

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE PENDLEBURY CENTRE PUPIL
REFERRAL UNIT**

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106022

Headteacher: Mrs J Cahill

Reporting inspector: Mr I Benson
2379

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May 2003

Inspection number: 249533

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the unit. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the unit must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years (4 – 16 years home and hospital tuition)
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Edgeley Road Cheadle Heath STOCKPORT
Postcode:	SK3 0RJ
Telephone number:	0161 428 9305
Fax number:	0161 495 7158
Appropriate authority:	Stockport Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Mr C Keeble
Date of previous inspection:	9 th – 11 th December 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2739	Mr I Benson	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9931	Mrs MJ Kerry	Lay inspector		How high are standards? – Results and achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22178	Ms K Robertson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Educational inclusion	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
4483	Mr J-P Kirkland	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International Ltd.,
Upperton House
The Avenue,
EASTBOURNE
BN21 3YB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the unit	
How good the unit is	
What the unit does well	
What could be improved	
How the unit has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the unit	
How well the unit is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the unit	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The unit's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	23
HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	24
HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

This mixed Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) serves pupils in the borough of Stockport. It has full-time places at The Pendlebury Centre, and part-time places through home tuition and a mental health unit for secondary aged pupils who have a range of extreme emotional conditions. Among these are pupils who suffer the traumatic effects of bullying, severe depression, the wish for self-mutilation. Part-time teaching is also provided in the hospital and on the ward for pupils aged 4-16 years. During the inspection there were 61 pupils on roll: 33 were at the centre, three of them have a Statement of special educational needs; 12 pupils were taught at home; 6 pupils are supported on their reintegration to mainstream school; a further 10 are monitored on outreach programmes. The progress of a further 22 successfully reintegrated pupils is also being monitored. As a result of their history of interrupted schooling, most pupils enter the PRU with below average levels of attainment. None of the pupils currently on the roll has English as an additional language. The PRU recognises and values all pupils within its care.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

This is an excellent service, providing a high quality education for pupils with a wide range of needs, in the unit and beyond. The pupils benefit from very good teaching and learning that enable them to make very good progress and achieve highly. They obtain impressive results in a range of certificated courses. Pupils are supported by an exceptional ethos within which very effective review and target setting processes support their progress as learners and people. The quality of leadership and management is outstanding and provides a coherent and effective approach to the work of this service for highly vulnerable pupils. The PRU provides very good value for money.

What the unit does well

- High quality education, including very good teaching and learning and rigorous monitoring of progress, that enables pupils to achieve highly
- Outstanding leadership and management that provide a coherent and effective approach to work with pupils across the service
- An exceptionally positive ethos that is underpinned by a shared understanding of the organisation's aim and values and by excellent relationships
- An excellent standard of care, working with families as well as pupils
- A curriculum with a wide range of learning opportunities that offer clear progression routes for pupils' re-integration into mainstream or post-16 education
- The excellent use pupils make of the opportunities given to them: to regain their self-esteem and confidence as well as to develop as learners and people

What could be improved

- There are no areas identified for improvement

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

Very good progress has been made since the PRU was last inspected in December 1998. All of the key issues for action have been addressed, as have other areas of work. The unit's improvement plan is now of high quality: some of its most recent priorities are at the forefront of thinking in areas such as distance learning for sick pupils. The issue of individual education

plans has been tackled following a major review of practice. Provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly and is now applied in a range of subjects. Performance management has been successfully implemented and regular half-yearly reviews now help to inform planning for professional development. In addition, the unit has fully documented its policies and practice, both of which are subject to a regular review cycle. Closer links with mainstream schools have been established to support pupils' re-integration and provide support for the unit's inclusive curriculum. A major achievement has been the integration of the hospital, home-tuition and adolescent mental health unit into the PRU. The consolidation of these services into one organisation has ensured that the aims and values of the PRU have been reviewed and are now integral to the whole service provided for the vulnerable young people in its care.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Observation in lessons, scrutiny of work and teachers' records show that pupils across the service make very good progress and achieve highly, with some achieving outstandingly well. This is the result of the high quality teaching that takes very good account of individual learning needs, and the very good quality individual target setting and review processes. Pupils in the unit gradually overcome their difficulties, gain in confidence and become committed and successful learners. Those who take GCSE and other examinations achieve impressive results across a wide range of accredited courses. Progress is very good in the core subjects, in drama, food technology and personal and social education. It is good in all other subjects except French where it is satisfactory. Attainment is generally below average, but in some subjects it is in line and in others above the average. In ICT many pupils are achieving standards in line with national averages. Pupils with special educational needs make progress comparable to that of their peers because of the high quality planning focused on individual needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Very good. Pupils show a strong commitment to their learning. They take pride in their work, and have a serious approach to study. Pupils show evident enjoyment of their experience in the unit.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are considerate and courteous to each other and to visitors. They respect each other's views even when they disagree. There is a real sense of community.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Exceptional relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to overcome significant difficulties and become confident young people. They take an increasing degree of responsibility as they prepare for their future lives
Attendance	Good. Punctuality is impressive.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Very good. Teaching was never less than satisfactory: most was very good or excellent.

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

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. During this inspection, the teaching in English, mathematics and science was very good. Excellent teaching was seen in some lessons in English, mathematics, science, drama and personal, social and health education. Characteristics of the very good and excellent teaching and learning included: meticulous and rigorous planning; high expectations of all pupils; the brisk pace of teaching and learning; time in lessons was effectively used; outstanding management of pupils and their learning. Learning was well supported by excellent use of question and answer, the high level of pupils' involvement, interesting tasks and detailed marking and assessment of work. As a result pupils' progress was very good and their achievement high. Literacy and numeracy skills were always exceptionally well taught and integral to pupils' learning across the curriculum. In art and French teaching was less good: progress and achievement were satisfactory in French but good in art. Pupils' learning and personal development needs are extremely well supported within lessons and all benefited from significant challenge and positive encouragement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities and is complemented by extra-curricular activities. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. It provides very good progression routes for pupils' re-integration to mainstream school or transfer to a post-16 college place.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from very well designed learning tasks to meet their learning needs. For those with Statements, well conducted reviews, involving parents / carers and pupils as well as other professionals, ensure appropriate targets are set.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. High quality provision is made to support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, within lessons, through extra-curricular activities and within the relationships and encounters pupils have with teachers and other adults. Very good support is given for their cultural development within lessons and through the celebration of diversity in art, drama and literature.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	An area of excellent practice. There is an impressive degree of consistency across the service. The use of a caring, encouraging and understanding approach means that teachers never give up on pupils, even when progress is slow.

