

INSPECTION REPORT

HILLINGDON TUITION CENTRE

Yiewsley

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102366

Headteacher: Mr. P. Helps

Reporting inspector: Mike Warman
1516

Dates of inspection: 16 - 18 June 2003

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	9 to16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Providence Road Yiewsley Middlesex
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Appropriate authority:	Hillingdon LEA
Name of responsible officer:	Mr M Dennison
Date of previous inspection:	15 May 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1516	Mike Warman	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Special educational needs	The characteristics and effectiveness of the Centre The Centre's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the Centre led and managed?
9007	Rafi Salasnik	Lay inspector		How well does the Centre work in partnership with parents and carers?
1718	Kay Charlton	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1830	Stuart Charlton	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Educational inclusion	How well does the Centre care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Hillingdon Tuition Centre (the Centre) provides for pupils aged nine to 16 years within the Hillingdon Local Education Authority (LEA). It is the only pupil referral unit in the Borough. It takes pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or who are likely to be excluded. Pupils who attend the Centre are predominantly white. There are currently 37 pupils on roll, one of whom is currently being re-integrated into a mainstream school and 3 are on dual roll placements. Pupils have been excluded from 15 different secondary schools. One pupil has a statement and all other pupils are identified at school action plus in relation to the Code of Practice for special educational needs. All pupils are identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). No pupils speak English as an additional language. Currently 20 pupils are entitled to free schools meals which at 54 per cent is very high. Pupils' attainment on entry is below or well below that expected for pupils of this age. Pupils come from the whole borough and consequently a wide range of social backgrounds.

The primary aim of the Centre is to re-integrate pupils into mainstream schools for pupils in the 9 to 13 age range and for pupils who are 14 to 16 to re-engage them in learning and provide an alternative provision leading to GCSE qualifications or other national accreditation. For these pupils college provision and work experience features strongly.

HOW GOOD THE CENTRE IS

This is an effective Pupil Referral Unit with many very good features. Teaching is good which leads to pupils making good progress overall and very good progress in their personal development. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. The provision made at the Centre is particularly cost effective in terms of the success it achieves.

What the Centre does well

- The standards pupils in Year 11 achieve at GCSE are very good.
- In all other years pupils achieve well in all subjects they study.
- Pupils make very good progress in their behaviour, attitudes, their personal development and attendance.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a clear direction for the work of the Centre.
- The Centre's links with parents are very good and as a result they hold it in high regard.

What could be improved

- The use the Centre makes of the national qualifications framework.
- The way the Centre provides support for pupils returning to mainstream.
- The systems the management committee use to review the effectiveness of the Centre's work.

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

HOW THE CENTRE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The Centre was last inspected in May 2001. Since then improvement has been very good. Teaching is now much better with almost all lessons being good or very good. Specialist teachers now teach all subjects in Years 8 to 11 which has helped to raise standards. The procedures for assessing and recording progress are now very good and consistently applied throughout the Centre. The management of special educational needs is now satisfactory with good systems established even though at present there is no permanent co-ordinator. The Centre has worked hard to improve attendance and almost all pupils show considerable improvement on their previous rate. The rate of re-integration has improved as a result of the systems established by the LEA.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By the time they leave	Key	
English	B	Very good	A
Mathematics	B	Good	B
Science	B	Satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	Unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	Poor	E

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

Pupils make good progress overall and many achieve very well particularly in terms of the GCSE passes they gain. The greatest progress seen is in pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). This is because many elements of it are addressed in every lesson, and at lunch and breaktimes. As a result pupils regularly meet the challenging targets set for them. The good progress seen in other areas of the curriculum is the result of careful planning and a good match of learning material to pupils' needs. In English pupils make the greatest progress in their speaking and listening skills, and in their reading. In mathematics pupils develop their mental skills well and enjoy solving problems and achieving the correct solution. Pupils make very good progress towards the very clear personal targets in their individual education plans (IEPs) particularly in relation to managing their own behaviour.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Very good. Most pupils show very good attitudes and are very positive about the education they receive and success they achieve. Most are keen to attend and speak with praise about the way in which they are treated by staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Taking into consideration the history of poor behaviour in the past pupils make very good progress in improving it. There are still incidents, but as a result of very good behaviour management strategies, the Centre is mostly calm and learning proceeds smoothly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop respect for one another's feelings and values as well as becoming much more independent and self-controlled.
Attendance	Very good improvement. Given the sporadic and often non-attendance of nearly all pupils prior to attending the Centre attendance is now good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 to 11
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Teaching is good throughout the Centre with a significant proportion of very good teaching seen. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are good and often very good. There are strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy which enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers and support staff work very well together, are consistent in their approach and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Staff have high expectations of pupils and these are well supported by very good behaviour management. Planning is good and clearly reflects the differing needs of the pupils. Pupils are interested in the work, want to do well and they usually try their best.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in the subjects of the curriculum in Years 5 to 9. This supports their re-integration into mainstream schools. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is very well tailored to meet their needs and enables them to achieve a good range of passes at GCSE.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Good systems have been established which effectively enable pupils' additional learning needs to be met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for moral and social development is particularly strong. The strong moral climate results in a well-established sense of community and purpose. Many pupils take increasing responsibility for their actions and this helps them to make a successful return to mainstream schools. Many pupils are eager to take on responsibilities that they perform well. There is an ethos of mutual respect for individual differences. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting academic and personal development, behaviour and attendance are very effective.

