

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE ORCHARD CENTRE
PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

WOLVERHAMPTON

WEST MIDLANDS

Unique reference number: 104288

Headteacher: Sharon Humphreyson

Reporting inspector: Mike Smith
15303

Dates of inspection: 10th – 14th March 2003

Inspection number: 253871

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	5-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Valley Park Cromer Gardens Wolverhampton WEST MIDLANDS
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Tina Warren
Date of previous inspection:	17th – 18th May 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15303	Mike Smith	Registered inspector	Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities Hospital Education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the Centre The Centre's results and pupil achievements How well the Centre is led and managed
9214	Janet Garland	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities Equal opportunities Personal, social and health education English as an additional language Supporting French, music and child development	How well does the Centre care for its pupils
16198	Carol Etherington	Team inspector	English Music Religious education Child development Citizenship Equal opportunities	Quality and range of learning opportunities
30741	Paul Copping	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs Home tutoring	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
30127	Barry Robinson	Team inspector	Science French Information Technology/support Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language Hospital education	How well are pupils taught

23390	Mel Blackband	Team Inspector	Information technology Art Design Technology Drama Equal opportunities	School partnership with parents
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Orchard Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), known as a Centre, provides both full and part-time education for primary and secondary pupils whose education has been severely disrupted by medical and/or psychological difficulties. The pupils may have a range of special educational needs, including emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. There are 19 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. The Centre also provides education for schoolgirl mothers. The headteacher is responsible for the home education service and hospital education, which forms part of the overall inspection. At the time of the inspection, 103 pupils were registered at the Centre, comprising of 3 pupils educated off site and 2 pupils supported part time. 26 pupils are receiving tutoring at home and the number of pupils receiving educational support at the hospital changes from day to day. There are is a very small number of pupils with an ethnic minority background and only 1 pupil for whom English is a second language. There is only 14% take up of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and sandwiches are provided. Pupils attend mainly from the whole of the Wolverhampton local education authority (LEA), with some provision made available for neighbouring local authorities. The majority are transported to the Centre by arranged transport, a few senior pupils are encouraged to travel independently.

HOW GOOD IS THE CENTRE

This is a good Pupil Referral Centre. It endeavours to effectively meet and support the increasingly complex needs of its pupils. The educational provision for children at the hospital is first rate and young mothers also get good support at the Centre. From limited evidence it would also appear that pupils receiving home tutoring receive appropriate support and encouragement. Teaching is generally a strength. However, there are issues within teaching and learning that need to be addressed to ensure further improvement. The learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and to their personal development. Pupils make good overall progress in the subjects of the curriculum and very good progress in their emotional and social development. Much of this is made possible by the focused leadership of the headteacher, the support of the senior management team (SMT) and the very good relationships that all the adults have with the pupils. Pupil outcomes are positive when considering previous individual history. The Centre has a clear picture of its own strengths and weaknesses. The Centre's Mission Statement is delivered and it is providing good value for money

What the Centre does well

- The Centre has created a positive learning environment that encourages pupils to make progress with their learning and personal development
- The headteacher, the senior management team and the school staff, have a shared commitment to school development and improvement. The Centre is effectively led.
- Teaching is good overall and directly related to pupils' learning
- Pupil attitudes to their learning is generally very good and they make good progress. Many overcome previous disaffection and make significant improvements to their attendance in comparison to their previous placement.
- The provision at the hospital and for young mothers effectively meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Nearly all pupils behave very well, and learn how to relate to one another. They become more responsible and confident in their own ability. Pupils are enthusiastic and fully participate in activities.
- Pupils are well cared for and relationships are very good. Mutual respect and trust is shown between staff and the great majority of pupils. Adult teamwork is a strength. Learning support assistants effectively support pupil learning and development.

What could be improved?

- Assessment processes, in terms of both monitoring pupils' learning and progress and informing curriculum planning
- Induction, support and ongoing training of staff, in terms of pupil care and behaviour management and in terms of curriculum and lesson delivery to meet the wide range of pupils' educational needs

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

HOW THE CENTRE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The Centre was last inspected in May 2001. Since then full time education became statutory for pupils attending the Centre and sufficient staffing have been recruited to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. The Inclusion and reintegration of pupils into mainstream or special schools is still a priority and the appointment of a transition co-ordinator who is part of the senior management team is furthering the relationships between the Centre and local mainstream schools. Formative assessment and the monitoring of pupil progress is still a developing area. There is evidence of a shared whole Centre commitment to development and improvement, ably managed by the headteacher. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By the time they leave	Key
English	B	very good A
Mathematics	B	good B
Science	B	satisfactory C
personal, social and health education	A	unsatisfactory D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	poor E

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

The Centre has made good improvements in its provision for English and literacy since the last inspection. Pupils are making good progress overall. Primary pupils and pupils up to the age of 14 are making good progress, whilst pupils in years 10 and 11 who stay at the Centre to complete their GCSE course in English make very good progress. Young mothers and those pregnant teenagers attending classes at the Centre also make very good progress and are able to complete courses that they began in their mainstream school.