The service has a strong partnership with parents and carers, and works with the whole family to the benefit of the pupil.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The leadership and management are highly effective in ensuring a high level of quality consistency across the service, using monitoring and self-evaluation to review the effectiveness of policies, procedures and practices, and in establishing a coherent understanding among all staff of the organisation's aim and values. As a result, pupils benefit from a high quality provision and support and very good teaching and learning.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Excellent. The management committee is very supportive, is aware of the PRU's major strengths and areas for further development. Like the local education authority, the committee has a very high commitment to the PRU's work.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The ongoing process of monitoring and self-review across the organisation ensures that effectiveness is highlighted and areas for improvement or further review tackled.
The strategic use of resources	Very good, because of the service's excellent self-evaluation. The principles of best value are applied exceptionally well. The day-to-day management of finances is meticulous. The highly skilful staff members are very effectively deployed. The accommodation, both in the unit and at the hospital, is of very

	good quality. The curriculum is adequately resourced.
--	---

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make very good progress because of the high quality teaching • The service has very high expectations of what pupils can achieve • Parents feel that pupils are at last safe and secure and this lifts stress from the whole family • The approach of the headteacher and staff is straightforward and firm but fair. It inspires confidence. • The service restores pupils’ confidence and self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that the service is not approachable • Some parents feel that the service does not work closely with parents • The range of extra curricular activities is limited

Inspection evidence fully supported the parents’ and carers’ positive views. The service works closely with the great majority of families, and makes every effort to be approachable. Many parents write to the service in appreciation of its work. The range of extra curricular activities is very good, and includes home and hospital pupils where it is safe to do so.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and pupils' achievements

1. The service comprises a pupil referral unit, a home and hospital tuition service, an adolescent mental health unit and an outreach service. It therefore has to cater for a very wide range of needs, and this is reflected in the attainment of pupils on entry. Pupils who have a placement in the unit have usually experienced disrupted schooling. Baseline assessments, as well as the results of Key Stage 2 tests where these are available, indicate that attainment is usually below average with pupils having significant gaps in their knowledge. However, this is by no means invariably the case. In other parts of the service pupils have not necessarily experienced disruption but may be receiving tuition following an injury or operation, involving short or long periods in hospital. The service therefore has to cater for a wide range of attainment on entry, and to make accurate and realistic assessments of pupils' learning needs quickly. It is very successful in doing this and in ensuring that the very wide range of pupils makes very good progress.

2. Pupils who are able to do so take national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. Four pupils did so in 2002. In the same year, thirteen pupils took between two and five GCSE examinations each, covering English language and literature, mathematics, science, information communication technology (ICT) and child development. All pupils passed, and a significant proportion gained grades in the A – C range. In addition pupils took GCSE entry-level certificates in English, mathematics and science plus a certificate in health and hygiene where 12 out of the 13 entrants obtained a merit. Pupils also obtained certificates through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) programmes. Six pupils took units at Foundation level in GNVQ leisure and tourism at a local College, five of them gaining distinction. From 1996 to 2002 pupils at the unit have generally achieved high pass rates and, especially recently, a good proportion of higher-grade passes. These are impressive results over a very good range of nationally accredited courses.

3. Most unusually, the unit undertakes its own value added work based on progress from Key Stage 3 tests (where data is available) using the OFSTED Autumn package. This shows that in GCSE examinations in 2002, pupils generally achieved at least as well as expected, rarely worse than expected, and often significantly better than expected. When it is borne in mind that these comparisons are against rates of progress achieved nationally, the results are impressive. Pupils in the unit have suffered disrupted education and are still overcoming significant barriers to learning, and yet they usually achieve at least as well as, and often better than, their peers. For some, being able to meet the demands of taking an examination at all is a major achievement.

4. Although the unit is not required to set targets for performance against national averages it does so. There are progress targets for pupils taking Key Stage 3 national tests, and targets for the proportion obtaining A*-C or A*-G grades in GCSE examinations. These overall targets are seen as what might be reasonably be hoped for, given past performance, but in the awareness that individual cohorts vary widely and that targets are set before the current cohort is fully known. All pupils throughout the service have individual education plans with behavioural targets, and literacy and numeracy targets if these are needed. In addition teachers' planning takes very good account of short term learning targets for individual pupils in each subject. The attention paid to this area of planning ensures that pupils make very good progress against their targets. There are also predicted GCSE grades for individual pupils based on past performance.

5. In the work seen during the inspection standards of attainment were below average overall, but with some pupils reaching standards that are in line with or above average in some areas of their learning. In ICT many pupils are achieving standards in line with the average. Progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is very good, as it is in drama, food technology and personal and social education and citizenship. Achievement, as the result of high quality teaching, is very good or good in all subjects except French, where it is satisfactory. Often the achievement seen in lessons is very good and on occasions it is excellent. Over time pupils' achievement as demonstrated in their work and in progress records is very good. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is as good as that for all pupils because of the high quality planning which pays close attention to individual needs.

6. In **English**, standards are below average, but the progress pupils make while in the Centre is very good. Many pupils come to the unit with low levels of literacy and low levels of confidence in the subject but, thanks to very effective planning and teaching, they cover a lot of ground and achieve well. Some pupils achieve standards in line with the national average. Last year four pupils gained a grade C pass in English Literature GCSE and one pupil achieved a B grade. Twelve pupils entered for GCSE English Language and a high proportion achieved grades in the A-C range. The development of literacy skills for all pupils is very good and well promoted across the whole curriculum. Individual education plans are of a high standard and have a significant influence on learning for all pupils.

7. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed through the emphasis placed on discussion in lessons and the encouragement of conversation at breaks and lunchtime. Pupils listen attentively to a good selection of literature and poems and their ability to convey thoughts and opinions show progress in the understanding and appreciation of differing moods and messages contained in them. For instance, in a revision session Year 11 pupils demonstrated a high level of skill whilst constructing a group response to an examination prose question. They proved themselves able to make sensible contributions and to listen to each other carefully. The teacher asked pupils to comment on the similarities and differences in the stories they had been studying and one pupil recognised the racism in *Kiss Miss Carol*. When studying the anthology, they are able to make comparisons between texts and say which is most interesting and which appeals to them. Drama also makes a significant contribution to speaking and listening; for instance, in a very good lesson for Year 8, all pupils participated in a high quality debate on how to interpret expressions on photographs. They realise that body language and expressions convey meaning and respond accordingly.

8. Achievement in reading is very good. Many pupils may have been reluctant to read and write and lack confidence in their abilities. As a group, they study a set text, for example Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, retelling parts of the story and comparing characters. Most pupils are able to answer questions on what they have read. Higher attaining pupils understand hidden meaning. For instance high attaining pupils in Year 11 recognise the "stream of consciousness" in *Your Shoes* and the symbolism in *Flight* and *Your Shoes*. Many are willing to read aloud in class and recognise the significance of punctuation. Careful planning of individual reading programmes effectively addresses individual weaknesses. Reading skills are further developed through work in drama and poetry, which give rich and varied opportunities to read aloud and to themselves. They consider the choice of words in poetry and appreciate descriptive language. In a Year 9 poetry lesson for instance, pupils identified "mystery objects" from the descriptive phrases used in poems and recognise that a *blue mirror for the sky* is the sea.