The Centre works very well with parents and carers, almost all of whom support its work strongly.

HOW WELL THE CENTRE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they make a very effective team providing very good support to all staff. The direction provided by the LEA is clear and effective.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	The management committee fulfils its responsibilities. It supports the Centre well and works with it to seek further improvement. However, at present it has no clear systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the Centre's work.
The Centre's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The management team and LEA provide very good information about the effectiveness of the work of the Centre and how it can move forward.
The strategic use of resources	The Centre uses all of its resources well to ensure pupils make the best progress possible in their quest for mainstream schooling or nationally accredited qualifications.

The Centre is well staffed to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum provided. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory overall although there is a lack of suitable facilities for physical education on site. The Centre applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE CENTRE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents have very positive views about the Centre and are very supportive of its work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very small number of parents commented about the behaviour in the Centre, the amount of work pupils get to do at home, the activities outside lessons and their child's dislike for school.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive comments. More than one third of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all except two expressing very positive views of the Centre. Inspectors found that pupils have made very good improvement in their behaviour which is good and that the Centre works with parents very well. The amount of work pupils get to do at home is similar to that found in other schools of this type. The range and quality of activities outside lessons are very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The Centre's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils join the Centre, their average attainment is below the nationally expected level for their age and on occasions well below this level, particularly in English and mathematics. During their time at the Centre, pupils make good progress and achieve well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
2. Most pupils have a history of interrupted education and often low achievement. During their time at the Centre most pupils improve the standard of their work considerably so that most pupils in Year 11 achieve very creditable results in their GCSE examinations. The main factor for this progress is the good and very good teaching. Teachers consistently have high expectations of pupils and consequently they respond well both in terms of academic achievement and behaviour. There is no difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils, different ages or by boys and girls. All pupils have special educational needs (SEN) and one pupil had a statement of SEN at the time of the inspection. Those with additional needs also make good progress. Their progress is as good as that of other pupils at the Centre because care is taken to provide good individual support.
3. In each of the last three academic years, at least three-quarters of the Year 11 pupils at the Centre have entered for examinations in five GCSE subjects, including English, Mathematics and Science. Between 2000 and 2002 the success rate in these examinations has gone up from 85 to 96 per cent. In each year a significant proportion of pupils attained Grade C or above. Compared to their previous academic performance, this represents at least very good progress and for some pupils it represents excellent progress. The performance of pupils in the coursework elements of these examinations was very much better than in the tested components. This pattern of success is repeated in the work seen from the present Year 11 pupils in the Centre. Again, the work in their portfolios and their coursework is of a high standard and gives a very firm basis on which to build.

English

4. Throughout the Centre pupils make good progress and achieve well in speaking and listening. They make good eye contact when communicating and join in class discussions well, for example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were discussing the question of whether dogs should be banned from parks. Many of them develop considerable confidence in learning how to express opinions about sensitive situations. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 did this very well when discussing the relationships between Nazis and Jews leading up to the Second World War. Importantly, these pupils realised that they needed to give some explanations for their thinking based on reference to different types of evidence. Most have a good sense of humour and will listen to others even if they don't agree with them, showing signs of increasing maturity and ability to control their behaviour. Those pupils who have just completed their GCSE courses speak very well about the next stage of their lives, whether this involves further education or for a number of them, about the jobs they are moving to.
5. Overall, pupils receive a high level of individual attention in reading and achieve well. They show an interest in books and handle them with care. Pupils of all ages say that they enjoy reading. In Years 5 and 6, pupils learn to read accurately and with confidence. They make good use of different strategies to make sense of words. Pupils effectively learn to distinguish between 'factual' and 'fictional' writing and can describe the key features of each. Pupils read instructions correctly and use menus effectively in food technology. Older pupils particularly enjoy the 'focus' texts that they read as a class and can talk well about books that they have read. For example, when talking about one entitled 'Holes' they can begin to go beyond the text and give their own ideas about how characters might be feeling in particular situations. Those pupils studying GCSE

read complex texts, such as Romeo and Juliet, and because of the high level of discussion that takes place associated with this work, they can give well thought out opinions about the effectiveness of, for example, the plot, the setting and characterisation.

