

INSPECTION REPORT

The Young Mums' Unit

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105147

Headteacher: Mrs L MacIvor

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax
25439

Dates of inspection: 13th - 15th May 2003

Inspection number: 249534

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	14 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Girls
Unit address:	Harvey Early Years Centre Pilkington Street Bolton
Postcode:	BL3 6HP
Telephone number:	01204 334026
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer	Cameron Chisholm
Date of previous inspection:	January 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Registered inspector	English Mathematics Art Child development Special educational needs	The characteristics and effectiveness of the unit The unit's results and students' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
19567	Mary Malin	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development Students' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
27429	Margaret Smith	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Citizenship French German Personal and social education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The unit provides education for girls of statutory school age who are either pregnant or who have recently given birth and for whom mainstream schooling is either inappropriate or not available. The unit serves the whole of the Bolton area and relocated to new premises in January 2003. Currently there are 17 students on roll. Though the agreed maximum is 16, due to maternity leave and home tuition, it is unusual for more than 12 to be present at any one time. Five students were on maternity leave during the inspection. All but one pupil are in Year 11. All are of white British origin and all speak English as their main language. There are no children from Traveller families, no refugees, none in the care of the local authority and no students have identified special educational needs. On leaving the unit, some transfer to further education, others to employment whilst a few choose to stay at home with their babies. Prior to attending the unit, the students have had varied experiences of education. The majority have become disenchanted by education. A high percentage have been out of school for some time, with a significant number for up to two years. As such, attainment on entry is well below that expected of students of this age.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

This is a very good unit with many excellent features. Very good teaching enables the students to make very good progress in achieving a significant number of passes in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in a range of subjects in a very short time. Students make very good improvement in their attitude, behaviour and attendance. Though operating with one teacher and a handful of supply staff, students are offered a wide range of learning opportunities leading to a number of nationally recognised awards. Day-to-day management and administration are good. Despite the teacher in charge not being made aware of all the funding she is entitled to, the unit provides very good value for money.

What the unit does well

- The vision, drive and commitment of the teacher-in-charge have resulted in an environment where students feel secure, valued and inspired to achieve their full potential.
- Despite the discomforts of pregnancy and the responsibilities of motherhood, students achieve higher than they or others expected, gaining up to eight graded passes in GCSE.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The attitudes, behaviour, drive and aspirations of the students are outstanding.
- Provision for personal development is very good, enabling the students to cope extremely well with motherhood and become useful members of society.
- Staff at the unit provide high quality support for the welfare and guidance of the students and their babies.
- Very good links with mainstream schools enable the students to continue with courses not offered at the unit.

What could be improved

- The appropriate authority does not keep the teacher-in-charge informed of funding. This is unsatisfactory and makes long term planning difficult.
- The appropriate authority does not have clear procedures for admissions to the unit and for return to mainstream education where appropriate.
- There is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities for day-to-day management of the unit.
- At sixteen hours each week the length of taught time is short and places unnecessary pressure on staff and pupils.

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

Overall, the unit has made good improvement since the last inspection in January 1999. Staff and students have coped extremely well with the upheaval of the re-location to new premises. The quality of teaching has improved from good to very good resulting in higher achievement. Very good improvement has been made in extending the number of courses and qualifications available. Staff now work more closely with mainstream schools in the provision and assessment of coursework. This is beneficial to the students and has led to improved standards. Whilst the school day has been lengthened on 3 days, taught time is still nine hours per week less than that recommended for students of this age. The local education authority has provided new accommodation, more staff and resources. However, the facility still lacks specialist rooms for practical subjects. The key issue to improve the arrangements for long term planning by monitoring and evaluating the work of the unit and by allocating a budget related to the development plan has not been fully addressed.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 11	Key	
English	A	Very good	A
Mathematics	A	Good	B
Science	A	Satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	Unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets	A	Poor	E

Standards and results in examinations are close to the national average in English literature and language, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, French and German. Taking account of prior attainment this is very good achievement. Standards in personal and social education are above those expected, with standards in child development being well above those expected of students of this age. In the 2002 examinations, all students gained at least three graded GCSE passes, the majority achieving five or more, some with grade C.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Excellent. Students make remarkable improvement in their attitude to education and are passionate to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Parents and staff report a marked improvement in behaviour. Students respond particularly well to the adult environment.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships between the students and staff are based on mutual trust. Students conscientiously take on the responsibilities of motherhood, and are determined to succeed in their studies for themselves, their teachers and their child.
Attendance	Very good. Students make very good improvement in their attendance

	and in punctuality.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good in all subjects. Though no teaching was observed in information and communication technology, teaching is judged to be very good because of the standards the students achieve. Literacy, numeracy and computer studies are taught very well and used very effectively in all subjects. Teachers are confident in their subjects and very aware of the needs of young mothers. They are extremely successful in motivating the students and giving them knowledge and skills for life and motherhood. Planning is exemplary with each girl having a challenging individual programme tailored to her needs. As a result the quality of learning and achievement are very good. The students are extremely conscientious. Though some are uncomfortable because of their pregnancy or others may have had sleepless nights with their baby, they demonstrate intense concentration and complete their work conscientiously, often giving up their free time to do so.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Individual programmes are tailored to each girl's needs, where necessary providing for them to continue their studies in mainstream schools or at home. Provision for child development and parenting are outstanding. The length of taught time is very short and students do not have the opportunity to take part in any physical activity.
Provision for students with special educational needs	No students have identified special educational needs.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for cultural development is good; provision for moral development very good. Provision for the students' spiritual and social development is excellent.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff provide very good academic and moral support for the pupils. Their welfare and protection and that of their babies are of prime importance. Staff are vigilant at all times.