9. Pupils' skills progress very well in writing. The very good use of a variety of writing frames across the curriculum enables pupils to organise and develop their writing for a range

of purposes and by the age of 16 pupils have learned to identify and comment on common themes in what they read. They have a good foundation for tackling some of the aspects that do not come as easily to them – for example, writing more independently, or understanding how writers use language to create particular effects. When considering persuasive language in advertisements pupils in Year 10 recognise the power advertisements have and the techniques used to generate an image or message. For instance, one pupil notes that the photograph of a girl advertising perfume *looks like she is trying to say, "Use this perfume and all your problems will go away"*. A higher attaining pupil notes that: *the images are vibrant and create the mental image of fun and liveliness*. For some pupils the regular use of a commercial computerised literacy programme has a positive effect on both reading and writing. They improve their writing – for example, constructing sentences more accurately, choosing more interesting words and expressions and writing at greater length.

10. The standards in **mathematics** are below average and reflect the low levels of pupils' attainment on entry. Work scrutiny, analysis of teachers' records and observation in lessons confirm that standards are below average, but by the end of Year 11 the attainment of a number of pupils is in line with national averages. As a result of very good teaching, pupils make very good progress and achieve highly. External results in 2002 show that all those entered for mathematics gained entry-level certification and in the GCSE examination four of the eleven gained either B or C grades. This is a highly creditable achievement given the history of interrupted schooling experienced by the majority of pupils at this PRU.

11. In lessons, pupils develop a firm grasp of number bonds, although some younger pupils are just beginning to develop greater confidence in this area of work. Year 8 pupils have a good grasp of the concept of correlation. They can plot accurately co-ordinates using ICT, and can give reasons why there is positive, negative or zero correlation. Year 9 pupils can predict the outcome with a high degree of accuracy prior to producing a graph. Most pupils at this stage are successfully developing their mathematical thinking, although their accuracy in number work is improving more slowly, largely because of significant gaps in knowledge and skills. Older pupils are more confident both in number work and problem solving. The level of support and challenge provided in the teaching ensures that progress is very good. Year 10 pupils, applying the theory of probability, developed very good levels of understanding and were able to propose and successfully test hypotheses. Year 11 pupils showed good understanding of mathematical processes, problem-solving techniques and of the properties of a range of geometrical shapes and were confident in discussing their approaches and in providing solutions. Pupils use number confidently across the curriculum and can understand and ascribe a range of units of measure in, for instance, science and design and technology.

12. The progress in lessons is rapid and marked by keen interest and commitment to their learning. Most of the older pupils make very good progress in their GCSE course. Previous work shows that, across the unit, pupils' rate of progress and confidence to tackle topics increases as gaps in their knowledge and understanding are addressed. Work is marked in detail and both oral and written comments made that offer both praise and guidance about how to improve standards.

13. In **science**, standards are below average for pupils' ages. Pupils enter the unit with low levels of scientific knowledge and understanding. They have a poor understanding of scientific vocabulary and many find it difficult to speak or to write about their science activities. Nevertheless, most pupils make very good progress from a low baseline. In 2002, nine pupils gained GCSE (human physiology) passes with grades in the C – F range.

14. All pupils make progress in practical work, learning to predict, carry out experiments and record results. They gain in both confidence and expertise in experimental and

investigative work; for instance when Year 9 pupils investigate loss by evaporation or Year 10 pupils investigate solubility in different temperatures. Year 11 pupils have studied the effect of pH on the activity of amylase, pepsin, and lipase, using graph paper to measure the rate of reaction. They understand the difference between solids, liquids and gases and are developing an understanding of salts and the characteristics of a fair test. With help, pupils are able to consider results and make simple generalisations. Their interest in science has been rekindled. Clearly focussed explanations and tasks undoubtedly help pupils' grasp of appropriate scientific concepts. Work is tightly structured in small steps and pupils are very well supported.

15. Pupils also make good progress in other areas of their learning, such as understanding the requirements of safety, or working collaboratively in pairs. The development of literacy and numeracy within science is very well promoted. For instance Year 9 pupils have considered the amount of power used and the cost of a number of everyday electrical items when investigating the use of energy. Pupils learn to record their results accurately, using tabulations or graphs, and to interpret the data they have collected.

16. Taking account of the range of work seen and teachers' records, achievement in **art and design** is good. The subject is used to develop pupils' appreciation and knowledge of other artists in addition to promoting skills development. Most pupils are improving their skills in drawing and painting using a variety of media including crayons, pastels, pencils and paints. They are developing a good understanding of texture and colour mixing to achieve different shades and the use of lines and marks to create an effect. For instance, when studying the paintings of Van Gogh, Year 8 pupils use curved and wavy lines to create flow and movement when reproducing *Starry Night*. Pupils study the work of other artists such as Picasso, experimenting with Cubist techniques to paint, for example, a vase. There is a wide variation in the attainment and confidence of individual pupils.

17. Although attainment in **food technology** is below average, pupils make very good progress in their understanding of cookery and basic food hygiene. Last year 12 pupils gained the basic skills certificate in health and hygiene, with 11 pupils achieving merits. What they learn is very relevant both to their personal and social needs and focuses mainly on basic cookery and hygiene. For instance, Year 11 pupils put into practice the principles learned from their hygiene course when making "smoothies" to sell during break time. Good quality discussion about nutrition and health are combined with practical activities. Pupils prepare and cook a range of dishes and learn to evaluate the results of the recipes and methods they have used. They are able to estimate amounts of ingredients needed, weigh accurately and follow verbal instructions well. The pupils are beginning to identify the basic nutrients in what they are eating and in fresh and packaged foods. They also recognise the composition of milkshakes and the importance of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. All pupils demonstrate a good understanding of food and personal hygiene related to food handling.

18. Standards of attainment in **geography** are below those expected, although some higher attaining pupils reach standards that are in line with or above those for pupils of a similar age. In lessons pupils are confident in their use of maps, are beginning to use geographical terminology appropriately and can discuss a range of physical processes showing good levels of understanding. Year 8 pupils, for instance, developed good understanding of the process of volcanic activity, acquired the relevant vocabulary and could apply these to the eruption of Mount Etna and others up to the present day. In Year 9 pupils undertook a comparative study of the lifestyle, social and economic life of Japan, recognising its physical location and vulnerability to natural disasters and geo-physical activity. As a result, pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding were impressive and showed

considerable awareness of a range of phenomena affecting life in that area of Asia. Work seen and teachers' records suggest that, by the end of Year 9, pupils' progress is good and their achievement is high.

19. Standards of attainment in **history** are below average. The scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of lessons and analysis of teacher records show that pupils in Years 8 and 9 make good progress in developing historical knowledge, understanding and skills. For instance, Year 8 pupils have good levels of knowledge of Tudor times, in particular the life and time of King Henry VIII. Written work shows good levels of achievement and the skill of writing for a range of audiences and purposes. They are developing a clear understanding of the use of evidence and the application of criteria to determine the difference between primary and secondary sources. Year 9 pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of medieval English history and can account for the underlying concerns by the barons that resulted in the signing of "Magna Carta". Their level of understanding of the politics of the time was impressive. The written work of these pupils showed levels of achievement that are better than expected. Work for Year 8 and 9 pupils is carefully marked and provides clear guidance about how work can be improved.