In Mathematics pupils in all years make good progress and use their knowledge by applying it to everyday situations. In Science, pupils generally make good progress and increase their knowledge of facts and their understanding of scientific processes.

The strength of Personal, Social and Health education (PSHE) is the result of good to very good teaching and the very good individual knowledge that the adults have of pupils. This is coupled with teachers' skill in incorporating valuable learning opportunities in all lessons. The daily form period covers a variety of issues that contribute to developing pupils' awareness of belonging to a wider society, while sex and drug education offer opportunities for mature discussions and decision-making. There is particularly strong progress in years 10 and 11 where the very good teaching often challenges pupils thinking and high expectations ensure pupils always want to do their best. Introductions to the

world of work offers valuable links to areas of personal development and many pupils rise to the challenges and experience successful work placements.

Pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities within geography, history, music, physical education, French, religious education, art and ICT and make satisfactory, good and occasionally very good progress.

Pupils with statements of special educational needs make appropriate to good progress with their learning and personal development. Reviews are effectively carried out and transition plans implemented appropriately.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the Centre	Very good. A very positive ethos pervades the Centre. Pupils are eager to participate in lessons and view the Centre as a place of learning and personal support. Most are keen to attend and will freely discuss their appreciation and enjoyment of opportunities given. Although there is an understanding of the importance of reintegration into mainstream schooling, success at the Centre can generate a reluctance to move for a number of pupils.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. It is often very good. Only a small number of lessons are disrupted and generally there is a sense of calm around the Centre. There is no apparent bullying, pupils respect others' rights, no sexist or racist comments are heard and there have only been 10 occasions of temporary exclusions over the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Very Good. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their actions and this supports their potential return to mainstream schooling or prepares them for life after school. Relationships are positive and supportive and reflect the whole Centre ethos of mutual respect of individual differences. Many of the older pupils work well with little supervision and will volunteer to assist with activities and peer mentoring.
Attendance	Good. Pupils who have previously shown reluctance to attend school nearly always improve their attendance whilst at the Centre. Many pupils make a successful transition to the Centre after having only part time tutoring at home. Pupils arrive at the Centre in good time to start the day and very little time is wasted during the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Young mothers, hospital and Years 4,5,6,8,9,10,11 at the Centre
Lessons seen overall	good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Nearly three quarters of lessons across all year groups and settings are good or better and the quality of the teaching is directly matched to the quality of pupils' learning. Only one lesson was judged to be less than satisfactory. The proportion of teaching that is good or better shows an improvement since the previous inspection and without doubt the quality of teaching contributes positively to pupils' good learning in lessons across the Centre and settings. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils, supported by good planning. The lack of consistent formative assessment of pupils' learning and progress, however, is preventing more consistent and rapid advancement in individual attainment. Increased support for classroom and behaviour management is required to ensure that occasional pupil misbehaviour is consistently dealt with and does not unduly affect the learning process. Teaching of all the core subjects of English (including literacy), mathematics (including numeracy) and science is good overall.

Teaching is supported by very positive relationships and all adults clearly understand the wide range of personal circumstances that could pose a barrier to an individual's learning. Discussions with pupils revealed that, they appreciated the efforts of the teachers and learning support assistants and for first time in their education they had made good academic progress and begun to realise that they had the capacity to learn. These feelings articulated by pupils offer powerful support to the quality of teaching provided.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There have been many improvements in this area since the last inspection, including the change from a limited part-time curriculum to a full-time provision that gives pupils access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Provision for the primary pupils is good, being well planned to address the age and ability of pupils and to prepare them for return to mainstream education wherever possible at the end of year 6. The curriculum for pupils aged 11-14 is satisfactory. Although it now provides all National Curriculum subjects and religious education there are some weaknesses that need to be addressed. The range of learning opportunities and the curriculum provided for pupils aged 14-16 including that for pupils in the young mothers group and in hospital, is good. Many of the courses are accredited and give pupils a range of opportunities to gain national recognition for their achievements. Older pupils have access to a work- related curriculum with careers advice and a good range of work experiences, tailored to their needs. Extra-curricular activities offered, enhance the range of learning opportunities for all pupils. As more pupils are referred whose needs include a longer-term placement at the Centre, the two-year rolling programme may need to be adjusted so that pupils do not repeat work already covered.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Every effort is made to meet the needs of all pupils at the Centre. Those with statements of special educational need have appropriate support for their additional, recognised needs. Increased consistency in monitoring pupils' learning and assessing ongoing progress will further assist and increase pupil attainment.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Currently, there are no pupils where English is their second language who require additional support in their learning or who require access to the services offered by the local education authority.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Overall, there is good provision for pupils' personal development, their moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. This is an overall improvement since the last inspection. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to think, talk and reflect about their own lives in a supportive and non-threatening environment. Ample opportunities are provided through daily practice for pupils to raise their self-esteem and to appreciate and value the qualities of other people. Pupils feel valued and many openly express their happiness at attending the Centre.
How well the Centre cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well cared for across all settings. Child protection is secure, with locally agreed procedures in place. Health and safety procedures are carefully followed. Attendance and personal development are carefully monitored. Pupils receive very good support to help them address their anxieties or concerns, with the overall aim of returning them to school as soon as is appropriate.