Staff make every effort to maintain good links with parents. This is achieved through telephone calls home visits and an 'open door' policy.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The teacher-in-charge is passionate about the work of the unit, continuously challenging herself and those in her care to higher achievement.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Good overall. The management committee meets regularly and provides very good support for the work of the unit. However, members are frustrated because of a lack of information from the local education authority, especially with regard to finance and long term planning. Some aspects of management need to be more rigorous such as procedures for admissions to the unit and for return to mainstream education where appropriate. Aspects of day-to-day management need clarification.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The teacher-in-charge monitors the unit's performance very carefully. Whilst valuable discussion about academic progress takes place at management meetings, other performance indicators need to be taken into account. Managers are beginning to apply the principles of best value satisfactorily by looking for similar settings with which to compare themselves. No formal consultation takes place with users of the unit.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The teacher-in-charge uses the cramped accommodation and part time supply staff imaginatively to provide a high quality education. However, she does not receive detailed information about her financial entitlement, this makes planning difficult.

Staffing and accommodation are inadequate. As at the time of the last inspection, the unit is run single handed by the teacher-in-charge assisted by limited specialist input. At present there is no clerical help. All specialist teachers are very hard working and contribute significantly to standards. To improve the staffing, a new appointment is in the process of being made. The unit has recently relocated. Whilst some aspects have improved, the single room facility is extremely cramped. Plans are well advanced for additional space at the start of the next academic year. However, there will still be no facility for physical activity. The unit now has sufficient equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity to continue and extend examination courses. The standard of teaching. The high quality support the students receive. The non-judgemental environment. The way students are involved in decision making. The expectation that pupils, despite their circumstances, will aspire to a career. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No areas for improvement were identified by parents.

The inspection agrees with the strengths identified by the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and students' achievements

1. Most students who enter the unit have lost interest in formal education. Many have been out of school for long periods of time and have gaps in their learning. As such, their attainment on entry to the unit is at least below, and more often well below that expected of students of this age. In addition to time lost in their previous schools, students lose up to 10 weeks of taught time because they need to take maternity leave. In a very short time, in some cases as little as three months, they complete their coursework and gain GCSE and other nationally recognised qualifications because of very good teaching and a changed attitude to learning. Their achievement is very good in all subjects. They now have high aspirations, conscientiously working on their assignments even though they may feel unwell because of their pregnancy or may have had sleepless nights with their babies. There has been very good improvement in the number of students being entered for and achieving examination passes in a wider range of subjects since the last inspection.

2. Achievement in **English** is very good because of very good teaching and the opportunity to improve their skills in other subjects. In speaking and listening, all staff set very good examples and provide numerous opportunities for discussion, encouraging students to express their opinion. As the students grow in confidence, most become articulate young women with carefully thought through opinions. They take an active part in discussions listening attentively to the contributions of their peers, providing support and making suggestions. Speaking and listening is of a particularly high standard when discussing issues that affect them personally, for example their reasoning for or against breast-feeding or a presentation to 'Stop Paedophiles'. The majority speak fluently with the higher attaining students choosing their vocabulary carefully for maximum effect. All extend their skills in modern languages by listening to and accurately repeating vocabulary. Through work in child development, the students gain a very good understanding of the development of language and communication enabling them to help their child.

3. The students make very good progress in the range and difficulty of the texts they read. They discuss the themes and compare characters in works such as 'Of Mice and Men' or 'To Kill a Mocking Bird', selecting sentences and phrases from the text to support their ideas. In their study of poetry they express personal preferences giving reasons for their choice. Research skills are good with students retrieving information, for example in Aboriginal art, from a wide range of sources including books, magazine articles, the Internet and CD-ROM. All levels of attainment make very good progress in the style and content of their writing. They use persuasion well, for example, in a letter to a friend highlighting the possible difficulties to be encountered on leaving home. Writing is at its best when it comes from personal experience. Such an example was the descriptive writing 'Being Pregnant', when the turmoil experienced by one girl on her positive pregnancy test was clearly evident in her account.

4. Achievement in **mathematics** is very good for all levels of attainment because of very good teaching that challenges all the pupils. One girl who arrived very recently will achieve a School Maths Project (SMP) graduated assessment. Of the remainder, all are in line to attain GCSE which is very good progress as many have missed huge parts of the course in their previous schools. Five students are expected to attain the higher grades A to C. The students have acquired a good understanding of numeracy, algebra and shape and measures. Coursework is of a good standard. Students have shown a lively interest when analysing the bias of the tabloid press. All have collected and analysed data using, for example, bar graphs

and pie charts to illustrate their findings. Higher attaining students have produced scatter-graphs and used percentages. Whilst students have a basic understanding of statistics, this aspect is not as strong as other areas of the subject.

