

INSPECTION REPORT

GILLFORD CENTRE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Upperby Road, Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112095

Headteacher: Alan Kemp

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 27th- 30th January 2003

Inspection number: 252945

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

Type of school:	Pupil referral unit
School category:	Special
Age range of pupils:	7-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Centre address:	The Gillford Centre Upperby Road Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA2 4JE
Telephone number:	01228 606957
Fax number:	01228
Appropriate authority:	Cumbria LEA
Name of responsible officer	Stuart Goodall
Date of previous inspection:	18 th January 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23587	Alastair Younger	Registered inspector	English Art Music Religious education	The characteristics of the centre and its effectiveness The centre's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
9352	Malcolm Weaver	Lay inspector		How well does the centre care for pupils? How well does the centre work in partnership with parents and carers?
29452	Chris Emerson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs	How well is the centre led and managed? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Modern foreign language Physical education Citizenship	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was: QICS
"lbsley"
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

Gillford serves the city of Carlisle and the rural communities of the north and east of Cumbria. Many pupils come from the less privileged parts of these areas. About 60 pupils are on roll at any one time and just over half of these also attend other schools. Virtually all pupils have been excluded from school or are under threat of exclusion because of their behaviour. Few ethnic minority, refugee or traveller pupils are ever referred. Almost all pupils have special educational needs relating to behaviour and many also have additional learning difficulties. About a half have statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry is often very low. The centre is included in the Carlisle Achievement Zone. It operates on two sites, the second being Kingmoor; a facility for workshop and practical experience. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE CENTRE IS

This is a good, very well led, centre. The primary department is very good. Here, pupils attend well are well taught and show a lot of enthusiasm for learning. As a result, they make good progress academically and very good progress in their personal development. Secondary aged pupils are well taught but make only satisfactory progress because their attendance is much lower and many are unenthusiastic learners. The centre gives good value for money.

What the centre does well

- The primary department is very well run; pupils are very well taught
- There is a lot of good teaching throughout the centre
- The curriculum benefits from a wide range of activities out of the centre and strong links with the community
- It is very well led by the headteacher; change and improvement are being well managed.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and effective in promoting learning and personal development.
- It has earned the full support of parents.

What could be improved

- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress.
- The role of subject co-ordinators.
- The way in which secondary aged pupils are helped to learn about the humanities (history, geography and religious education).

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

HOW THE CENTRE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a better centre than when it was previously inspected in January 1999. A stronger curriculum has improved opportunities to make real progress academically as well as in their personal development. What is more, improvement is rapidly gaining pace as recent changes are bringing increased levels of professionalism to the staff.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key	
English	B	C	very good	A
mathematics	B	C	good	B
science	C	C	satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	B	unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	**	**	poor	E

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

**Targets in IEP's are often too vague and long-term to provide a necessary guide for measuring progress

Primary pupils make the best progress. Teaching is at its strongest here and pupils are keen to learn. There is a very effective emphasis on improving pupils' personal skills. This successfully addresses the main reason why pupils are referred and increases the chances of them returning to school. Achievement in English and mathematics is good. All other subjects are taught through topic work in which pupils make good progress. Secondary aged pupils achieve less because attendance is much lower and many are reluctant learners. Achievement in English and mathematics is greatly helped by the fact that all teachers take every opportunity to help pupils recognise the importance of reading, writing and arithmetic. Achievement in science is slowed by the lack of a suitable laboratory. Achievement is particularly good in art for secondary aged pupils. It is also very good in the practical activities they participate in, particularly the motor vehicle project at Kingmoor. Achievement is weakest in the humanities because teaching and organisation fall below the standard found in other subjects. Specific targets are not set for the centre but it performs well against targets set for the whole service.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the centre	Good. Primary pupils demonstrate very good attitudes. Several pupils in Years 8 and 9 show growing disenchantment and are harder to involve in learning but the majority comply well. Those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who attend regularly show very good attitudes to learning, especially at Kingmoor.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. In most lessons pupils behave well. Out of class the centre is usually calm. Nevertheless, there are many exclusions and serious incidents on record. These have been significantly reducing in each of the last two terms. Bullying, sexism and racism all exist but are rare. Most pupils make good progress in improving their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils become increasingly aware of the expectations of society and that their own actions can occasionally upset others. The oldest and youngest pupils demonstrate tolerance and sympathy for one another but several pupils in years 7-9 remain immature in their desire to irritate each other and cause discontent.