6. Pupils make good and often very good progress in writing. They often start from a very low base and have to work very hard to catch up. Many enter the Centre as reluctant writers and only after much input from staff that helps them develop some self-belief are they confident to 'have a go' by themselves. Pupils of all ages develop their understanding about different types of writing, for example writing letters, narratives, dialogues and poetry but particularly significant improvement takes place when pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop their personal writing. The high level of feedback from staff based on the clear use of the assessment criteria gives pupils very good advice about the ways in which they might improve. Pupils' finished work shows very good use of imaginative vocabulary to describe situations that have particular meaning to them, for example when one wrote, 'I started to miss my mum, I felt like a little lost puppy that nobody understood or wanted to understand.' Over time pupils are successful in writing extended pieces of work. Throughout the Centre pupils work hard with handwriting and spelling and overall, develop satisfactory skills. They make suitable use of ICT to present their work.

Mathematics

7. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6 the main focus of mathematics is to retain their familiarity with the structure of lessons in line with the format of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is appropriate and highly effective in preparing them for return to mainstream schools. There is a good emphasis on oral work and developing mental strategies, extending pupils' subject vocabulary, and introducing problem solving. Pupils develop good knowledge of number and space, shape and measurement. They are beginning to understand positive and negative numbers and are confident with the concept of less than one as they use fractions and mixed numbers. They are confident using numbers to 1000 and can identify halves and quarters of objects. They name and know the properties of many two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils are developing confidence in using their mental skills and are beginning to identify the information they need to solve simple problems. Pupils add and subtract accurately and are able to use their knowledge of tables to solve simple multiplication problems.

8. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are also working towards returning to mainstream schools. For the short time they have been at the Centre their books show a good amount of work. They show a good knowledge of concepts such as mode, median and mean and can calculate with accuracy. Their secure knowledge of number supports them well in their calculations. Sound knowledge is shown of using formulae to calculate, for example, the area and circumference of circles. There is good evidence of pupils using graphical representation to demonstrate data following a survey. They demonstrate a good knowledge of angles by naming, estimating and accurately measuring them. Pupils in Year 10 are working on their GCSE course and show sound knowledge of the elements covered. Their files show a good amount of work completed with care and accuracy: data presented through using a range of charts and types of graph; continued work on angles and the calculation of areas of complex shapes; rotation of shapes; and work on algebra involving expanding brackets and substituting values in expressions. Evidence from the coursework of those pupils in Year 11 studying for GCSE shows very good achievement and a good range of work at an appropriate level.

9. Pupils throughout the Centre apply themselves well to improving their numerical skills as a result of the interesting activities planned. Much of the repetitive work is covered through practical tasks and games to which pupils respond well. Numeracy skills are also well developed across the curriculum. Pupils use their skills appropriately to enhance their work in subject areas other than mathematics such as design and technology which regularly uses and enhances pupils' measuring and calculation skills. Within science, pupils draw and interpret simple graphs and use statistical diagrams to record the results of their experimental work.

Science

10. Pupils make good progress in developing their scientific knowledge and very good progress in developing their investigational skills. This is due in part to the high emphasis which is given to practical work. All pupils, including those in the Year 5/6 class, use the designated science room and all lessons for the older pupils are taught by the science co-ordinator. She shares the teaching of the Year 5/6 class with the class teacher. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can identify the main parts of a flower and classify a selection of materials into wood, plastic, metal and fabric, giving examples of how each is used. They have investigated light and electricity and understand how to construct a basic circuit. In their recent work they have shown they understand the difference between evaporation and filtration when they were, for example, attempting to separate dissolved salt from water. In their work on forces, older pupils, up to those in Year 9, have investigated parachutes, carrying out their own investigations as well as enjoying a visit from a free-fall parachutist. They are presently looking at the differences between acids and alkalis and carrying out experiments relating the properties of these to taste and texture. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 have extended this work to include investigations into the factors which control the rate of a reaction and are familiar with the pH colour charts and how these are used. In science there is good emphasis given to using the subject to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and they have good opportunities to use ICT in recording and presenting the results of their experiments which they do well.

Art

11. Pupils make good progress in art and achieve well, developing a good depth of knowledge and a range of skills. In terms of their artistic skills, a few pupils demonstrate attainment which is in line with that expected of pupils of their age. The work produced for the GCSE portfolios shows that some pupils achieve high standards. Pupils are developing a good understanding of design and can identify why they like particular designs and then make their own. Most pupils are developing skills in drawing and painting using a variety of media including crayons, pastels, pencils, paints and printing techniques. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed good imagination in their paintings of snow-topped mountains using light, tone and shade effectively. They use a range of materials and techniques including collage, textiles to produce cross stitch cards and clay tile design. In their current work they are looking at proportion in the context of making masks. Pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 have well-developed design skills and work carefully on topics such as the Graffiti project. In this pupils are developing good lettering, drawing and painting skills. They are showing good co-operation and negotiation skills. The course work for the Year 11 GCSE portfolios shows high quality skills in using paint, textiles and collage techniques. Pupils have shown particularly good interpretation and vivid imagination in their work. Skilled observational drawing and the exciting use of colour characterises much of this work.