5. Achievement in **science** is very good because of the teacher's skill, high expectations, very good use of information technology, and ability to make the topics relevant by linking them to the students' experience. For example, through work in genetics the students have a good understanding of the colour of hair and eyes of their babies. Work on radiation is linked to scans and a good understanding of biomass has been gained through considering the weight of food babies eat compared to their overall weight. The one Year 10 girl is making very good, well monitored, progress, working on an individual computerised learning package, designed by the teacher, with Internet links. The revision lessons observed indicate that the Year 11 students are well on track to achieve the expected grades in GCSE. They are confident in their knowledge of all aspects of science, working through past examination papers with quiet efficiency. Science files include course work of outstanding quality and quantity on life processes, materials and their properties, and physical processes. To compensate for the lack of specialist facilities in the unit, students use new technology, including a 'virtual lab', to achieve highly in investigative work. All students work at a level appropriate to their level of attainment, and previously acquired knowledge. All are fully challenged by use of accessible activities supplemented by extension work for the higher attaining pupils. Almost all are expected to achieve GCSE grades A-G with the higher attaining students gaining grade C. One, who joined the unit very recently, will gain single unit AQA certificates.

6. Students of all levels of attainment achieve highly in **child development**. Their knowledge and understanding is well above that expected of students of this age. Whilst this is partly due to their situation, it is also because of their interest and desire to find out more information, and the determination to provide the best for their child. This contributes significantly to their abilities as a mother and to parenting skills. All achieve Units of Accreditation in 'Pregnancy', 'Developmental Stages of the Unborn Child', 'Birth', 'Communication and Language Skills' and 'Childcare Facilities'. Files of work include a very good volume of high quality work for all levels of attainment. Students use their knowledge of literacy and numeracy very effectively in this subject; for example, in reporting factual information, providing instructions, reporting interviews and analysing data. New technology has been used most effectively to produce charming books for their babies such as 'My First Alphabet' and 'My Counting Book', all of which are of marketable quality.

7. The students achieve very well in **information and communication technology**, working towards appropriate nationally recognised awards such as Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT), General National Vocational Qualification or GCSE depending on their level of attainment. Though it was not possible to observe any lessons, records show that the students are acquiring relevant skills which will prepare them very well for further education or the work place. The students make very good use of these skills, for example, researching on the Internet, word processing the final draft of work in other subjects, creating, illustrating, and laminating children's books, and producing editions of their magazine 'Labours of Love'. All competently use individual learning packages designed for use on the computer. Access to a computer suite enables the students to practise their skills, though the Internet is only available in the classroom, where there is always supervision. Work in the students' files is well presented, mostly accurate, and carefully marked. Visits to a sound recording studio to make a CD provide opportunities to learn about the technology involved.

8. The students achieve very well in **French** and **German** because they are very well motivated and taught by a language specialist, with skill and enthusiasm. Lessons are well structured to include speaking, listening, reading and writing. The students show very good understanding of the spoken word, even when listening to an unfamiliar voice on tape, and can answer questions or follow instructions. They read and write at an appropriate level, learning and using new vocabulary well. In response to questions in the target language, students answer in French or German using single words or short phrases but are not confident when speaking in front of their peers or visitors. They are more fluent in one-to-one conversations with the teacher, who anticipates that they will have no problem with the oral section of the examination. All the students take a modern language and are expected to achieve accreditation. Accreditation ranges from Assessment Qualifications Alliance entry level certificate to GCSE. Success in the entry level is often giving students the confidence to go on to GCSE.

9. Achievement in **personal, social and health education** is very good and makes a significant contribution to the excellent personal development of all the pupils. Through the planned programme the students acquire a good knowledge of a wide range of subjects including citizenship, careers, sex education, drug misuse and the handling of personal finances. Overall, it provides a very good preparation for life. Through lessons in **citizenship** students have acquired a very good understanding of rights and responsibilities at home and at work, and understand the difference between fact and opinion. They have acquired the skill of using facts to express an opinion, for example, in a very good essay on the war in Iraq, which demonstrated clear thinking which was well expressed. Involvement with a high street banking project, Personal Finance in Education, provides valuable learning opportunities and has allowed students to have a good understanding of budgeting. Apart from providing a vast amount of relevant information, the most important element of this subject is the way it has enabled the students to become more aware of themselves, their abilities, feelings and hopes for the future, as well as their place in the wider world.

10. Students of all levels of attainment make equally good progress. Where a girl has been identified as having a particular gift or talent, this is followed up. For example, one pupil who had attained A* GCSE in mathematics in Year 10 in her mainstream school progressed to take statistics in Year 11 at the unit. This she achieved alongside nine other subjects and was awarded subject prizes for mathematics, English and information technology by her mainstream school. Equally, lower attaining students are challenged and supported well allowing all to leave with nationally recognised awards. Students in different year groups are very well catered for. The one pupil in Year 10 is provided with individual work in English, science and mathematics, enabling her to link in with her mainstream school.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Parents, staff at previous schools and students comment on the remarkable difference in attitudes, behaviour and attendance. Students are determined to attend the unit and to achieve well, recognising that qualifications will help provide a better future for themselves and their baby. They show amazing commitment and loyalty to the unit. Conversations with the students and letters from previous students evidence this extremely well. Some who should be on maternity leave visit the unit to keep up with their studies and complete their course work. They demonstrate determination, for example, one pupil who had a fractured pelvic bone due to pressure laid on a beanbag all day, answering all the questions posed to her and taking a full part in the lessons. A second girl, the day after the delivery of her son, sat her English literature examination in the hospital ward.

12. As at the time of the previous inspection, students' attitudes to the unit, their behaviour, their personal development and relationships are all excellent. This is a major

achievement in that staff have to motivate and inspire each new group of pupils. Almost all have come to the unit with a very negative view of education, many with a low self-esteem, little or no desire to learn or even attend educational establishments. Within a very short time of arriving they have, as one girl declared, 'fallen under the spell' of the teacher-in-charge. The students listen intently in lessons because they choose to, and they do well in their examinations because they now have a belief in themselves and that they can achieve. They want to do well for their teacher, for themselves and for their child.