Attendance	Unsatisfactory The attendance of primary aged pupils is very good but it deteriorates to the point where, in years 10 and 11, attendance is poor. The exception is at Kingmoor, on the motor vehicle project, where attendance is very good.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Y 3-6	Y7 -11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good

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

Teaching is good. Primary aged pupils are being very well taught. Throughout the centre, teaching is rapidly improving. This is evident in the recent work of pupils and reflects the advice and support of an 'advanced skills' teacher who is successfully conveying the message that teaching can only be successful if it leads to pupils learning. Teachers are developing a particularly good awareness of the importance of improving pupils' reading, writing and arithmetic. For secondary aged pupils, English and science are well taught. Mathematics teaching is good in Years 7-9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching of personal, social and health education is good overall. Art, practical and physical activities are all well taught as is information and communication technology. Teaching is not leading to sufficient learning in the humanities.

The most significant feature of teaching is the very good understanding that staff have of pupils' individual needs. This helps the formation of strong relationships and the good management of pupils' behaviour. Few weaknesses were evident in the observed teaching but it is clear from analysis of pupils' work that there has been complacency in the past and that expectations have been too low, especially in the humanities. Increasingly, however teachers are more clearly identifying what they want pupils to learn in each lesson. This has led to improved planning, more realistic expectations and an increasing awareness of the need to vary tasks to enable all pupils to benefit from each lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CENTRE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is innovative and very relevant to each group of pupils. The primary curriculum closely resembles that of a primary school for older pupils the curriculum is particularly well focussed on providing a wide range of activities that pupils find interesting and relevant. A good balance is being found between opportunities for academic learning and personal development. Statutory requirements are well met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers are very aware of the different abilities and needs of each pupil, good extra support is given to pupils experiencing difficulty in reading and writing. Insufficient attention is paid to implementing the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and the close monitoring of pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are frequently encouraged to reflect on their lives and prospects. Their cultural understanding is promoted through frequent visits to museums and galleries and through literature and art. Staff set a very good moral and social example for pupils to follow.
How well the centre cares	Satisfactory. The centre is a safe place and pupils well looked after.

for its pupils	What weakens care is that assessment and recording of pupils' progress is underdeveloped and is not giving teachers the precise information they need to teach pupils to best effect.
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There is a strong link with parents. They are full of praise for the centre and do their best to co-operate with staff to secure the best for their children. They can do this because the centre keeps them well informed about what their children do on a day-to-day basis. The link would be even better if reports contained more detailed information about what their children are learning as well as how they are behaving.

HOW WELL THE CENTRE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is strong leadership. The headteacher is widely admired and trusted by colleagues, parents and schools. He is the driving force behind the improvements being made. A senior management team is increasingly involved in the good management of the centre. Leadership and management of subject areas requires improvement.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Good. It fully supports the headteacher. Members are closely involved in the work of the centre and play an important role in all major decisions. The chairperson provides an excellent link with mainstream schools. The LEA, as the appropriate authority, has fully met its responsibilities and has offered good support.
The centre's evaluation of its performance	Good. A wide range of indicators is being used to help managers make comparisons and to set targets for the future. There is good monitoring of teachers and this is leading to the raising of expectations and standards. All staff are involved in performance management. This has been instrumental in many of the improvements being seen.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The headteacher manages the budget well. Funding has been well used to improve staffing and the curriculum. Major expenditure, such as the Kingmoor initiative and ICT provision is accompanied by clear expectations as to improvements in pupils' achievements. The principles of best value are satisfactorily applied.

There is a good staff. All teachers hold a specialist qualification relating to the understanding of pupils' behaviour. Specialist support staff are particularly effective and play a huge role in pupils' learning and development. There are many good resources. Excellent use is made of resources outside the centre. Accommodation is mainly good but the lack of a satisfactory science laboratory is limiting pupils' progress.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE CENTRE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel welcomed and involved • They feel their children are being well taught • They feel the centre is well managed and led • They like the range of activities outside lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like teachers to set more homework

The inspection team agrees with parents' views and notes that the centre has been very quick to respond to parents' concerns over the amount of homework being set.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The centre's results and pupils' achievements

1. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection. The best achievement is seen in the primary department where pupils are consistently well taught and strongly supported in their personal development. Pupils are also attending very well so there are few interruptions to their learning. Learning opportunities are well planned so that pupils are achieving in a good spread of subjects, many based around a topic that is carefully chosen to interest them. There is a suitable emphasis on personal development. This is particularly important as it is the main reason for their initial referral and it is this that needs to improve before pupils can return to school. It does result in a significant part of the timetable being dedicated to providing opportunities for improving personal skills and this detracts slightly, but appropriately, from the time available for academic study.
2. Secondary pupils achieve slightly less well. Several have more entrenched negative attitudes and a greater reluctance to accept that schooling has anything to offer them. As a result, they are often reluctant to attend and when they do it is occasionally for social rather than learning purposes. Unlike the primary pupils, many of the older pupils have no desire to return to school. This is a big problem for pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 because there is still an expectation that they will. It is these pupils who present the greatest challenge in terms of attitudes to learning and it is these who achieve least. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are responding well to the opportunities they are being given to practise work-based skills and are increasingly motivated by the growing awareness that they have the opportunity to leave the centre with a good range of qualifications. Pupils with additional special educational needs are offered good support, especially to help them improve their reading
3. Achievement in English is satisfactory overall. It is better in the primary department, where a good emphasis on discussion helps pupils to learn and use appropriate vocabulary in a wide range of situations. They find writing and spelling difficult but with support they persevere to record their experiences and ideas. Handwriting noticeably improves. On referral, a few pupils are barely able to form individual letters but virtually all pupils who leave write legibly and many are using capital letters and full stops to demonstrate their ability to write simple sentences. Several pupils are making significant inroads into writing in a joined up style. Higher attaining pupils identify nouns as naming words and verbs as doing words. Reading and spelling improves as pupils learn how to break down words into sounds. The word "crowd", for instance, becomes "cr ow d", altogether more manageable. The main area of weakness is in imaginative writing. Many pupils are reluctant to write at any length and have much more difficulty expressing themselves in writing than in speaking.
4. Achievement for secondary aged pupils is satisfactory. It is lower because less learning time is available and teaching is slightly weaker. Many pupils arrive having achieved very little in English in recent years. Several have exceptionally low reading ages and are performing most English tasks at a level expected of pupils up to five years lower than themselves. Nevertheless, often with successful support from specialist reading intervention sessions, most pupils improve their reading to the point where they can read newspaper and magazine articles and extract necessary information from job advertisements. Another area of success is in the presentation of work. Pupils' handwriting nearly always improves. The best work of older pupils is well

presented, simple punctuation is correctly used and finished articles reflect the set task. For instance, pupils have written good autobiographies having first read those of celebrities. Others have captured the excitement of travelling to see their favourite band. By the time they leave, most pupils are achieving success in unit award schemes. Each year, a small number of pupils are capable of gaining a lower grade GCSE but spasmodic attendance means that they do not complete the necessary coursework.

5. Mathematics achievement is highest in the primary department because there is a good emphasis on developing numeracy skills at every opportunity. Pupils use addition and subtraction accurately to solve problems when they work with tens and units. They frequently work out answers to simple sums and problems in their heads. Pupils are good at using skills they have learned in mathematics in a variety of other situations. Having learned about graphs in mathematics, they draw graphs of their favourite, healthy foods in science. A few lower achieving pupils still do not recognise the importance of writing numbers in the correct column when setting out a tens and units sum. Older pupils achieve less well. They respond best to the challenge of mental arithmetic where they quickly and correctly, work out multiples of 5, 6 and 7. A few pupils work out the squares of numbers up to the square of 12. Many pupils need support in helping them to set out sums and to complete written exercises. In years 10 and 11 those pupils who attend regularly have satisfactory prospects of gaining AQA unit awards and last year one pupil achieved a grade G at GCSE.
6. Achievement in science is satisfactory. It is limited by the lack of opportunity to investigate and experiment. Primary pupils recognise that different types of animals have different diets. They correctly label a diagram of a plant. Most can describe the properties of common materials. In experiments they are able to show that some processes are reversible, but others are not. Secondary aged pupils measure the volume of air in their lungs and draw bar charts of lung capacity, very neatly and accurately. They are aware that smoking damages the lungs. By Year 11 pupils describe processes such as photosynthesis, correctly identifying the role of chlorophyll. They also correctly identify and describe different types of energy. The weakness in pupils' achievement is that they do not sufficiently learn how to design and conduct experiments and carry out investigations. Pupils who attend enough lessons achieve a range of AQA unit awards and ASDAN challenge awards.
7. Very high achievement in practical activities is helped by good facilities and effective, well qualified, staff. An additional benefit is that lessons also contribute well to the development of pupils' personal, social, and work-related skills. Pupils enjoy cooking because lessons are interesting. In Year 9 they make pizzas and compare them with commercially produced ones. In Years 10 and 11 they discover the ingredients used in Chinese cooking. Many pupils have previously been reluctant to taste unfamiliar foods but when they see what goes into them they become more adventurous. Last year, older pupils planned and prepared Christmas lunch for everyone in the centre. They regularly cater for community bingo held at the school. Pupils achieve particularly well in the workshop at Kingmoor where Year 9, pupils use a wide range of hand and power tools safely and correctly as they construct items such as wind chimes from their own designs using wood and metal. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are achieving very successfully as they build a kit car. They find the work interesting, recognise that they are developing valuable practical, work-related skills, and attend regularly. They become proficient and safe users of oxyacetylene and electric welders and metal grinders. This is a new project but there is a realistic, high expectation that nearly all pupils will achieve an NVQ qualification.