Design and technology

12. All pupils, apart from those in Years 10 and 11, study design and technology. Overall, they make good progress in their studies and achieve well. However, in the making aspect their progress is very good and they achieve very well. All lessons are taught by the subject co-ordinator and the school has a well-resourced workshop and separate food technology room. All pupils experience a good balance of time spent working on food technology and resistant materials. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class have made a range of food including pizzas and buns and have completed a trinkets box made in wood. The objects they produce are of very high quality. Older pupils in Years 8 and 9 have made a small wooden table involving a range of different joints and are presently completing a junior hacksaw project involving casting, drilling, threading and finishing. Again, these articles are of very high quality and are a tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of the co-ordinator which results in all pupils really enjoying their design and technology lessons and taking great pride in the things they make.

History and geography

13. In history and geography, pupils make good progress and achieve well in developing their understanding of the past and place in the regional and world-wide community. National guidance is used appropriately to develop schemes of work for both of these subjects so that the provision is well-matched to the needs of the pupils. In geography, pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop good awareness of different continents and can identify them on a world map. They compare life in a village, such as Broadwindsor, and can draw out some of the features that distinguish it from a city. In Years 8 and 9 pupils find out about places further afield, such as Brazil, and use ICT effectively to both find information and present details of that country in a brochure for potential visitors. In history, pupils in Years 5 and 6 study topics such as the Victorians and the Ancient Greeks and effectively learn about famous people who lived in those times along with some appreciation of a time-line that gives perspective to the period of study. Older pupils in Years 8 and 9 learn about key features of topics such as the French Revolution and the Holocaust. Throughout the Centre there is suitable attention given to the ways in which both primary and secondary source materials can be used to build up understanding of different periods and older pupils can describe the effectiveness of some of these. The Centre makes good use of visits to help pupils widen their understanding in both subjects, for example, when the pupils in Years 5, 6, 8 and 9 visited Windsor Castle.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

14. All pupils have discrete ICT provision, but in the Year 5/6 class much of the teaching of ICT is based on the work which they do in the other subjects they study. All pupils make good progress in the use of ICT and achieve well in the subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use the keyboard and mouse confidently and accurately and all can load programs correctly. They use word-processing effectively to redraft their writing in English ensuring that it is presented to a good standard. They are very confident in using multimedia techniques including Powerpoint and have made a particularly effective CD-Rom about London which is of high quality. Older pupils refine their skills and, as well as entering GCSE ICT, they use all aspects of ICT very effectively in their coursework for all the subjects they study. This ensures that the quality of presentation in their coursework portfolios is very high.

Physical education (PE)

15. Pupils enjoy PE and overall, make good progress and achieve well. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have very good opportunities to learn to swim and as a result virtually all attain the expected national level and many go beyond this. The Centre only has a restricted area for games but this is used effectively by these younger pupils. All other year groups undertake a good range of activities, mainly at local sports centres. These include football, bowling, swimming and also ice-skating. Particularly good opportunities are given to pupils to learn to water ski and also Year 10 pupils are developing their skills in outdoor and adventurous activities by taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. In these ways pupils develop appropriate co-ordination and control in their movements. They learn how to play team games, recognising that it is essential to work together to achieve success. They show awareness of both their own and others' space and they learn to take turns and share. The visits out of the Centre provide very good opportunities for pupils' personal development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. All pupils attending the Centre have previously experienced considerable difficulties with their attitudes, behaviour and personal development. As a result of the comprehensive and consistently applied behaviour programme, the pupils' progress in this aspect is very good and is a strength of the Centre. This is similar to that found at the last inspection although attendance has improved significantly.

17. The pupils indicate that they feel comfortable and secure and throughout the day there is a calm working atmosphere. Pupils are developing a positive attitude to their work and are striving to overcome problems which have previously affected their progress. Parents report that pupils are now taking an interest in their learning and this is a significant improvement on the situation in their mainstream schools. Most are beginning to enjoy their work and are improving their level of concentration and are beginning to handle challenge well. They work purposefully, and persevere even when they find a task difficult, for example, when solving mathematical problems. The majority of pupils handle frustration well. All make strenuous efforts to gain merits for effort and achievement. Discussions with pupils show that they feel very positive about what the Centre has done for them.