13. Students are happy to relate how much they enjoy being treated like an adult and with respect. They appreciate not being judged but encouraged. Many are genuinely surprised by what they have achieved and will openly admit that if only they could have spent more time in education they know they could have done much better. Behaviour in the unit is excellent although many of the young women have a previous history of difficult behaviour. In the classroom, the creche and the dining room their behaviour is outstanding. They listen to those who are teaching or giving advice whilst looking out for each other. For example, when one girl who was five days away from her expected delivery date was clearly uncomfortable in a lesson, a second pupil rolled up her jacket and placed it to support her friend's back. During the lunch break, those taking their babies out for a walk checked to see that no one had been left out. Students who are still pregnant returned to their studies immediately after eating, determined to make best use of all the time available to them.

14. Personal development is excellent. This is underpinned by the excellent personal, social and health education programme. Relationships between the staff and the students are exemplary. The support offered by adults is valued and welcomed. Staff are excellent role models and demonstrate respect for each other, working together in a truly caring environment. This is reflected in the way the students treat each other and in the way visitors are welcomed. The students are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to care for their babies. Their increased confidence and self-esteem enables them to take part in discussion groups, considering very sensitive, personal issues. Some put their new found confidence to very good use, for example, speaking and answering questions on teenage pregnancy and motherhood at a study day for midwives at the University of Salford.

15. Attendance is very good. Attendance and punctuality have increased since the last inspection with the introduction of taxis to transport the students to the unit at the start of each day. Most students have a history of poor attendance and in some cases non-attendance for over two years. At the unit the majority attend every day because they want to. The unauthorised absence is attributable to a very small number of students who say they do not have parental support that encourages attendance or enables them to catch their taxi; others are expected to look after younger siblings. Almost all the authorised absence is for medical appointments and maternity leave. Though every girl is entitled to ten weeks confinement leave, very few take the full entitlement because they want to complete their studies. This is a further indication of their commitment to the staff and to themselves, and their determination to achieve their qualifications.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Teaching was very good in all but one lesson observed. In this lesson teaching was good. Specialist teaching in science and modern languages has led to higher achievement in these subjects. Recognising a lack of teacher confidence in teaching the higher levels of mathematics, the services of an advanced skills teacher have been acquired to enable students to achieve their full potential in mathematics. Though all but the teacher-in-charge are part time supply staff, they willingly undertake professional development, for example to keep abreast of the changing requirements of different examination boards.

17. Teachers' planning is excellent. Students arrive at the unit working on different courses. For example, in English, students are working towards GCSE with three different boards. In addition, in order to challenge them to reach their full potential some are entered for foundation level, others at the higher level. As each board has different set texts and different poetry anthologies this necessitates a very wide teacher knowledge and a great deal of preparation. Similarly, teachers of mathematics and science are planning and preparing for different boards and different attainment levels. In addition, teachers ensure the one pupil who is in Year 10 has relevant work, this usually necessitates the provision of additional work. This staff do willingly with the science teacher having produced a high quality computer presentation to guide the pupil through her course. All of which she can use on the teacher's laptop in her own home when she is on maternity leave. Such dedication by all teachers results in each girl working at the highest possible level and achieving the best she can.

18. Teachers are imaginative in the activities they provide and draw on the students' experiences to make learning relevant. More over they aim to make learning enjoyable. Card games devised by one teacher helped students consolidate their knowledge and understanding of mathematical facts. A fun game of 'Bingo' at the end of an English lesson helped the students improve their spelling. During one personal, social and health education lesson, the students acquired a very good understanding of oral hygiene because the speaker related it to their babies. On other occasions, topics are more serious though still very relevant to the students' needs. Such was the case in a lesson about domestic violence when skilled teaching allowed the students to ask questions of a very sensitive nature. Teachers are not afraid of silence. In this particular lesson, this gave the students the chance to reflect, articulate their thoughts and make considered contributions. Due to the outstanding relationships and trust the students were able to voice their fears, gain an understanding that the victim is not to blame and the knowledge of what, should this happen to them, to do in such circumstances.

19. Teachers have very high expectations of the volume and quality of work the students produce. Furthermore, they expect the students to use their literacy, numeracy and knowledge of new technology in all subjects. Consequently, students produce a very good quantity of high quality work. This is especially so in child development where all levels of attainment have undertaken personal research and meticulously produced portfolios very neatly presented using grammatically complex sentences with spelling of a good standard. Mathematical skills are used well to present the findings of individual research with very good use being made of new technology to enhance their work through the use of digital photography, desk top publishing and advanced word processing.

20. Teachers mark students' work diligently. Success is suitably praised with additional detailed comments enabling students' to improve their work at a very good rate. Such an example in English enabled one girl to extend her vocabulary and make her writing more lively when she substituted 'get' with 'deduce' and 'interpret'. On the rare occasion where a girl does not do as well as was expected in a piece of course work, sympathetic comments and a focus on what has been done well spur her on to good improvement. For example, 'Don't loose heart, a good plan, good use of quotes and more time left to get it right'.