8. Primary pupils are achieving well in the humanities. They have compared the ways that people in different countries and at different times have lived and recognise that people from different religions, societies and times have special festivals and celebrations. Pupils have gained a better understanding of the British Isles and with a bit of help mark the location of major cities on a map. Very good use of the local community through visits to castles around Carlisle has had a big impact on pupils' achievement. It has helped them to explain how and why castles were built, how they were defended and why they began to be built of stone in the middle ages. Achievement in humanities for secondary aged pupils is unsatisfactory because of poor organisation and few opportunities for learning. Very recently a few pupils have begun to study the culture of a country of their choice as part the ASDAN award scheme. Small numbers of pupils in years 10 and 11 are learning about the major geographical features of Europe and electricity generation in the UK. Over the past five weeks religious education has been introduced to the curriculum through study of the ASDAN module Beliefs and Values. Insufficient work has been completed to form a judgement on achievement.
9. Achievement in art is good. It is very good in the secondary department and each year several pupils pass GCSE with lower grades. One of the strengths of achievement in art is the range of activities taught. In addition to improving technique, pupils are also building up a good understanding of famous artists, their lives and works. They perceptively compare different styles, such as those of sculptors Frink and Giacometti and they use the work of designers such as Mackintosh to help them design their own patterns and forms. Pupils also develop a very good awareness of the art of a wide range of non-western cultures. They recognise the influences of Chinese and Aboriginal art. To help them learn about African art pupils visited an African art gallery and craft shop. Very good developmental work is evident as pupils take an initial idea and explore ways of interpreting and expanding on it. Primary pupils achieve well in art. As part of topic work, most art is illustrative but pupils are mixing colours and applying paint with increasing accuracy. They are also using different textured materials imaginatively in collage and there are simple examples of weaving.
10. In personal, social and health education, primary pupils achieve very well. They develop skills that enable them to play constructively, taking turns, and sharing. They become much better at taking responsible for their own actions and develop a good understanding of the benefits of following group rules. Secondary pupils achieve well as they budget for shopping and host social events such as bingo sessions. They help themselves to become more employable by learning about the world of work as they experience work in a local forest, cater for groups and make Christmas puddings to sell as part of an enterprise project.
11. Primary pupils achieve well in swimming. Few new arrivals swim unaided for more than a few metres but with practice and very good instruction they rapidly improve and gain in confidence. Pupils listen well to instructions and behave very well in the water. A good outdoor education programme gives all pupils the opportunity to develop their physical skills. Older pupils make good progress in developing canoeing, rock climbing, football and fell walking skills. They are proud of their achievements, especially rolling over in a canoe and abseiling. Many gain AQA unit awards for canoeing and fell walking.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes and values closely reflect those reported upon by the last inspection. Primary pupils demonstrate the best attitudes. They respond quickly and positively to the high expectations of staff and are keen to volunteer, for example, to write down sums on the whiteboard. Many, such as at the end of an interesting history lesson, are keen to take extra work home. Pupils are generally polite and considerate to one another. They say they enjoy attending because they like the fun and support that is so evident in the primary classroom.
13. About a half of secondary aged pupils show enthusiasm to learn, the other half are more reluctant. This is especially evident when pupils are presented with tasks they find challenging or where they have previously experienced failure. For instance, several pupils write only with great reluctance and in a Year 11 mathematics lesson pupils considered work that challenged them as 'boring'.
14. Most pupils are referred because their behaviour is bad and most make good progress in improving it. Behaviour of primary aged pupils is very good. It is particularly good in public, such as when they visit the swimming baths. Most older pupils also behave well, but a few, especially in Years 8 and 9, frequently interrupt learning through loud and disrespectful behaviour. There are many exclusions and serious incidents on record. It is a good sign that these have been reducing over the last three terms. Any bullying, sexism or racism is quickly and effectively dealt with and as a result remains rare. Between lessons, the centre is usually calm. It feels settled and unthreatening. At lunchtime, pupils talk to one another sensibly. It was good to observe friendly, but competitive, football games at break-time.