20. Achievement in **information and communication technology** (ICT) is good and pupils throughout the Centre make good progress. Many pupils are achieving in line with the national average. Last year nine pupils completed a variety of units of study towards CLAIT accreditation and five pupils gained D grades in the GCSE examination. Some pupils have had little opportunity to develop their computer skills prior to attendance at the PRU and quickly become familiar with basic programs over a relatively short period of time. All pupils use the mouse, keyboard menus and toolbars confidently. By the time they are 16 they are using ICT for 'real' purposes, such as producing brochures as part of units of study. For instance, a Year 10 group made very good progress writing a letter about a ski trip containing basic information and researching two resorts. They prepared an information sheet, using cut and paste procedure successfully to add maps and pictures. They gave thought to how it should be presented to suit the intended audience, incorporating word-processed text and graphics.

21. The PRU now benefits from a new computer suite, which is having a significant effect on learning. All pupils have regular ICT lessons and additionally use a variety of programs to support their learning in subjects across the curriculum. In mathematics and science pupils learn to create graphs and spreadsheets and in one Year 9 lesson pupils learned how to use a sensor and record in graph form data in relation to light intensity. In English they draft poetry, imaginative stories and course work incorporating graphics where necessary. Pupils illustrate their work with imported graphics from clip art packages or directly from the Internet.

22. The only **modern language** that pupils experience is French in Years 8 and 9. Standards in French are well below average. While pupils show some interest in the subject, as a result of their lack or paucity of experience of a modern foreign language, they find the work demanding. Their levels of skill in reading, writing, speaking and listening are not well developed. Their application of the verbs *avoir* and *être* in work on describing themselves and learning various body parts enabled some to make progress in developing the use of the perfect tense. For a number of pupils in both Years 8 and 9, their unfamiliarity with these two important verbs, and lack of understanding of how they were conjugated and used to construct the perfect tense, limited their understanding and progress. Scrutiny of the limited work available and evidence of teachers' records supports the view that progress is satisfactory and most pupils achieve at an acceptable level.

23. In **music** and in **physical education** no work was available for scrutiny, no teaching was taking place during the inspection and thus no judgement of standards could be made.

24. Attainment in **drama** is in line with the average in Year 10. In Year 11 it is above average, and was particularly impressive in a performance of *Billy Liar* that included hot seating of the characters. Pupils sustained their roles very well, and switched rapidly and convincingly between characters. Pupils in Year 11 improvise to a good standard, developing roles well and moving the action forward plausibly and with good pace. Voice, gesture and body language convey swift and convincing changes of mood. These pupils have made very good progress in the nine months during which they have been studying the course to GCSE level. Pupils in Year 10 also show conviction in role, and good levels of creativity.

25. Progress in **personal, social and health education and citizenship** is at least good, often very good, and sometimes excellent. In some aspects of work standards of attainment are below what might usually be seen in pupils of a similar age, especially where the tasks make written demands. However, pupils are thinking very hard and grappling with ideas and concepts about responsibility and justice that are difficult, and require significant effort on their part. In other aspects of work such as self-management, attainment is above that usually seen, with pupils showing a good knowledge of research work in the area. In the ASDAN programme attainment is above average with significant challenges being undertaken and achieved. Progress in personal, social and health education is extremely well supported by other aspects of the unit's work such as the provision for drama and support for pupils' personal development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

26. Pupils placed within the unit, and those involved with other parts of the service, are emotionally vulnerable, anxious, depressed or medically unwell. Many of them have had to overcome significant challenges in their lives including, for example, experience of traumatic bullying or the wish for self-mutilation. They benefit greatly from their experience in the unit, and learn to manage many of their difficulties successfully. Their progress in personal development is very good.

27. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptional. In the weekly forum time, taken by the headteacher, there was a powerful sense of a community where all are known and valued. Each individual pupil and member of staff received some words of praise and encouragement, as part of considering the theme of heroes – "There is a hero in each one of us." Not only were all the pupils comfortable with receiving this public praise: some of them felt sufficiently confident to share very personal feelings with this large group of over twenty people. This denotes a very high level of trust and mutual respect, springing from the unit's excellent ethos.

28. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils displayed a strong commitment to learning. The high degree of trust that they place in their teachers enables them to take risks, and regain their self-esteem through successful achievement. There were many examples of pupils showing great pride in their work, perseverance and a serious approach to study, in an atmosphere of good humour and enjoyment. In drama pupils reflected most maturely on how involvement in the subject had allowed them to find once more confidence that had been destroyed by earlier experiences. In teaching on the hospital ward, where creating a rapport very quickly is essential, the relationships between pupil and teacher were built rapidly around mutual involvement in learning.

29. Behaviour around the unit is very good. Pupils are considerate and courteous to each other and to visitors. There are no exclusions. At break and lunchtimes the social area

provides an excellent opportunity for informal conversation. There are always one or more members of staff on hand to facilitate, or to play card or board games with pupils. For some pupils eating lunch alongside their peers is a major breakthrough. Pupils use the area sensibly, and have taken responsibility for planning improvements to the newly acquired outside courtyard area. Punctuality on returning to lessons from the social area is highly impressive. No chivvying or reminding is required, as would be seen in many units.

30. Initially, because of their emotional needs, pupils find it hard to take responsibility. However, as their confidence grows, they take a good degree of responsibility through, for example, negotiating their own targets. Older pupils organise their work in private study. Pupils who are on re-integration programmes gradually take responsibility for themselves in mainstream school through a series of graduated steps in independence. Sometimes the steps taken are very small, but the focus is always on moving forward with sensitive and discerning support. Year 11 pupils have high aspirations for their placements post-16, and their future lives. They can think of a number of strategies for managing when things go wrong with career plans, including accessing sources of advice and support. They have become confident young people who are ready to move out into their next stage of education.

31. Pupils respect each other's right to a view, even if they do not agree with it. Sometimes they find it difficult to listen to views opposed to their own, but they recognise that respect for such views is a fundamental principle of the unit. When considering controversial opinions, such as the efficacy of prison as a punishment for example, they will listen to what others say in a structured discussion, even though they can hardly wait to put an opposing view! They respond to the unit's values by having the patience and courtesy to hear what someone else has to say.

32. All parts of the service keep meticulous attendance records that show overall levels of attendance, and, where relevant, how this has improved compared to mainstream school. Attendance at dual placements is very carefully recorded, which is not the case in all PRUs. For most pupils the unit provides a very successful re-engagement with learning. Those pupils who have little or no attendance at mainstream significantly improve their attendance. Where there is authorised absence this is often on medical grounds. A few pupils do not come to the unit, or come for some time and then stop. The unit makes continuous efforts to draw these pupils and their families back into education, sometimes in the face of considerable reluctance or opposition. However, these are the exceptions and most pupils attend well and some very well. Attendance is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

33. Pupils in this PRU are very well taught. The quality of teaching across the curriculum is very good. During the inspection teaching was never less than satisfactory and in about seven out of ten lessons it was very good or excellent. As a result pupils make very good progress and achieve highly. Teaching was generally of very good quality across the curriculum. Excellent teaching was seen in six of the 34 lessons inspected and was found in English, mathematics, science, drama and personal, social and health education.