21. Due to the timing of the inspection the students were revising for the imminent examinations. Teachers provide the students with very good advice on technique to ensure they achieve well. Recommendations such as 'revise in bite-size pieces', 'take time to read the paper thoroughly' and 'you can gain 54 marks for this question which is equivalent to a grade C' help allay students' fear. The students quickly latch on to tips to gain additional marks by, for example, knowing additional credit will be given for using metaphors and similies in their descriptive writing. Very good use is made of previous papers to familiarise

students with the layout of the paper and as a final check for any weak areas which are immediately remedied. Students visibly grow in confidence as they heed the advice, carefully drawing together their own revision plan to match their personal circumstances and needs, all showing great determination to succeed.

22. Teachers have been very successful in creating an adult environment where the students feel secure, valued and able to concentrate. Relationships are excellent. The students thrive on the respect shown to them and the trust placed in them. They report they feel someone genuinely has an interest in their education and welfare, often for the first time in their lives. As a result they are determined to achieve highly not only to please their teachers but also for themselves. Students who scored levels well below those expected in national tests for Year 9 are given belief in themselves and aspire to achieving well in GCSE. Despite the discomfort of pregnancy or the demands and responsibilities of their new baby, they conscientiously complete their homework, often beating the deadline. They thirst for knowledge. Of their own volition, they use their free time to access the Internet for additional research or their lunch break to continue with a piece of work.

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

23. The curriculum is good overall with some outstanding features such as the individual learning packages and the provision for the students' spiritual, social and personal development. There has been good improvement in the range of subjects offered since the last inspection and in learning opportunities through improved links with mainstream schools. Regardless of attainment, all are expected to study and gain qualifications in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and a language. Some students continue their courses in other subjects. All benefit from an outstanding course in child development and parenting. Through their mainstream schools individuals are preparing for GCSE in graphics, business studies, drama, child development, Spanish, art and design, religious education, history, textiles and food technology. In addition, others are working towards General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in health and social education, leisure and tourism business studies and information and communication technology. With the relocation to new premises, the students no longer have access to regular physical activity. In addition to this being a disappointment for them, it impacts on their well being.

24. Whilst the length of taught time has increased since the last inspection, because the unit is closed on Monday and Friday afternoon the reduced curriculum time puts pressure on both the students and the staff in their efforts to achieve the desired outcomes. Though all the students in the unit have equal opportunities to access the curriculum, the time difference means that they do not have parity with their mainstream peers. Staff and the students reported to the inspectors they need the additional time. After the examinations learning opportunities will be enriched by, for example, jewellery making and a course in food hygiene course.

25. Literacy and numeracy are promoted very well across the curriculum with very good results clearly seen in the quality of work in all subjects. Extra curricular activities are very good. The students have visited the theatre to see 'Of Mice and Men', been to a pantomime, listened to poets reading their work at the Lowry Centre and visited soft drink and bread factories. Mothers have taken their babies to 'Kinderswim'. The support for learning outside school is particularly impressive. Staff visit students in their own homes to facilitate the completion of course work or the taking of examinations, when, because of problems relating to pregnancy or confinement, students are not able to attend the unit. During the Easter holidays, the teacher-in-charge opened the unit so that students who wished to do so could

continue with their course work. After the examinations the learning opportunities will be enriched by, for example, jewellery making course and a food hygiene course.

26. The careers adviser, together with the staff, prepare the students very well for life after school in college or the workplace. Individual interviews have helped the students recognise their talents and needs so they can make appropriate decisions and plan for their future. The careers adviser provides very good support, visiting the unit and the students' homes and maintaining contact throughout the holidays to keep them up to date. Staff are looking to extend the provision by offering post 16 provision based at the local college.

27. Community involvement in the work of the unit is very good. Visiting speakers include health visitors, midwives, and community police who make a significant contribution to the students' learning. The unit is involved in a project with one of the major banks, Personal Finance in Education, and has been chosen to be a case study. This initiative and participation in a healthy eating project considerably strengthen links with mainstream schools. Though initially staff have experienced some difficulties in obtaining records of attendance and achievement from referring schools, communication regarding progress, support for coursework and the recording of progress for accredited courses is very good. Though a small number of students have returned to mainstream education in the past, this is rare. The local authority has no firm policy on re-integration and, to date, no facility or programme for phased return. However, the authority intends to address this by the appointment of a new teacher who will take responsibility for this from the start of the next academic year.

28. Provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall. The promotion of spiritual development is excellent. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. Staff report that many students arrive depressed, insecure and with poor self-esteem. As a result of teachers' high expectations and commitment, the students develop a belief in themselves which leads to them achieving more than they, or others, had expected. Discussion such as 'sixteen is too young to have a baby' and writing 'the thoughts of an unborn child' have encouraged the students to reflect on their lives and the lives of their babies. Through becoming more aware of their attitudes and values they have developed a greater understanding and tolerance of others. Though religious education is not taught as a subject, students learn about other beliefs and traditions through discussions, initiated by the teacher, with those students who are studying religious education through their mainstream schools. A sense of wonder is encouraged through the development of their babies. The crèche is a source of delight for the pupils. They glow with pride as they marvel and describe each stage of their child's development.

29. Provision for moral development is very good. Staff provide very good examples and, because of the excellent relationships, the students are encouraged to discuss a wide range of issues. Frequent discussions about personal problems help students consider the pros and cons of moral dilemmas. The clear code of conduct results in very good self-discipline. Topics in English lessons such as 'children and drugs' and 'genetic engineering and designer babies' in science make a significant contribution to the students' moral development.