15. Pupils respond well to the expectations of the centre and learn to be less selfish as they realise that what they do affects other people. Primary aged pupils make very good progress in being able to explain their feelings and behaviour. This is evident in sessions where they share their views and feelings with the whole class. These pupils are extremely polite to visitors and pleased to show off what they have learned.
16. The oldest pupils also recognise how their views and actions affect one another. They show maturity in the way they organise football matches (in the Carlisle Achievement Zone) and help out with a food co-operative and bingo sessions as a way of putting something back into the community. Several pupils in Years 7–9 continue to seek attention through irritating behaviour. They remain reluctant to accept advice and behave immaturely in lessons and in conversation.
17. Attendance is well below national expectations. It is slightly lower than reported at the last inspection. Nevertheless, primary aged pupils attend very well, achieving a level envied by most schools. A small number of older pupils frequently absent themselves and in a small centre such as this it distorts figures. There is a problem with the attendance of Year 10 and 11 pupils. They attend very well when lessons such as the Motor Vehicle Project appeal to them but remain unwilling to compromise when they cannot see the relevance of other lessons. In Years 7,8 and 9, one in four days is lost through absence. This slows learning and also introduces inefficiency in terms of staffing and organisation.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The most significant feature of teaching is the very good understanding that staff have of pupils. This helps the formation of strong relationships and the good management of pupils' behaviour. This has been the case for several years and was noted as a strength of teaching in the previous inspection. What has improved though is that teachers are increasingly, and more clearly, identifying what they want pupils to learn in each lesson. This is leading to improved planning, higher and more realistic expectations and an increasing awareness of the need to vary tasks to enable all pupils to benefit from each lesson. The improvement is evident in the recent work of pupils and reflects the advice and support of an 'advanced skills' teacher, who is helping centre teachers to make the best of their skills to promote pupils' learning. Teachers have also developed a good, new found, awareness of the importance of their responsibility to improve pupils' reading, writing and arithmetic at every opportunity. This is evident, not only in planning, but in practice.
19. As opportunities arise, specialist staff are being appointed. They bring with them increased subject knowledge. This is proving beneficial in the teaching of subjects such as science and information and communication technology. Several specialist staff are not teachers but they are improving teaching by adding their subject expertise to the existing skills of teachers. The working relationship between teachers and specialist support staff and technicians is a strong feature of most of the best teaching.
20. There are few weaknesses in teaching but this has not always been the case. Analysis of pupils' work shows that many improvements date back only since last summer. Prior to this, pupils' work suggests much lower expectations were evident and learning opportunities less well planned and less imaginative. Pockets of this still remain in the humanities at secondary level. Homework is set only spasmodically, but even so, more is set than returned. There is currently no policy on homework.
21. English teaching is good. In the primary department it is very good. This is where the greatest attention to implementing the National Literacy Strategy is paid and lessons are particularly well structured. The teacher and support assistant are skilled at involving every pupil in discussion, prompting pupils where necessary to help them to contribute. Firm management of behaviour results in a very settled classroom where pupils are relaxed but keen to work. When one pupil was clearly upset at missing out on his 1:1 session of reading intervention, skilled handling of the situation prevented an outburst and the pupil was quickly re-involved in the lesson. Teaching of secondary aged pupils is good overall, but occasionally dependent upon the moods of pupils. For instance, a group of challenging Year 9 pupils reduced the effectiveness of teaching because the time and effort dedicated to managing their behaviour reduced the time available for teaching and learning. Nevertheless, teachers nearly always win their battles because they have good behaviour management skills. They also recognise the importance of strong planning which clearly sets out expectations for each lesson. A strength of teaching is the insistence of teachers that all pupils participate. Teachers do not take the easy option of letting reluctant learners opt out for want of an easier life.
22. Teaching in mathematics is very good for primary aged pupils. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching for primary aged pupils is successful because it is based on a very good understanding of individual pupil's ability. The teacher constantly questions pupils to check what they remember and to ensure that they have understood new concepts. High expectations of behaviour and learning are evident and this results in a very harmonious atmosphere in which pupils work hard.