18. Behaviour in and around the Centre is good at all times of the day and this represents very good progress. Pupils respond very well to the behaviour policy. They understand the system for loss of privileges, and appreciate rewards and merits. The good behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes results in these being pleasant, sociable occasions. Pupils behave particularly well when out of the Centre, as for example, when taking part in ice-skating at a sports centre. They are polite and courteous to members of the public and control their emotions well. They respond well to visitors, for example, when elderly local residents visited the Centre for afternoon tea. The significant improvements noted in pupils' behaviour result from the contracts made with them being seen as meaningful and relevant to each individual.

19. Relationships are very good. Staff act as excellent role models, particularly noticeable is their calm approach even if under pressure. There is mutual respect between the pupils and adults and they respond well to the warm, trusting relationships and patient encouragement from staff. This enables pupils to gain self-respect and confidence. Pupils accept each other's difficulties and provide support for each other. The quality of relationships makes an important contribution to the ethos of the Centre.

20. Pupils respond to the opportunities for personal development very well. They are familiar with routines and help to organise their own learning in subjects such as English. All show respect for their surroundings and handle equipment carefully. This is especially noticeable in science and design and technology, for example, when undertaking practical work using acids. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities for choice of activities, and are beginning to understand the need for rules and fair play through games and activities. The majority of pupils respond with great enthusiasm to opportunities to develop their character and stamina through activities such as those undertaken with the army and at an outdoor centre in Wales. Pupils make a conscious effort to contribute to the smooth running of the Centre even by small details such as remembering to put their chairs under the table as they leave the central area, which they are aware acts as a thoroughfare. Contributions to the wider community are made through activities such as helping the physically disabled to take part in water-skiing and through donations to charity.

21. The Centre is successful in achieving significant improvement in attendance for virtually all pupils. Attendance is now good overall. For example, since Christmas there have been 23 awards for 100 per cent attendance and punctuality for one month. Throughout the day punctuality is good, lessons start on time and pupils return promptly after breaks. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching is good with a significant proportion of very good teaching. Teachers show good skills as regards planning, which is consistently strong. This ensures that when they enter a classroom they know what they are going to try to teach each individual pupil and how they are going to check how much has been learned. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subjects they are teaching and all are good at addressing specific literacy and numeracy difficulties being faced by pupils. Teaching is now very much better than it was at the last inspection.

23. The work of the learning support assistants throughout the Centre contributes significantly to the good quality teaching seen and the good learning opportunities provided for the pupils. They are skilled when working with individuals or small groups of pupils. Their necessary interventions to help with the management of pupils' behaviour are effective.

24. The best teaching is seen when teachers make it clear to pupils what is expected of them in a lesson and what it is hoped they will achieve. In Years 10 and 11 it is also made clear to pupils how the lesson content will help them achieve a good grade in their GCSE, which is particularly effective in motivating pupils, as they have a desire to succeed. Consequently, most pupils respond positively to the realistic challenge of these well-planned lessons.

25. Good planning and preparation is helping teachers to conduct lessons that flow at a good pace and successfully interest pupils. What is apparent is that all teachers have good expertise with regards behaviour management and this, linked to the Centre's strategies for supporting staff, leads to a good response from pupils.

26. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good overall and this is significantly better than during the previous inspection. This good quality of teaching contributes positively to pupils' good learning in lessons in all subjects taught. The teacher has high expectations and these are supported by effective planning and very good pupil management that demonstrates clear understanding of individual needs. Time and resources are used efficiently and effectively. Pupils make an effort in lessons and consequently they achieve well in learning new skills, acquiring knowledge and developing understanding. The teacher promotes this effective learning through activities that match pupils' needs because she has good knowledge and understanding of the individual pupils. Key subject vocabulary is identified, well promoted and emphasised in these lessons. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well promoted, through effective use of the national strategies, as are the key skills in information and communication technology. For some lessons the pupils work with the subject specialist teachers in the secondary department which supports their learning well.

27. Teaching in Years 8 to 11 is good with some very good features. All teachers are specialists and share their enthusiasm with the pupils. All lessons are well planned and appropriate resources are used to stimulate and interest pupils. Pupils benefit from the positive relationships developed by the staff and the constant encouragement to persist with and improve their work. Teachers recognise pupils' differing abilities and give as much attention as possible to meeting pupils' individual needs. The result is that pupils develop confidence and achieve highly. The use of support is very effective with assistants making a valuable contribution to developing pupils' skills. The deployment of these assistants ensures that they work in lessons where they can use their considerable subject knowledge to support pupils' learning. This is recognised by pupils who show them a high level of respect.

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

28. The Centre has developed its provision very well since the last inspection and overall, the curriculum is good. There is a clear rationale that focuses on maximising pupils' smooth re-integration into mainstream education and for the oldest pupils on ensuring that they are well prepared for the world of work. In all age groups, literacy, numeracy and ICT are given a high focus and along with a very effective programme in personal development provide a firm foundation for all other areas studied.