34. There were a number of outstanding characteristics found in the very good and excellent teaching. Teaching was meticulously and rigorously planned. It was informed by very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the topic; it ensured that pupils were attentive and committed to learning right from the beginning of the lesson. Teachers always had high expectations of all pupils. As a result, teaching provided significant challenge through the use of, for instance, question and answer sessions, well-designed and differentiated tasks to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and the involvement of pupils as active participants in the learning.

Teaching was never lacking in pace. A range of tasks and the use of question, answer and practical investigation made high levels of demand on pupils and ensured that very good progress was made in acquiring knowledge and developing understanding and skills. Time was always used most effectively. Pupils worked hard and well, responded eagerly to constant demand. Within the three-part lesson structure, there was always time for the plenary session. During this, pupils contributed fully to the review their learning, and by their contributions demonstrated what they knew, understood and could do as a result of the teaching. The management of pupils and their learning was always outstandingly good. Teachers' built on their excellent classroom relationships and well developed skills to ensure that pupils were fully engaged in the learning, had purposeful work to do and problems to solve. As a result, few deviated from their tasks or lost concentration.

35. In almost all lessons, teachers use a range of teaching methods and learning strategies that are well supported by well-chosen resources to enable pupils to explore the learning. Progress is rarely less than good, although usually it is very good. In some cases the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills are hard-won, especially where there are significant gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils contribute to, and benefit from, the intellectual challenge provided as well as from the contribution peers make in answering and asking questions or through brief but effective oral presentations.

36. Work is subject to regular detailed marking, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Positive comments, the appropriate use of praise and indications of how the work could be improved are all important elements in the marking of home and coursework. The analysis of marking informs the planning of further teaching and learning. Teachers' detailed records ensure that pupils' achievement and progress are carefully tracked and monitored in each subject.

37. Teaching in **English** is very good overall. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan their lessons well. Very good emphasis is given to helping pupils improve their understanding and appreciation of text. In one outstanding Year 9 poetry lesson, excellent teaching enabled all pupils to be involved in the learning and they made very good progress in understanding images used in poetry, such as *cliff cruncher* for erosion and *street washer* for rain. A variety of activities are used to engage pupils' attention and to promote good learning. In one lesson, for example, there was excellent use of an overhead projector and whiteboard to list key ideas and words that pupils could use in developing their work. The teachers' enthusiasm, detailed subject knowledge and encouragement led to pupils thinking hard and expressing their views clearly. Written contributions in the practical part of the activity were, as a result, well informed and showed an imaginative use of language. Computers are used well to support learning; for example lower attaining pupils use a computerised programme to improve their literacy and all pupils use ICT to draft and redraft work.

38. Assessment procedures are very good, and elements of the national literacy strategy are used well to support the learning of pupils up to the age of 14. Marking is used particularly well to provide constructive areas for development and is very much appreciated by pupils.

39. The quality of teaching in **mathematics** is very good. In most lessons teaching is either very good or excellent. Lessons are very well planned and learning is well sequenced. There is always a brisk start to lessons. This pace is maintained throughout by the use of a range of carefully structured tasks, the excellent use of question and answer and problem solving exercises all of which engage pupils in thinking mathematically and developing their conceptual understanding. Pupils relish opportunities to contribute to learning or to work at their own level on a set task. Every encouragement is given to pupils to achieve success in their mathematics and good use is made of ICT to support their learning. Teachers provide support to all pupils, increasing the levels of challenge for each as appropriate. As a result,

pupils make very good progress and lesson observation, scrutiny of their work and teachers' records show that they achieve well. All pupils respond to the teacher's interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and show their own commitment to work by their high levels of concentration and active participation in lessons.

40. Work is marked regularly and in detail. Comments are helpful and encouraging and identify areas for further improvement in, or development of, their work. The outcomes of marking and assessment inform the planning of further teaching and homework, but also assist the teacher to monitor each pupil's progress.

41. The quality of teaching in **science** is very good. Very careful thought has been given to the curriculum structure so that it is accessible and motivates pupils while ensuring that they know and understand the key information needed to gain external accreditation. Success is demonstrated by the high quality of pupils' learning in lessons, their positive attitudes and progress over time. Lessons are planned thoroughly and provide pupils with a very clear focus for learning. For example, in one outstanding Year 9 practical lesson on evaporation, the excellent explanations and demonstrations developed pupils' understanding of the process of evaporation and why it varied between the four different experiments performed. Lessons make a very significant contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy skills, with very good reinforcement of subject-specific language. The use of technical language is well supported by the use of key words. Very good use is made of questions to explore and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good. Assessment is very good with work and achievements being assessed against national curriculum or examination criteria. Work is marked very constructively indicating what pupils need to do in order to improve.

42. Teaching in **ICT** is never less than good. Lessons are well planned and delivered by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Teaching is very focussed, enabling each pupil to make progress and achieve good standards. Introductions and demonstrations are clear and hold pupils' attention. Work is imaginative and engages pupils and as a result they apply themselves well and work productively, extending their knowledge and understanding. A good range of programs supports learning and development of skills.

43. Only one lesson of **art** was observed during the course of the inspection teaching was satisfactory. A good, creative atmosphere was established in the lesson by the use of music and the relaxed approach of the teacher. A wide range of resources, such as videos, books and posters, are available to inform and encourage pupils, and conversation is well focused on the artistic merits of work.

44. Only one lesson of **design and technology** (food) was observed during the course of the inspection, but from teachers' records and planning teaching is very good. In the one lesson seen the teacher ensured that each pupil had a measure of responsibility. Practical work in the Year 11 lesson was well linked to nutritional and hygiene principles when they made "smoothies". Expectations were high and pupils were challenged to think about what they were doing and worked very productively. Relationships are highly positive within a supportive encouraging environment. Accommodation and resources are very good and are used very well to support pupils' learning.

45. Teaching in the one lesson of **geography** seen was very good. The lesson was well planned and took account of previous learning. Pupils enjoyed and contributed well to a lively discussion on elementary plate tectonics as part of their exploration of why and how volcanoes erupt and earthquakes occur. The activities built on pupils' levels of current understanding and significant challenge was applied as the physical processes, their names

and definitions, were considered. Pupils made very good progress and achieved well in both the oral and written work they undertook.

46. The teaching of the one lesson of **history** seen was good. Pupils were very active in contributing to the lessons. The well planned activities and tasks enabled pupils to make good progress and extend their knowledge and understanding of life in medieval England. The careful use of questions and the building on pupils' knowledgeable contributions helped to maintain the pace of learning and the interest of the group. The use and application by pupils of the key historical terminology was impressive.