30. The promotion of social development is outstanding. Through discussions and daily routines the students learn to take responsibility for the health and welfare of themselves and their babies. Visiting speakers, including the health visitor, midwife and community policeman amongst numerous others provide expert advice on such diverse topics as oral hygiene and domestic violence. This results in the students having a deeper understanding of pressure, and the confusion which comes from conflicting advice from peers, parents, church, magazines, television, and the government. They begin to make important decisions about

themselves and their child. Their growth in maturity enables them to co-operate more effectively with others. Students are encouraged to care for each other and do so by sharing work with those who have missed lessons because of ante-natal appointments, collaborating in the prize winning design of a web page, cutting a CD, and producing a touching anthology, 'Labours of Love'. The teacher-in-charge is a member of the personal, social and health education secondary network in Bolton which enables the students to benefit from the latest initiatives taking place in the area. As a result of one such initiative, a group of students taking part in a competition with mainstream schools designed and produced a gift bag, securing first place with their efforts. Involvement with a high street banking project valuable learning opportunities and has allowed students to have a good understanding of budgeting.

31. Provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It is promoted well through visits to the theatre, restaurants, art galleries, and museums. The students are encouraged to appreciate a wide variety of literature which increases their knowledge of their own heritage and that of other cultures, for example, through the poems 'Half Caste', and 'Presents from my aunt in Pakistan'. Art makes a contribution as the students study Aboriginal art and related beliefs, customs and traditions. However, though there is zero tolerance of racism in the unit and acceptance of a diversity of cultures is encouraged, there is no planned programme to prepare students for living in a multiracial society.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

32. As at the time of the previous inspection, the provision for support, guidance and students' welfare continues to be a strength of the unit, making a very good contribution to the students' well being and the standards they achieve. Staff are very aware of the pressures on teenage mothers and keep a close eye on the physical and mental well being of the students and their children. The teacher-in-charge and nursery nurses know the students extremely well and provide excellent support for the students and their babies. Drawn closer by what students have experienced, relationships are excellent throughout the unit. Staff demonstrate a very genuine concern for the students and their babies. They treat students with respect and set excellent examples of how to behave appropriately. The very high level of support from all staff contributes to the comfortable and relaxed environment in which the students feel secure, happy and keen to learn. Both parents and students value this.

33. Staff know and are alert to the students' physical and academic needs. In consultation with each girl, the teacher-in-charge draws together an education plan which all staff strive to successfully address. Child protection procedures are well-established, consistently applied and staff are regularly trained and updated. All staff are confident in their knowledge of what to do in the event of any concerns regarding students or their babies. Two skilled nursery nurses provide valuable support for the work of the unit. The students greatly appreciate the care given to their children, leaving them free to continue with their studies. In addition to childcare, the nursery nurses provide a 'listening ear' and make a major contribution to skills in parenting. Training in information and communication technology has given the nursery nurses the expertise to produce an informative handbook about the crèche to reassure the young mothers.

34. Conscious that some students find eating difficult during pregnancy, snacks and drink are readily available. This the students respect and do not abuse. Numerous external agencies support the work of the unit, for example, a midwife, health visitor and oral hygienist. A wealth of speakers provide very useful information on a variety of topics such as domestic violence, drugs, nutrition and family planning. The excellent rapport with these professionals, their support and advice make a significant contribution to the students' welfare and development. In addition, a library service providing books for babies, an advocacy worker,

young parents' support groups, a theatre group and a personal finance and education group and others, visit regularly making the welfare support for these young women excellent.

35. Since the previous inspection the local education authority has provided taxis to transport the students and their babies to the unit. This has made a significant contribution to the students' well-being as well as leading to good improvement in attendance and punctuality. Every girl currently studying at the unit has improved her attendance in the time she has been there. If required, the educational social worker is available to do home visits to monitor any potential problems.

36. The positive behaviour system is applied consistently by all staff so students understand what is expected of them, consequently making very good improvement in their behaviour. Praise and rewards are used effectively. Particularly noteworthy work or actions are recognised by staff with the teacher-in-charge sending a postcard to the girl's home address to make sure her family celebrate and recognise how well she has done. When marking work, teachers ensure they commend the good as well as identifying areas for improvement. The students report they truly feel that staff care about them and they are valued.

37. The monitoring of academic performance is very good in all subjects. It is, for the most part, related to accreditation, though in English and mathematics regular spelling tests and mental tests provide ongoing assessment and recording of progress. Teachers monitor progress towards accreditation very closely, especially where there are differences in the requirements of different examining boards. The collaboration with mainstream schools in assessment for GCSE has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Course work is marked constructively by teachers at the unit, highlighting areas for improvement, then graded by mainstream teachers who have greater numbers of students for comparison. There is very good assessment and recording in information and communication technology, so that the students can be entered for Clait when most likely to achieve. Those who enter the unit with insufficient time to complete a GCSE course gain single unit AQA awards or certificates of achievement. Throughout their time in the unit, all students compile a Personal Education Plan which records their attendance, details about themselves and their child, personal views, targets and self-assessment. All achievement is celebrated. The students enjoy receiving congratulatory post cards and the presentation of certificates. They take pride in their Records of Achievement and in their reports which are sometimes the first positive reports they, or their parents, have received.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff work hard to provide very good links with parents and continue to seek further improvement. Parents hold the unit in very high regard. This is evidenced in the numerous letters of thanks from parents and pupils, who are delighted with everything staff have done for them.