29. The provision for pupils in Years 5 to 9 is good. It effectively uses the National Curriculum as its base. The Centre has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and for other subjects, such as history, makes effective use of national subject guidance. The Centre has worked particularly hard to ensure that there is a comprehensive programme to teach literacy through all other subjects. As a result staff make effective use of different strategies; for example, using key words associated with their own subject and using

different types of writing that are most suited to particular topics. Currently, the Centre is suitably extending the use of numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.

30. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given a wide choice of courses and virtually all achieve very good success in GCSE. However, pupils could still achieve more since the type of GCSEs offered do not make best use of the flexibility that is now permitted nationally as a result of the revision of the 14 to 19 curriculum. For example, by studying the new dual award (vocational) GCSE a higher percentage of marks are awarded for course-work, the area where pupils achieve especially well. The curriculum, at present, is based on either an academic core of five GCSE subjects, including English, mathematics, science, ICT and art or a more basic course covering English, mathematics, science and ICT. These are based in the Centre and can then be extended from a range of vocational options including courses in motor vehicle maintenance, hairdressing, child care and construction based at the Langley Campus of East Berkshire College. There are other options that are available at Uxbridge and West Hertfordshire Colleges, as well as work experience, voluntary work and secretarial studies. To ensure the effectiveness of these links and options, the Centre has a member of staff acting as a college liaison officer based one day-per-week at the Langley campus, where the greatest proportion of pupils attend. She very effectively co-ordinates the college-based options and monitors the progress of the pupils.

31. The Centre has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and ensures that all pupils are very effectively included in activities. The Centre fully meets the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. The Centre has devised a programme to target specific character traits or behaviours that affect easy assimilation into new peer groups. This is called 'Effect Some Change After Permanent Exclusion' (Escape). As soon as a pupil arrives an 'Escape' programme is set up. Staff, working with an educational psychologist, use records that are available from the pupil's previous school, a series of assessments undertaken by themselves and discussions with pupils and parents in order to draw up targets and agree a way forward. A wide range of different types of support is provided according to each pupil's needs. All of this is effectively planned and reviewed regularly to achieve the best outcome for the pupil. A central feature is ensuring that all pupils learn to appreciate that each and everyone is important and working with others can achieve success. In readiness for their re-integration into school pupils receive a significant amount of support and advice. The Centre works closely with the receiving school and overall, there are good links established. However, since there is no formal structure set up to support this process of re-integration too much is left to chance.

32. The Centre's provision for personal, social and health education is very effective. Throughout the day staff reinforce the work undertaken in specific lessons. In this way they help pupils to realise that each individual has responsibilities as well as rights, and that everyone has to learn how to make choices. There is good attention given to the need for healthy living, sex education and the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs. A good emphasis is given to the development of pupils' understanding of citizenship and issues associated with the environment are of particular interest to pupils. Pupils recognise the positive effect the Centre has had on their own personal development. Some of their comments include: -'They really make you think so hard,' 'It gets you to the crunch,' and 'The Centre has changed me a lot.'

33. Pupils' learning is very well supported through a wide range of activities outside lessons and very good links with the local community. For example, a link with a nearby special school has provided a unique opportunity for pupils to help those less fortunate than themselves to learn to water ski. Other examples include an overnight stay in an army camp, a residential stay in North Wales and a day visit to the Eiffel Tower. Visitors into the Centre, including the police and elderly folk in the area, all help to enhance the curriculum.

34. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Staff receive and value pupils' ideas and encourage them very well to have a positive self-image. They set good role models and inspire a sense of trust. In this climate pupils are confident to explore their feelings and emotions; for example, when pupils talked with the staff about safe sex. The Centre provides a range of opportunities for pupils to find out about different beliefs. There are good opportunities for reflection in assemblies and

pupils respond particularly well to these. The headteacher uses assemblies particularly well to ensure that everyone in the Centre starts the day with 'a smile on their face'. In subjects such as science and art, opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a sense of wonder at the beauty of the world. This was particularly noticeable when some of the pupils discussed the wonders of different chemical reactions.

35. There is very good provision for moral development. Parents expressed their appreciation of the aims, values and good behaviour that the Centre promotes and pupils are aware that they are expected to behave well. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, and appreciate the importance of 'The Centre Rules'. They understand that it is their responsibility to behave well and also to help others to do so. They appreciate the fact that staff acknowledge they have responsibilities to the pupils and 'will always listen to what we have to say.' Targets to help improve behaviour are carefully worked out for each pupil and all staff who work with the pupils are made aware of these so that there is consistency of approach. The staff work hard to help pupils attain these and this results in pupils making particularly good progress in this respect.