47. Only one lesson of **modern language** (French) teaching was seen. Teaching was satisfactory. The lesson was carefully planned to involve pupils in exploring the learning and some use was made of the target language. The tasks were sequenced to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and to build on previous learning. Some pupils responded well to the opportunities provided and to the worksheet on the use and application of the verbs *avoir* and *être*. Not all pupils had, however, previously learned the verbs that were the focus of their work, while others found the worksheet and flashcards insufficiently challenging.

48. The quality of teaching in **drama** is very good, and sometimes excellent. Extremely good use is made of questioning and of immediate feedback to improve the quality of pupils' work. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, the questions posed by pupils to others who were in character were initially rather superficial. The teacher modelled questions in a way that ensured that pupils' own questions improved markedly in depth. She also gave a brief feedback on this area of the work that gave clear guidance on how it needed to improve. Very good use is also made of evaluation at the end of lessons. The teacher has observed work very closely and gives positive but discriminating feedback on pupils' performances. Learning intentions are reviewed, and there is an evaluation of how far they have been met.

49. Pupils in Year 11 have undertaken a GCSE course in one year. During the inspection they gave their examination performance to all the pupils and staff of the unit. This included, at the end of the performance, the hot seating of characters to take questions from the audience. As a result of the high quality teaching they have received, pupils were able to remain in role very convincingly, sometimes switching rapidly between two characters during the audience questions. The teacher's management of the performance, including the learning provided for the audience, was excellent. The learning in drama, including the role-playing of difficult situations in improvisation work, gives very good support to pupils' personal development by increasing confidence and raising self-esteem.

50. The specialist teaching of **personal, social and health education and citizenship** is of very good quality. Sometimes it is excellent. The language used is demanding, so that pupils have to think hard about concepts such as responsibility or justice, as well as using correct technical vocabulary. Pupils are enabled to meet the high demands made on them by very skilful questioning that clarifies meaning and misconceptions. This helps them to contribute their thoughts to discussion, whilst directed questions draw in reluctant speakers. Examples are carefully chosen to be relevant to the pupils' own experience, and this helps them to contribute to, for example, a brainstorming session on why a young person might be involved in crime. High quality planning is closely based on the evaluation of previous learning so that work builds on the point pupils have reached. For example, a discussion of how well prison works as a punishment undertaken by a Year 10 group, had been specifically designed following an earlier lesson where pupils found it hard to take turns in formulating and expressing an opinion. In ASDAN work the teacher's very good knowledge of the scheme means that clear objectives and really demanding challenges are set, achieved and celebrated.

51. Form periods taken by form tutors are very worthwhile and productive sessions that give very good support to pupils' learning in personal, social and health education. In a Year 11 form period the focus was on examination preparation. Very good teaching enabled pupils to review revision and examination techniques, and to tackle anxiety and how to maintain a work / life balance.

52. In Year 9 pupils explored reactions to various mainstream classroom scenarios such as receiving praise, being drawn into misbehaviour, or being wrongly accused. Well-formulated situation cards were used to explore feelings and strategies with pupils in situations that were clearly realistic parts of their experience. The very good learning in personal, social and health education is extremely well supported by other aspects of the unit's work such as drama and the provision for supporting pupils' personal development.

53. No teaching of **music** or **physical education** was seen during the inspection.

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

54. The curriculum is very good and relevant to pupils' needs. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Current planning is much more coherent: it takes account of a wide range of needs. There are now carefully planned programmes of study in all subjects delivered. Alongside literacy, pupils' skills in numeracy are promoted very effectively in other subjects. For example, in food studies, pupils weigh and measure ingredients and work out timings. In science the use of key words and writing frames very effectively supports pupils' learning. Dedicated ICT teaching, the lack of which was an issue at the last inspection, is now available as well as within subjects.

55. In addition to the core curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to study additional subjects such as art and design, drama and humanities. Year 11 pupils attend college courses leading to GNVQ accreditation in leisure and recreation in addition to CLAIT certification. Pupils also have the opportunity to study for certification in health and hygiene and in child development. A very good range of nationally recognised accreditation is offered including the ASDAN award and, as much as possible, carefully planned programmes reflect the topics studied by mainstream schools to ease the process of reintegration. All pupils undertake of physical education through the teaching of outdoor and adventure activities that incorporate a wide range of personal and survival skills, including map reading, hill walking, skiing and skating.

56. Within the unit, there is highly appropriate emphasis on the development of basic skills within English and mathematics and account has been taken of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. The curriculum also includes science, ICT and a good range of other National Curriculum subjects. The current provision for the teaching of a modern foreign language is under review. The PRU's medium-term curriculum planning is based on the National Curriculum programmes and the requirements of public examinations so that, even in their relatively short stay, pupils keep in close touch with the curriculum offered in mainstream schools. This sensible approach greatly assists in each pupil's successful reintegration.

57. Careers provision is very good, and well integrated into the personal, social and health education programme. Work experience and a weekly session at the local college are notable features of the careers and vocational programme. They are designed to reflect pupils' individual needs and used to promote their confidence and self-esteem. The Centre has very good links with the Connexions personal adviser ensuring that pupils do not miss the chance to receive relevant careers guidance and information while they are out of school.

Individual interviews are provided for all pupils and those in Year 11 are enabled to complete their personal statements and action plans in preparation for life beyond school. Arrangements for work-related education are good; there are very well organised opportunities for work experience. Activities reflect individual needs well and promote both confidence and self-esteem.

58. All pupils, including those who have Statements of special educational needs, have equal opportunities and access to the curriculum and the wide range of other activities offered by the PRU. Planning for individual needs is very good and pupils with additional special educational needs are very well supported. Currently only three pupils have Statements of special educational need. Regular reviews and consultation with involved professionals, pupils and parents or carers ensure clarity of direction and targets for development. Records are thorough and indicate clearly the progress pupils are making. Since the last inspection the PRU has reviewed its practice relating to the development and use of individual education plans for all pupils on the Code of Practice, an issue for improvement at the time of the last inspection. A very thorough and thoughtful approach has considered the generation of both general and subject specific targets. The result is that the effectiveness and impact of individual education plan targets on teaching and learning and pupils' progress is now very good.

59. The PRU rightly gives a high priority to pupils' personal development: the purposes of which are to raise self-esteem, restore individual confidence, enable all to become confident and effective learners and to grow into responsible citizens. The total learning experience provided by the PRU is focused on supporting pupils within lessons, extra-curricular activities and through the outstanding relationships they have with staff and other agencies that work with them. A range of excellent opportunities is provided to support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. They respond exceptionally well to the PRU's values and expectations. These are clearly defined to challenge and encourage their participation in activities that will help them become confident, self-assured and individuals who are more understanding of themselves as well as others. Within art, drama, English and through personal, social and health education and the weekly forum pupils' cultural development is very well supported and their lives enriched by the challenges offered. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the support they receive and the praise and recognition they are offered for personal achievements. They also reflect on their own lives as well as on the richness and diversity of the wider community.

