of the space available. However, there are no indoor physical education facilities and the design technology workshop and ICT rooms are too small. A more effective use of the Kendal site has been identified. It will now focus on taking up a preventative role, working with dual registered pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.

56. The very good progress pupils make, the very good management of pupils' behaviour, the consistently very good teaching and the effective way in which the unit is managed mean that overall the unit provides good value for money.

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

57. In order to improve the quality of education provided by the unit, the headteacher and Local Education officers need to:

- (i) improve the accommodation for the teaching of information and communication technology, design technology and physical education.
- (ii) formal assessment arrangements so that there is a consistent approach and use can be made of the information they gain to set further work geared to improve achievement.
- (iii) improve opportunities for extra curricular activities.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	12	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0.0	42.3	6.2	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0

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

### *Information about the unit's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the unit's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	41

<b>Special educational needs</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	41

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
Unit data	16.7

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
Unit data	9.9

*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	40
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### ***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	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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: Y3 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y[ ] – Y[ ]**

Total number of education support staff	6.4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42.9

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	588,113
Total expenditure	546,301
Expenditure per pupil	6,427
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,722
Balance carried forward to next year	61,715

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	4

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	41
Number of questionnaires returned	7

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	29	0	29	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	29	0	14	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	14	29	0	29
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	14	43	14	14
The teaching is good.	57	14	14	0	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	86	14	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	14	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	14	0	0	14
The school is well led and managed.	57	14	0	0	29
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	29	0	14	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	14	0	0	29