Good promotion of numeracy at every opportunity helps pupils to learn how to use their skills in different contexts. The teacher for Years 7-9 is increasingly successfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' ability to work confidently with numbers is having a positive impact on progress. Good relationships contribute to motivation of pupils to attempt the work they are set. The specialist teaching assistant provides good support, for instance when helping a pupil with additional learning needs. Potentially disruptive behaviour is dealt with calmly and effectively. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The teacher has a pleasant manner with pupils and they get on quietly with their work but there is little challenge and pupils mainly consolidate existing skills rather than extend them. The strong reliance on worksheets means that lesson presentation is somewhat dull.

23. Science teaching is good. There is a good focus on emphasising scientific language and pupil interest is maintained by presenting them with as wide a range of activities as the accommodation allows. Visits to the coast and to a local forest are very effective in extending pupils' understanding of the environment. Teachers take particular care to link science to other subjects such as health and drugs education. Secondary pupils were particularly motivated by the use of video and a smoking machine as they learned about the effect of cigarettes on the lungs. Not enough demands are made on secondary pupils to write at length about their work. Specialist teaching assistants provide good quality support. Relationships are very good, and pupils are managed effectively.
24. In information and communication technology the part-time specialist technician, with good support from the headteacher, has made a positive impact on teaching. Because the technician has very good technical knowledge she is able to work well with individual pupils, helping them to complete tasks successfully. Year 9 pupils were delighted with the CD case covers which they had made. Lessons are based on thorough planning which clearly identifies what pupils are expected to learn. Very good support is provided by the specialist teaching assistant who works hard to give reluctant learners the confidence to use the computer. Teachers, other than in the primary department, make insufficient use of computers, particularly in mathematics and science.
25. Teaching of personal, social, health and citizenship education is good overall and very good in the primary class. In this class, teaching and specialist teaching assistance are very effective. Teamwork is very good and very good relationships with pupils are evident, setting these pupils a particularly good example and helping them with their personal development. Activities are very well chosen to match pupils needs and abilities. Teaching of secondary aged pupils is good. Very good relationships are promoted, helping to keep all pupils working. Humour is used well to motivate pupils. A wide range of relevant topics is planned to prepare pupils well for the next phase of their lives.
26. The teaching of humanities for primary aged pupils is very good. The teacher's obvious enthusiasm, especially for history, results in very stimulating lessons. Effective use of a good range of resources adds excitement to lessons. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and learn very well. Staff work very effectively as a team to provide good support for pupils who experience difficulty in reading and writing. As a result, all pupils are fully included in lessons and complete work set. Very good relationships between staff and pupils and the skilful management of behaviour create a very positive learning environment. Because of this pupils concentrate well and take great care with the presentation of their work. There are few opportunities for

secondary aged pupils to study humanities. Only one lesson was seen and attendance was very poor. Secondary aged pupils are not learning enough in humanities because they are not being taught enough.

27. Art teaching is a strength, especially in the secondary department where the teacher is confident and experienced. Evidence for this comes from pupils' work and achievements as no teaching could be observed during the inspection. Very good advice is being given to pupils to help them compile impressive, very well presented portfolios of work. One thing that pupils say they like is that the teacher does not unduly interfere with their work. This allows each pupil to develop their own style rather than copying that of the teacher. This gives pupils greater ownership of their work and motivates them to try hard.
28. Teaching in design and technology is good. In the Motor Project it is very good. Here, thorough assessment procedures help pupils to judge their own progress. Teachers are well qualified and provide interesting activities to motivate pupils. Good use is made of specialist accommodation and resources. Relationships are very good and pupils respect the staff. As a consequence pupils behave well and work safely.
29. The range of physical activities is well taught. Specialist teaching assistance and swimming instruction for primary pupils is very good. Relationships are very good and time at the swimming pool is used very well to include the promotion of personal and social skills, for example, taking turns in the water, and being polite and well behaved in the café. Very well qualified staff lead the outdoor education programme. They are enthusiastic and are strongly committed to the pupils. Great care is taken to match activities to the needs of individual pupils and so help pupils grow in confidence and self esteem.

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

30. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, with a much better balance being struck between opportunities for academic learning and personal development. This is an improvement since the last inspection when personal development overshadowed academic learning. Learning opportunities are very well suited to the needs of each group of pupils. Care is taken to ensure that primary pupils are taught in a way they are familiar with and which will help them to slot in well when they have the opportunity to return to school. The curriculum for older pupils is well focussed on providing a wide range of activities that pupils find interesting it helps them to prepare for adult life and employment. It is also, increasingly, takes note of national initiatives such as Literacy, Numeracy and Key Stage 3 Strategies.
31. All pupils learn English, mathematics, and science, based on National Curriculum programmes of study. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn computer skills in the new computer suite. Topic work for primary aged pupils is well planned and covers most subjects that pupils would be studying in school. There is a good focus on personal and social education. For secondary aged pupils, all learning leads to qualifications; either through ASDAN (a youth award scheme), or through the AQA unit award scheme. Particularly effective use is made of a workshop where pupils are developing skills in working with wood and metal. Pupils have a good, extensive outdoor education programme. Many visit a local forest for work experience and to extend their knowledge of the environment. Primary pupils focus more on history and religious education than geography. Secondary aged pupils are not taught enough of

any of the three subjects but the very recent introduction of religious education, through an accredited beliefs and values module is a positive move forward.