39. Links with parents are effective because staff make time to visit students and parents in their homes, giving advice on benefits and other matters as well as education. Some parents report negative experiences at previous schools and are reluctant to visit the unit. Despite numerous invitations, for example, to a pre-joining meeting and the annual parents' consultation, not all parents take advantage of opportunities to be involved in their daughter's education. Nevertheless, the unit operates an 'open door' policy and all teachers and support staff make a point of being available so parents can discuss any concerns or plans they may have. As parents' confidence in the unit grows so does their support. By the end of each year, most parents, relatives, fathers of the babies and teachers from mainstream feeder schools attend the annual presentation day to celebrate achievement. Parents' letters relate their pride and the strength of feeling evident at the presentation evening.

40. Because of the nature of the unit and the very wide catchment area the impact of parental involvement in the school is minimal. However, a parent has recently joined the management committee and some help with the sale of goods in school to raise money to provide food for the presentation day. As the students are extremely well motivated and independent, other than moral support, parents make little contribution at home to their daughter's learning.

41. The quality of information provided for parents has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The prospectus provides very good information for parents and pupils, and in reassuring them that the pregnancy does not mean the end of their academic career. All parents receive an annual report of progress in addition to that provided by their mainstream school. Staff try to ensure that time in the unit is a positive experience and this is reflected in the annual reports. In addition to reporting what students know, understand and can do they praise the remarkable progress students have made in their attitude, attendance and academic achievement. A number of parents state they never thought their daughter could do so well and achieve GCSE in so many subjects. They are quite thrilled by the reports and the work of the unit. All of this has a very positive effect on the students' confidence and self esteem.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

42. The teacher-in-charge is a major asset to the local authority. She is a very enthusiastic and capable teacher and an inspiration to the students in her care. The teacher-in-charge has very successfully created an environment where students settle quickly, feel comfortable, and willing to be helped through a very traumatic time in their young lives. The warmth of the unit is infectious. As a result, the pupils, many of whom had become disenchanted by education, leave with a range of qualifications, frequently exceeding those expected of them and often in harrowing circumstances. In addition, but equally important, they acquire a belief and pride in themselves. The teacher-in-charge is very highly thought of by parents and pupils. Her day-to-day management is effective. However, this is dependent on non-teaching time. Despite the criticism of the previous report that the teacher-in-charge was expected to undertake all the clerical and administrative work for the unit, this situation still continues though an appointment is in the process of being made. In addition to her teaching commitment, keeping policies up to date, and producing an attractive staff handbook and an informative prospectus for students and their parents, she is examinations officer and the point of contact for all the necessary health professionals and mainstream schools. She very successfully juggles her roles and ensures suitable professional development for herself and the part time supply teachers.

43. The support given by the local education authority, as the appropriate authority, is satisfactory. Whilst the senior manager meets with the teacher-in-charge and is aware of what is happening in the unit, information is not always forthcoming, particularly about finance, and areas for improvement have taken too long to put into place. Systems lack rigour. The admissions policy is informal and there are no written guidelines to re-integrate and support students returning to their mainstream schools. This has resulted in a waiting list, with four students whose pregnancy is well advanced waiting for places. Although improvement has been made to planning since the last inspection, there is still no real long term planning, particularly with regard to finance.

44. The management committee has been established since the last inspection. The group meets each term to monitor and discuss what is happening. However, they report their work is sometimes hampered by a reluctance by the local education authority to give full support. For example, members have continuously requested a breakdown of the budget entitlement in order to plan more effectively. Nevertheless, the committee is determined to fulfil its role. In addition, some members provide very good practical support for the work of the unit. For example, as a health visitor, the chair of the management committee has been very supportive to the students and given them a lot of advice. Their respect for her is evident in their contributions to their magazine 'Labours of Love'. Members who are councillors have a strategic overview and have been helpful in the relocation of the unit. The recent addition of a parent representative has added a useful dimension to the group. The management committee has a clear overview of what is happening in the unit and members now have the confidence to challenge and question the teacher-in-charge. Minutes of committee meetings indicate that, whilst useful discussion takes place about achievement, other aspects, such as attendance, and the impact of training, for example, in new technology, are at an early stage. Progress against the unit improvement plan is discussed at each meeting, but committee members do not contribute to the formulation of the plan. The group is currently looking for similar settings with which to compare their performance.

45. A recent addition of the management committee, though not officially involved in the management of the teacher-in-charge, is the manager of the Early Years Centre. She has been instrumental in helping staff and students settle into the new accommodation, making helpful suggestions as to how to extend the room. The centre manager has daily contact with the teacher-in-charge and has invited her to be part of the centre management group. This the teacher-in-charge finds very useful especially in the day-to-day running of the unit. The centre manager recognises how staff and students at the unit can benefit from the range of services housed in the centre. To this end unit staff have already attended training and made a contribution to the centre development plan. Currently there is an overlap in the responsibilities of the centre manager and the representative of the senior manager from the local educational authority. The unit is now at a stage of development where these roles and responsibilities need clarification.

46. Though the accommodation is currently inadequate, the move to new premises has a number of positive features. For example, staff and the students are very happy with the up-to-date crèche facilities, the support of staff at the Early Years Centre and the provision of a hot meal each lunchtime. The single room used by the unit is small and cramped, even taking account of students on maternity leave. The lack of suitable space and facilities restricts some aspects of practical work. Nevertheless, teachers have been imaginative in adapting to the restrictions. For example, the science teacher makes excellent use of new technology by enabling students to undertake investigative and experimental work using a 'virtual lab'. Whilst some of the shortcomings will be remedied when further space is made available at the start of the next academic year, the provision will still lack space for physical activity. In addition, there is no facility for students who choose to breastfeed or somewhere for students who are pregnant when they feel tired or unwell and in need of a short rest.