36. The support for pupils' social development through the daily life of the Centre is very good. Adults are very supportive of the pupils and have established very good relationships with them. The Centre is particularly successful in ensuring that pupils help and care for one another. In class and elsewhere, pupils are effectively encouraged to work together and support the whole Centre community. At playtimes and throughout the lunch breaks many staff are on duty. They eat meals with the pupils and take part in games with them. Games, such as snooker, are well organised and pupils enjoy playing together. Visits out of the Centre undertaken by all year groups play an important part in encouraging pupils' social development.

37. Overall, good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their cultural awareness. Pupils develop their understanding well through visits to local places of interest, when visitors come to school, and through assemblies and their lessons notably in art, history and geography. Pupils learn about different cultural backgrounds and different faiths are recognised in assemblies. Pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures is also promoted well by the staff of the Centre, a high proportion of whom come from different cultural backgrounds. Books appropriately include information about the diverse range of cultures represented in society. The Centre has a suitable policy to encourage positive race relations and, taken overall, successfully ensures that pupils learn about life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE CENTRE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The ways in which the Centre cares for its pupils are very good, as are the assessment procedures it uses to monitor and promote their academic and personal and social development. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

39. The Centre has very effective systems to assess the academic performance of pupils and to monitor their personal development. Within five days of admission to the Centre an Educational Psychologist who is bought in by the Centre interviews each pupil. From this interview and the results of the initial assessment tests, an individual education plan (IEP) is developed for each pupil. The targets in this IEP are held on a centralised database, 'Target Reporter', which can be accessed at any time by any member of staff. From the database a daily record for each class is generated and this is completed at the end of each lesson. These daily sheets and the fortnightly tutorial sessions enable the IEP targets to be updated regularly. These records provide clear evidence of the progress which individual pupils make in developing their personal and social skills and in managing their own behaviour. Each subject has developed an assessment record, which is based on the scheme of work and/or the syllabus requirements. These records are detailed and linked clearly to the National Curriculum requirements in each subject. They provide a very effective means through which the progress of each pupil can be tracked and ensure that all pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. They are also particularly effective for pupils in Year 11 where they form the basis through which pupils' portfolios and their coursework

are developed. Through these records the Centre is able to ensure that pupils attain high marks in the coursework components of their GCSE examinations.

40. These systems have a very positive impact on raising the self-esteem of pupils by enabling them to celebrate their success on a regular basis.

41. The Centre's systems and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of its pupils are very good. Risk assessment in curriculum areas such as science and physical education are extremely thorough as are those made before trips and outings. Careful records are kept of accidents and parents are notified immediately of any incidents which require their attention. All appliances, alarms and equipment are tested in the required manner and fire drills held regularly. There are also excellent procedures for child protection. Any concerns are fully recorded, investigated and acted upon if the need arises. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area and they regularly commit extra time to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils in the Centre. This total commitment to the well-being of the whole pupil is a very strong feature in the Centre's ethos.

42. The Centre has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating any form of oppressive behaviour. They are carefully integrated into the systems for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development. Pupils' IEPs contain not only specific and pertinent behaviour targets but also very good guidance on how to achieve these. Strategies and ideas on how to reinforce good behaviour are given together with what to do if these initiatives do not work. At the core of all plans is the premise that pupils have a choice. It is the constant reminder of this fact, together with the consistent use of sanctions, that allows the pupils to take control of their actions and see and enjoy the benefits of doing so.

43. Bullying is taken seriously by the Centre and is handled in a way that ensures that everyone understands that bullying is unacceptable and that all are given the opportunity to empathise with the victim of bullying, perhaps through role play. The success of this policy was clearly demonstrated in discussions with pupils. They stated that bullying was not a problem and compared the situation in the Centre very favourably indeed with their previous experience. There are appropriate systems in place in the Centre to log any serious incidents and the use of restraint but these are rarely needed.

44. Attendance is very effectively monitored. The very good links with parents ensure that any concerns are quickly resolved. There is a very effective first day of absence telephone contact, which is supplemented by an automated callback every hour until contact is made. This system is a significant factor in the rapid and very considerable improvements which are made in pupils' attendance rates.

HOW WELL DOES THE CENTRE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The partnership with parents is very good. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and filled in the questionnaires expressed high levels of support for the Centre and the education provided to their children. The effectiveness of the Centre's links with parents and the quality of information provided to them are very good. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the Centre is good and their contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. This reflects the high opinion of parents and good relations between the Centre and parents that was identified at the last inspection.

46. Parents in the meeting and in comments on the questionnaire referred to the many positive ways in which their children have benefited from being at the Centre. In particular they were most appreciative of the positive impact the Centre has on their child's behaviour and academic achievement. Some parents of older pupils taking GCSEs proudly commented that prior to their child coming to the Centre the expectation was that they would not be taking any exams at all.

47. Parents noted that all staff are approachable and are available at any time and that staff listen to their concerns and suggestions. They feel that staff are concerned about pupils' welfare and needs. They believe that the small teaching groups and high ratio of staff to pupils contributes greatly to the progress pupils make.