32. The courses provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are interesting, relevant and motivating. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is promoted well through ASDAN challenges, and as part of teaching in other subjects such as science. Courses for older pupils are well designed to help them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for adult life and employment. Work experience, residential visits, outdoor education and access to college courses are all provided. One option, the Motor Project, supported by a local benefactor, offers excellent opportunity for pupils to develop practical skills as they build a kit car. This project has captured pupils' imagination and is very well attended.
33. Many activities enrich the curriculum. These include outdoor education, sporting and residential opportunities and visitors into school. There are good links with clubs and schools for football and athletics. Very good links with the local community have led to innovative developments including the very successful Motor Project, the food co-operative, and the forestry links. Pupils also cater for and host community bingo evenings. There are strong links with the police, the local crime reform group, and the youth offending team. Pupils attend courses at a local college. The centre boosts its resources by linking with the local artefacts library for history, and with the local health education group. The careers service supports the centre well and pupils attend 'Skills City' to learn about the range of employment opportunities open to them.
34. A special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has recently been appointed to address weaknesses in provision and organisation. The new Code of Practice has not been sufficiently implemented to shift the focus from where the pupil has difficulties to what teachers are going to do about them. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is being assessed but results are not sufficiently recorded or used in a planned way to keep an eye on the progress of pupils with additional special educational needs or to determine what support individuals require.
35. The previous inspection identified provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development as unsatisfactory. There has since been good improvement. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own, and other people's lives. When they visit an outdoor centre, set in lovely scenery, pupils are encouraged to 'sit and watch' and appreciate the beauty of their surroundings. Assemblies are a good, daily feature. In them, staff and pupils talk about the lives and work of 'special people' like Mother Theresa and Florence Nightingale as a basis for identifying how people can be helped. Assemblies always finish with a prayer; full marks to the centre, this is rarely seen.
36. Staff set pupils a good example in how to conduct themselves and build relationships. High expectations coupled with a very good understanding of pupil's personal circumstances, help staff to support pupils through personal crises. A reward system is used consistently to help pupils to understand the effects of their behaviour. Inappropriate or anti-social behaviour is never tolerated.
37. Pupils have many good opportunities to sample culture through visits to museums, galleries, the local sculpture park and the theatre. An exciting initiative to develop pupils' awareness of their own community is the planned work with students from the local art college to produce a social documentary film about life in Carlisle. The rich and varied curriculum in art makes pupils aware of the art of other cultures.

38. Very good links have been developed with the community. Additional funding has been obtained from businesses and the local community to enable pupils to participate in the motor project, the healthy food project and conservation work at the Thirlmere Centre. Older pupils have visited a local newspaper to gain an awareness of newspaper production that has a clear link to the work pupils do in information and communications technology. They are also actively involved in providing a 'food co-op' for members of the local community. This promotes pupils' self-esteem and develops effective links with the neighbourhood. Local schools are increasingly confident that the centre is providing them with the support they expect. The centre's involvement in the 'Carlisle Achievement Zone' results in productive links with seven local schools and is helping the successful return of pupils to mainstream schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE CENTRE CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Procedures for promoting pupils' learning and personal development are as good as reported at the last inspection. There is a caring environment that enables pupils to develop self-esteem and appropriate self-confidence. All parents have agreed contracts for their children's behaviour, attendance and personal development. Admissions procedures are thorough and result in a close working relationship with parents, from which the expectations of the pupils, parents and staff are reviewed and agreed.
40. Attendance is closely monitored. Administration staff are particularly effective in establishing true reasons for absence when pupils do not attend the centre. All recording and reporting of attendance information is good and very effective links are held with the educational welfare officer.
41. Staff treat pupils with respect and set high standards for pupils' self-discipline and respect for each other, staff and visitors. Pupils are fully aware of the rewards and sanctions resulting for their behaviour and seek to gain the rewards and avoid the sanctions. Increased internal security prevents disruptive pupils from disturbing other classes. Whilst this has proven to be effective it is to be reviewed in due course in the hope that it can be relaxed.
42. The person in charge of child protection has received up-to-date training and keeps all other staff well informed. Confidential documents are stored securely. Several health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection. They will be resolved within a suitable timescale.
43. Staff understand pupils well and this helps them to meet personal and academic needs. Assessments are, however, often informal and not recorded. This makes it difficult for staff to keep a close check on pupils' progress over longer periods of time and this is a weakness. Consistent use of the reward system promotes hard work and positive attitudes. It motivates pupils and they look forward to the rewards they receive at the end of the term. Targets in individual education plans are still too vague to help staff to accurately assess small improvements. All pupils are being tested as soon as they arrive in the centre but not enough use is being made of the information gathered to set precise targets for individuals.
44. A good new system has been introduced in the primary class for assessing pupils' personal development, organising skills and capacity to work with others. The progress of secondary aged pupils is being increasingly well tested and rewarded through increasing use of AQA unit awards, ASDAN and NVQ certification. In the

Motor Project good assessment procedures require pupils to assess their own progress and then check their assessments against those of the teacher.