60. The PRU has very effective links with the community, which significantly enrich the curriculum and the quality of education that the pupils receive. These links are facilitated by the readiness with which the staff invite outside agencies to visit and talk to pupils and by a willingness to take pupils out into the community for first-hand experiences. For instance, the PRU supports the local children's hospice and has very good links with a local technology college and a university. Links with the local college are very good and in conjunction with the PRU offer very good support for pupils who lack confidence.

61. The PRU makes good use of professionals, for example the educational psychologist, school nurse and other involved agencies help it to assess, support and guide its pupils more effectively. Most subjects are made more interesting by visits to places such as theatres, and museums. An artist-in-residence has successfully provided pupils with experience of creating three-dimensional work, using papier-mâché to make giant insects. Relationships with partner schools are outstanding. These schools are very positive about the professional service given by the PRU that gives pupils every chance to do well when the time comes to rejoin mainstream school. Links with mainstream schools, that were a key issue for action at the last inspection, are now significantly improved and provide an important platform for working with others as well as for supporting pupils' reintegration into mainstream schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

62. This is an area of excellent practice, which is impressive in its consistency across all parts of the service. Policies and practice are carefully tailored to the different environments and different groups of pupils found within the various areas of the service. This is within an overall framework that is founded on coherent principles, thought through thoroughly and implemented with an eye to detail. All members of staff make a very full contribution to this area of the service's work with pupils.

63. With such vulnerable pupils the quality of procedures for child protection is of the first importance. Procedures are excellent. Staff members across all parts of the service show a very good awareness of the issues involved, and their role in protecting young people. Training is kept regularly updated for all areas of the service and the designated person has an extremely good knowledge of the requirements. The arrangements which are necessary should a child protection concern arise in, for example, a mainstream school where outreach work is being carried on, have been carefully thought about and clarified. This is by no means always the case in PRUs where work is undertaken in other organisations.

64. A similarly thorough approach can be seen in the arrangements for health and safety. In practical lessons observed in the unit close attention was paid to health and hygiene in food technology, and to safety considerations in science. The health and safety policy is currently being reviewed following the recent move to a new building so that it can fully take account of the features of the new environment. As with child protection, awareness of health and safety issues is very high throughout the service. For example, home and hospital pupils can attend the unit's extra curricular week, as long as they have been risk assessed to do so. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the curriculum, and through the food offered at break and lunchtimes. The unit has recently received healthy school status.

65. All pupils who have long-term contact with the service have an individual education plan that is regularly reviewed. Usually these plans focus on emotional and behavioural needs, with learning needs in subjects being met through targets set within teachers' planning. This straightforward system works extremely well, as the quality of teachers' planning for individuals is so good. Daily planning is regularly revised to take account of learning outcomes from the previous lesson.

66. Even though these individual education plans are already of very good quality, with well-formulated targets that spring from perceptive and accurate assessment, they are still seen by the unit as a continuing area for development in the search for the highest possible professional standards. The plans are reviewed regularly and the written review which results is a high quality document with a full and accurate assessment of academic work, recording of the work done in mainstream where relevant, and areas to improve clearly indicated. There is very good involvement of pupils in setting and reviewing targets during form time.

67. Where attendance is an issue a target will be included in the individual education plan. There is regular monitoring of attendance and the Education Welfare Service is involved when necessary. There is a thorough follow-up of absent pupils, and constant attempts to re-engage pupils who do not attend. Records show that most pupils improve their attendance, often very significantly.

68. All parts of the service keep very detailed progress records. Pupils on home tuition have the same arrangements for individual education plans and review as those within the unit. Pupils in the adolescent mental health unit have a seven-week assessment placement,

at the end of which a discharge meeting includes educational recommendations. Here again progress records are detailed and of very good quality.

69. Educational and personal support and guidance is of excellent quality. Exceptionally, the monitoring of pupils continues long after they have left the unit, up to Year 11 or to the end of the first year of post-16 education where this taken up. This is seen as a valuable pre-emptive strategy to ensure successful continuing education, and demonstrates an outstanding commitment on the part of staff to all pupils' long-term welfare and success.

70. High quality personal support and guidance is available within the unit from form tutors, a counsellor, and the Connexions adviser. There is support to help them access College visits, training providers or other opportunities that may be of benefit to pupils. Year 11 pupils undertaking a College course are supported by a teacher and support assistant from the unit, and there is also support from the College's own schools liaison officer and a College teacher. This helps nervous and anxious pupils greatly in gaining access to post-16 provision and prepares them for leaving the unit.

71. Very close liaison with mainstream schools ensures that pupils are well supported in outreach and re-integration work. Very careful assessment of the pupil, transparent and straightforward admission or referral criteria, and sensitive and flexible working with staff in receiving schools ensures a very good degree of success. Again monitoring continues once direct support has stopped. Care is taken to ensure as much continuity of class-work as possible on re-integration to mainstream, or when working with pupils who are long-term sick, and therefore on home or hospital tuition. This includes the harmonisation of examination boards as far as this is possible. Once again this means that there is very good support for the pupils' needs as they transfer from the service to mainstream schools.

72. The real understanding of emotional and learning needs and the close interaction of support and challenge enables pupils to make very significant progress in their learning and personal development, sometimes far above what might be expected. This is an area of excellence providing outstandingly good quality support for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

73. Parents and carers think highly of the work of the service. Many write letters of appreciation after their children have left, praising what the service has done in the highest terms. Parents have confidence that their children make very good progress and that they receive high quality teaching. They know that the unit restores lost confidence and raises self-esteem, which is often extremely low when pupils first attend, and this means a huge amount to them. As one parent commented: "I never thought I would see the day when my child would be going back to school". Expectations of what the service will provide are crystal clear from the start and inspire confidence. The firm but fair approach of the headteacher is much appreciated.

74. The service's links with parents are excellent. Records show very frequent contact with the home. All staff in the home and hospital tuition service, the outreach service as well as those within the unit, work very closely with parents. The headteacher makes every effort to gain parents' confidence and co-operation.

75. There is strong emphasis on parental involvement at every stage from the initial meeting onwards. Explicit standards of service are offered to parents such as the return of telephone calls within 24 hours (in reality this is usually done much sooner). A parenting group and meetings on specific topics such as sex education are provided so that parents can be both informed and supported.

76. Parents receive excellent information on pupils' progress. This includes high quality written reviews that give a very full picture of progress and achievement. There is very good parental attendance at review meetings, and parental comments are fully included. Appointments with subject specialist staff are provided as part of the review day. Individual education plans have recently incorporated space for home targets such as a sensible balance of work and social time. There is also a high level of informal contact through telephone calls that keep parents very well informed.

77. Routine information is conveyed through an attractive and lively regular newsletter. An annual report to parents similar to that from governors in a mainstream school is provided. The parental brochure is being revised following the recent move of premises. As a result of this emphasis on communication and involvement, most parents have a very close working partnership with the service, which strongly supports the progress their children make.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

78. Since the last inspection, the PRU has become the main provider of education for pupils with a range of emotional and medical conditions. This includes provision at The Pendlebury Centre for those of secondary age who have emotional difficulties, through the home tuition service for a range of long-term sick and highly vulnerable pupils, and within the hospital for short-term bedside or classroom education of sick children and provision for those in the children and adolescent mental health unit. The PRU also has outreach and re-integration programmes. The assimilation of this range of complex services within the PRU has been very successfully achieved. Highly effective management, organisational and service delivery standards have been developed, to ensure that the needs of a wide range of very vulnerable pupils can be met. The achievement of this major management objective has been an important milestone in the further development of the high quality provision across the range of services that now constitute the PRU's areas of activity.