48. Annual reports are provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11 in February and this is followed by a tutoring day when parents and their child meet with the pupil's tutor and teachers. The day runs from early morning to the evening, and as a result most parents attend. In the case of younger pupils, who are being prepared for reintegration into mainstream schools, parents are involved in this process. This includes attending relevant meetings and being given copies of the report. The headteacher carefully explains the process and works with parents and this enables them to support their child during the reintegration into their new school. The Centre also works with the local Parent Partnership Officer who is very effective in helping those parents who find the process confusing.

49. Very good quality information is provided to parents both about the Centre and how it works as well as about what their child will be studying. This is available both in hardcopy and also on the Centre's very informative website.

50. Some parents help out in the Centre, including coming in to help with the occasional instances of challenging behaviour. The Headteacher also telephones parents to tell them of their child's good actions and behaviour and Praise Cards are also sent home. This means that parents do not think that schools only contact them to complain!

HOW WELL IS THE CENTRE LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the Centre are very good and have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and the LEA work together effectively to ensure that the management of the Centre is shared and successful. The headteacher gives strong and particularly effective leadership. He provides a very good role model and is fully committed to the improvement of the Centre and to the achievement of high standards and quality. All staff share this commitment to high standards and work hard to achieve them.

52. The management committee is made up of appropriate members, including local primary and secondary headteachers who have first hand knowledge of the Centre. They have suitable terms of reference and their role is clear in relation to the management of the headteacher and the LEA. Although they do receive reports about aspects of the Centre's work they have not established procedures so that they can systematically review its effectiveness.

53. All staff have clear job descriptions and subject leadership is good. As subject leaders are the only teachers to teach their subjects in the Years 8 to 11 they have a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects. They have a clear understanding about the standards being achieved and rely on the monitoring and evaluation of the headteacher to provide clear information about the quality of teaching.

54. There is very good monitoring and evaluation of performance. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning, planning and pupils' work are all regularly undertaken by the headteacher and the LEA and the process is viewed positively by staff. A Performance Management Policy has given this area structure and focus. Teachers have individual targets, against which improvements can be judged. The objective setting, coupled with the Centre's improvement plan means all staff have a clear vision of where they are, where they need to go and what needs to be done to get there.

55. The Centre does not have a delegated budget. It cannot therefore, budget from year-to-year for major developments. It does, however, have responsibility for monitoring and accounting for its spending and it does this very well. The Centre's office is very efficiently managed and

positively contributes to the smooth running of the Centre. The provision made at the Centre is particularly cost effective in terms of the success it achieves.

56. The Centre is well staffed. Teachers demonstrate all the necessary skills to successfully promote pupils' progress and enable many to return to mainstream schools. The induction procedures for new staff are very good. The recent appointment of subject specialist teachers for Years 8 to 11 has had a major impact on raising standards. Learning support assistants are very effective and make a positive contribution to the learning ethos of the Centre as well as greatly contributing to pupils' progress and achievement.

57. The accommodation is satisfactory. Staff and pupils find it conducive to learning and pupils' achievements bear testimony to this. There are adequate rooms for the variety of activities provided, although there are no facilities on-site for physical education. The Centre is maintained well and cleaned to a good standard. The internal decoration in the classrooms and around the Centre is good. There is a pleasant overall feeling that supports a positive learning environment that is effectively enhanced by the interesting and informative wall displays.

58. Learning resources are good. The number and quality of computers has been considerably improved and are now good. ICT is very well used to support all aspects of the Centre's work. Other subjects are well resourced, with a wide range of appropriate books and equipment. There are many, high quality and interesting reading books and those to support individual subjects are in classrooms and in the small, well-stocked library.

WHAT SHOULD THE CENTRE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve the work of the Centre still further and build on the current good achievements of pupils' the headteacher and local education authority should:

- i. maximise pupils' achievement at GCSE by fully exploiting the potential of vocational education and work related curriculum; (paragraph 30)
- ii. improve the support for pupils returning to mainstream by setting out a clear programme of how they will be supported, by whom, when and for how long; (paragraph 31)
- iii. ensure the management committee establishes systems that will enable it to review the effectiveness of the Centre's work. (paragraph 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	16	1	0	0	0
Percentage	32	64	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	37

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	37

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	12.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	11

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
26	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y5 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	132

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
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	£
Total income	322,360
Total expenditure	322,360
Expenditure per pupil	8712
Balance brought forward from previous year	Nil
Balance carried forward to next year	Nil

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

37

Number of questionnaires returned

15

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	40	6	6	6
My child is making good progress in school.	40	60	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	0	93	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	67	6	6	6
The teaching is good.	47	53	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	20	0	0	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	30	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	70	30	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	47	6	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	30	12	0	20