HOW WELL DOES THE CENTRE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents value and support the work of staff very highly. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents are becoming increasingly involved. Attendance at the regular consultation evenings is good and parents are fully involved in discussing the progress their children make and planning future programmes. Parents help the centre in reviewing their children's work. They support their children well, ensuring that homework is completed on time. Parents are fully involved, and kept well informed, about arrangements for returning their children to school.
46. Parents are kept better informed about their children's progress than previously. Plans are regularly reviewed with parents and good procedures are in place for providing information to parents who do not attend. End of year reports are satisfactory but tend to concentrate more on how pupils behave than what they learn. Regular, good quality, newsletters are a feature.

HOW WELL IS THE CENTRE LED AND MANAGED?

47. Leadership and management remains a strength. The headteacher knows what needs to be done to improve the centre and has the energy and determination to do it. This provides a very good base for improvement. On his appointment the centre was experiencing significant difficulties including substantial staff absenteeism and demoralisation. Strong leadership is resolving these issues and the appointment of an effective senior management team has further helped improve management. Through his enthusiasm and persistence the headteacher has gained the increasing support of the community. This has been particularly effective in increasing opportunities for older pupils. The management of subject areas is weaker. No individuals take full responsibility for monitoring standards and provision for each subject. This leads to inefficiencies and increases the burden on the senior management team.
48. Priorities for development are successfully linked into performance management objectives for all staff. Individual targets are well linked to the centre improvement plan and include clear success criteria. There are well-developed plans to extend monitoring of planning and regular observations of lessons. Good use is made of computers to relieve administrative burdens but not enough to organise information about pupils' progress and development.
49. Members of the management committee are closely involved in appointing new members of staff. They meet regularly, communicate well and play an important part in decision making. The local education authority has provided a comprehensive curriculum policy and has clearly stated what it expects of the centre. It is supporting improvements in accommodation and provides valued and effective support through monitoring visits by the senior education officer for access and inclusion and the regular visits of educational psychologists and welfare officers. Finance is carefully managed. The headteacher has considerable control over the way in which money is spent and is careful to ensure that all spending is accounted for correctly. As with most centres of this type, there is little facility to plan financially for the longer term because money saved in one year cannot be carried forward to be spent in another.

Funding is greatly enhanced by generous contributions from charities, organisations and individuals in the community. The headteacher is shameless in his relentless pursuit of money to be spent on improving facilities and activities for pupils. It is one of his strengths.

50. A good training and development programme ensures that staff are kept up to date in many important areas. Over the past year these have included child protection, behaviour management, report writing, circle time, mental health, speech and language difficulties, literacy and computer skills. Training for each subject of the curriculum is weaker and this links to the weakness in co-ordination of subjects. The centre is bright, clean and well maintained. Very good use is made of facilities outside the centre to extend accommodation and resources for physical activities, history, geography, and science. The lack of a suitable science laboratory is restricting pupil's progress in the subject because it limits the range of investigation and experimenting that pupils can participate in. Resources for design and technology on the Kingmoor site are especially good and are significantly contributing to the high achievements being seen on that site. There is a very well resourced computer suite.

WHAT SHOULD THE CENTRE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to improve the centre and raise standards the headteacher, staff and local education authority should now:

- Improve the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. *Paragraphs 34,43,44*
- Improve the quality of subject co-ordination. *Paragraph 47*
- Improve the way in which secondary aged pupils are helped to learn about the humanities (history, geography and religious education) *Paragraphs 8,24,31*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

28

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	15	4	0	0	0
Percentage	3.6	28.6	53.6	14.3	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 about four percentage points.

Information about the centre's pupils

Pupils on the centre's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the centre's roll	60

Special educational needs

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	25
Number of pupils on the centre's special educational needs register	57

English as an additional language

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Centre data	14.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
Centre data	23

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

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	59	66	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	1	1	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: Y3 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y3 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	190

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	458216
Total expenditure	458216
Expenditure per pupil	8000
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the centre during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the centre during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	60
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	32	9	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	32	5	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	36	5	9	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	23	32	9	4
The teaching is good.	82	14	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	86	14	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	9	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	14	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	14	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73	27	0	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are broadly supportive of the centre and feel it has helped their children to make progress. However, most parents would like their children to be given more work to do at home.