79. This PRU has clear educational aims and values that underpin the development of its policies, practices and procedures. The overall aim, to enable pupils to continue their education within a positive and supportive environment, is understood by all members of staff. The clearly articulated aim and values inform the highly productive relationships staff have with pupils, the quality of teaching and learning present in every activity, the levels of support and guidance provided and the very high expectations teachers have of every learner. The consistency with which these are applied across the range of the PRU's services, supported by an exceptionally positive ethos, ensures that all pupils, whatever their medical or mental condition, benefit from a very high quality of education. This enables the pupils make significant progress in learning and to raise their own self-esteem and confidence in preparation either for return to mainstream schools or for the next stage of their education.

80. The PRU's work with a range of partners is impressive and is well managed. The outreach and reintegration work are highly valued by local schools, provide help and support to those returning to mainstream but also provide good quality advice and guidance for pupils who, for example, are being bullied or emotionally at risk. The PRU's commitment to such work is high and includes the continued monitoring of reintegrated pupils.

81. The common understanding of the PRU's aim and values is constantly reinforced by a regular cycle of self-evaluation across all operational levels of the PRU. This important part of the coherent monitoring and evaluation process also includes regular management meetings at head, deputy and service co-ordinator levels and with teams of staff. These are complemented by a programme of lesson observation as well as supervision of teaching and

learning on the hospital ward and in the home tuition service. Senior managers have, as a result, a clear over-view of the PRU's effectiveness and the extent to which it is meeting its overall aim. The outcomes of this highly consistent management process assist in the identification of short, medium and long-term priorities for the PRU's improvement plan.

82. The PRU development plan is now an example of outstanding practice: at the last inspection it was judged to be unsatisfactory and was made a key issue for action. Priorities for development are clearly identified through the self-evaluation process and also include the regular review of policies. Consequently, the overall plan takes account of the range of time-scales needed for the implementation of these priorities across the wider range of the PRU's services. There are both strategic and operational priorities as well as highly innovative longer-term proposals and targets, for example, regarding the distance learning needs of those pupils taught at home or within the hospital context. It is clear that, with the expansion of the PRU's provision, development planning has been an important management tool for tackling the consistency in standards and quality across the extended range of services.

83. The overall leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are outstanding. The educational vision is clear, purposeful and highly effective in having a positive impact on the work of staff, pupils and their parents or carers. The translation of the PRU's aim and values into coherent policies, rigorous procedures and best practice across a range of work ensures that a high quality of education and support is available to all pupils. The highly positive relationships, between the headteacher, her deputy, others with management responsibility and teachers and support staff contributes to the effective and coherent management of each service and to the quality of the provision made for all pupils.

84. An important dimension of PRU management is the highly effective partnerships forged with the range of agencies and professions working with pupils and their families. This partnership approach to the family and to multi-agency working is extremely well managed by the PRU and is highly beneficial to its pupils.

85. The management committee provides outstanding support for the PRU. It meets regularly, operates well as a strategic body, is clearly well informed about the PRU's work and, through the self-evaluation and development planning processes, is fully aware of the great strengths in its practice and of the areas for further development.

86. The local education authority has a very high commitment to the PRU and great confidence in the ability of this service to provide high quality education for some of the most vulnerable pupils in the borough. It is enlightened in the support it offers for the service, especially in recognising the nature and extent of the provision needed for these emotionally vulnerable and chronically sick pupils. As a result, the PRU has been able, within a number of forums and with mainstream school, to put mental health issues on the education agenda.

87. The strategic use of resources is very good. The local education authority sets a budget that encompasses all the parts of the service. There is some provision for the development of the service, through consultation, should this be required. There is very good communication with users of the service and other interested parties through various forums attended by the headteacher. The budget is held centrally with a devolved element controlled by the headteacher for day-to-day requirements. It is currently being reviewed and adjusted following the premises move, as different costs will need to be reflected.

88. The PRU's allocations from the Standards Fund and for capitation are meticulously managed. There is monitoring by the local education authority of financial procedures. The modest resources available to the unit are increased by, for example, a successful ICT development bid and by additional funding for a mental health worker whose role is to

disseminate good practice. Very good use is made of specialist advisory services to obtain resources and guidance. There is a keen eye to making cost effective expenditure, and ensuring that money is well spent. Subject areas are sufficiently resourced.

89. The highly experienced staff members are extremely skilful at adapting their teaching to pupils' needs, and are well suited to their roles. They are very effectively deployed in the areas where they can make the best contribution. They are extremely well supported by professional development opportunities that are determined by the effective performance management procedures and by half-yearly individual reviews. The implementation of professional review for each staff member was an issue at the last inspection.

90. By the efforts of the entire staff, the newly acquired premises have been swiftly transformed into a bright welcoming learning environment. The accommodation is spacious and includes vital elements such as specialist areas, a social space and good-sized classrooms as well as a confidential meeting room. At the hospital accommodation is also very good. Throughout the service there is a high standard of display, often celebrating pupils' work. This display is well used during teaching. Pupils often refer to display to remember, for example, key words, or to build on work done previously, as was seen in the hospital teaching observed.

91. The principles of best value are applied exceptionally well, particularly challenge and consultation. The quality of self-evaluation is excellent: the headteacher, her deputy and staff constantly review their work through a well-established review cycle, and identify areas for further refinement. The day-to-day finances are tightly run and, within the limited scope available, the principle of competition is applied very well. Management processes include the full participation of staff. Parents are fully consulted on their children's education through the very well run reviews, and their views are sought on other developments. Year 11 pupils evaluate the service they receive from the unit.

92. It is difficult to calculate the exact cost per pupil as the service is highly complex and covers a wide ranging and constantly shifting pupil population. Costs are not high, however, and money is very effectively spent. High quality education is provided to meet the complex needs for a wide range of pupils at a reasonable cost and so value for money is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

93. There are no matters that require the production of an action plan for further improvement. The priorities are those already identified in the current improvement plan and by the unit's own highly effective self-evaluation process.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	17	9	2	0	0	0
Percentage	18	50	26	6	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 two 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 [at The Pendlebury Centre and for home tuition, but not including hospital or mental health unit]	61

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	26

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

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
Unit data	10	Unit data	15

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	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	60
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20

Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	281,348
Total expenditure	281,348
Expenditure per pupil	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.9
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	45
Number of questionnaires returned	12

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	62	0	8	8
My child is making good progress in school.	62	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	38	8	0	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	31	8	0	31
The teaching is good.	69	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	15	8	0	15
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	8	23	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	8	23	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	23	8	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	38	8	0	15
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	8	8	15	31