47. All staff who work at the unit are extremely hardworking and dedicated. Though the previous inspection report highlighted the vulnerability of a single permanent teacher unit, though pupil numbers have remained stable, this has continued to be the case until very recently. At the time of the inspection a post was being advertised to provide an additional permanent teacher who will also act as re-integration officer. Whilst some aspects of the role are clear, other details have yet to be clarified. The acquisition of well-qualified, specialist teachers since the last inspection has contributed significantly to improved standards. However, some are part-time supply staff without contracts, including one teacher who has been with the service for over four years. Though only timetabled to work one half day each week, all give far above what would be expected of a supply teacher. Most have work in other schools yet manage their individual subjects very effectively. In addition, they make time to attend training, parents' evenings, write reports and provide additional support for the pupils. It is not unusual for supply staff to provide additional lessons in their own time or, for example, to spare time to counsel the students as was the case with a teacher helping a new mother cope with post-natal depression. Recognising a lack of expertise in advanced mathematics, to ensure the students are challenged and working to their full potential, the teacher-in-charge has negotiated the services of an advanced skills teacher to provide the additional support required. The time allocated is very early each Friday morning. In order to meet this, the teacher-in-charge and the nursery nurses from the crèche drive to the students' homes to transport them and their babies into the unit in time for the lesson. Such is the dedication of all staff.

48. The local education authority has made a significant increase in the amount of money allowed for each pupil since the last inspection. This has allowed for good improvement in teaching equipment, making resources good. In addition, staff have been invited to share the resources of Early Years Centre. A similar invitation has been extended to make use of Centre expertise. Staff in the unit have already found this very useful, especially in welfare and child protection.

49. Day-to-day financial management by the teacher-in-charge is good. She makes very good use of her delegated budget. However, she has not been provided with a break down of all the funding the unit is entitled to, including national funding. For example, she was not informed that £4,700 had been allocated last financial year for training and the implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy for literacy and numeracy. The lack of information about what funding is available is unsatisfactory and impacts negatively on her ability to plan for both the short and long term. The local education authority has recognised the need for the teacher-in-charge to meet with a finance officer. The teacher-in-charge investigates and uses all possible sources of income. Grants for specific purposes are used very well. For example, a grant for 'behaviour improvement' has been used very effectively to provide for a counsellor who has worked with the students each week. He has successfully improved their confidence and self-esteem by encouraging them to work as a group writing the lyrics for a song which they have recorded on compact disk.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to maintain the many strengths and to improve standards further

The local education authority as the appropriate authority should:

- Ensure the teacher-in-charge and management committee are fully aware of what funding is available in order to plan more effectively;

(paragraph 49)

- Draw up clear procedures for admission to the unit and, where appropriate, the return of students to mainstream education;

(paragraph 43)

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities for day-to-day management of the unit;

(paragraph 45)

- Extend the length of taught time.

(paragraph 24)

The teacher-in-charge, management committee and staff should:

- Ensure students have the opportunity to regularly partake in suitable exercise (paragraph 23)

In addition to the above, consideration should be given to the following minor issues in the unit's action plan

- Provide greater structure to cultural development, especially in opportunities to recognise and understand cultural diversity in British society today. (paragraph 31)
- Continue to encourage parents to be involved in their daughter's education.(paragraph 39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	11
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	1	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	91	9	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than nine 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	17

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	0

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	16.7*

Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	9

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

- this figure includes maternity leave and medical appointments.

Results in national awards 2002

General Certificate of Secondary Education

English language	10 candidates	4 grade C, 5 grade D, 1 grade E
English literature	10 candidates	2 grade C, 4 grade D, 4 grade E
Mathematics	10 candidates	1 grade D, 6 grade E, 1 grade F, 2 grade G.
Science	9 candidates	6 grade E, 2 grade G
French	4 candidates	1 grade D, 2 grade E, 1 grade G
German	3 candidates	1 grade E, 2 grade G
Spanish	1 candidate	grade E
Office applications	1 candidate	grade C
Child development	1 candidate	grade D
Graphics	1 candidate	grade C
ICT	1 candidate	grade D
History	1 candidate	grade G
Religious education	1 candidate	grade G

GNVQ

Leisure and tourism	1 candidate	grade C
Hair and beauty	1 candidate	grade C

Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT)

Four passes

Entry level certificates

German	3 candidates	all distinction
French	7 candidates	all distinction

Food hygiene certificate

6 entries, 5 passes

Assessment Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Units of accreditation

Every student achieved accreditation in

- child development
- Careers education and guidance
- Cookery

Ethnic background of pupils***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	17	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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: Y10 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.07*

FTE means full-time equivalent.

** because of maternity leave, it is unlikely more than 12 pupils will be in at any one time.*

Education support staff: Y10 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
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	£
Total income	99,422*
Total expenditure	99,422
Expenditure per pupil	8285
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

* of this £9900 was managed by the teacher-in-charge

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
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

17

Number of questionnaires returned

4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses from the questionnaire and from letters.

Though only 4 parents responded to the questionnaire, recent letters of gratitude were made available to the inspection team.

Parents are extremely pleased with the provision. They strongly agree that:

- their daughters enjoy attending the unit
- their daughters are making very good progress
- teaching is of a high quality
- the unit works closely with parents and they are kept well informed about their daughter's progress
- the unit is well led and managed
- the unit is helping their daughter become mature and responsible.