HOW WELL THE CENTRE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher	Good. The headteacher has a clear focus on the required development areas and offers effective leadership. She has managed the many recent changes with confidence and staff and resources are deployed to effectively support pupils' learning. The forthcoming move

and other key staff	to new premises is being effectively planned. The headteacher is ably supported by her deputy, transition co-ordinator, teaching and support staff who all share high expectations in developing strategies that help pupils achieve individual success. Subject co-ordinators need to further develop their whole Centre planning in terms of cross-curricular coverage, assessment and transition from year to year.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The management committee meets termly to discuss the comprehensive report submitted by the headteacher. They are committed to fulfilling their management role and demonstrate an understanding of how the Centre contributes to the overall LEA strategy for meeting pupil needs. Currently they pay little part in monitoring standards. There is a parent representative, but no representatives from local headteachers. The local education authority, acting as the appropriate authority has provided ongoing and effective support and guidance for the work of the Centre. An external adviser needs to be identified to undertake the headteacher's Performance Management.
The Centre's evaluation of its performance	Good. Lessons are observed by the headteacher and SMT. Threshold Assessment and the development of performance management has been a positive experience for all staff. Provision and opportunities for hospital, home tutoring, young mothers and pregnant teenagers have been improved and are being continually developed. The setting of objectives for all staff has evolved from formal and informal monitoring, although there is room for increased rigour in feedback and future target setting. The headteacher has not yet undertaken her own performance management. Professional development and training is integrally linked to Centre planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The main resource is staff. Teachers and learning support assistants are effectively deployed. Current accommodation and resources effectively support the curriculum and the move to new premises in April should secure additional facilities that will further support pupils' learning. The office management staff effectively support the day-to-day running of the Centre and the administration for transition, as well as providing a cheery, positive and professional response to parents/carers/pupils and visitors alike.

PARENTS' AND CARERS VIEWS OF THE CENTRE

Three parents took the opportunity to express their views to the registered inspector and 19 parents returned a completed questionnaire. They are generally very supportive of the work at the Centre and their children enjoy attending. The inspection team feels their positive views are well founded.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The Centre's results and pupils' achievements

1. The good achievement of those pupils who attend well is the result of good teaching and full access to the relevant curriculum. Consequently, many of those pupils who have previously shown signs of disaffection from school, have their interest in learning rekindled. There has been a satisfactory improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection, particularly in years 4, 5, 6

and 10 and 11. If pupils in years 6 and 9 are attending the Centre, they take part in the National Standards Assessments Tests (SATS) and their results are considered on an individual improvement basis, rather than as an overall target for the Centre. The Centre is also an assessment centre for GCSE.

2. In English, pupils on entry are often at low starting points, but many make up a lot of lost ground in the time they spend at the Centre. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively implemented for primary pupils and the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy is being addressed. Primary pupils and secondary pupils up to the age of 14 are making good progress, while pupils in years 10 and 11 who stay at the Centre to complete their GCSE course make very good progress. Those students attending the young mothers group also make good progress as do those children at hospital receiving on-site short-term support.

3. Primary pupils listen attentively and respectfully to adults and each other and talk animatedly about the books they are reading, with some using a wide range of vocabulary and increasingly complex sentence structures. Pupils aged 11 to 14 talk with increasing confidence about what they have read and answer with honesty when asked to self-assess their progress. The oldest pupils have many opportunities to discuss their work across the curriculum and in wider social situations such as when on work experience. They also practice and undertake formally assessed speaking and listening tasks as part of the accredited English courses, including GCSE. Such pupils delivered high quality introductory talks based on Thomas Hardy and the main features of the author's life.

4. In reading, pupil's progress follows a similar pattern. Primary pupils read graded reading books at appropriate levels and learn about phonics, grammar, punctuation and the rules of spelling to support their reading and their writing. Pupils of all ages and abilities in the group progress well, with those who struggle with reading receiving effective support. In their response to literature, pupils can identify the characters, setting and plot features of a range of texts, including stories, plays and poetry, identifying their favourite aspects and predicting what might happen next. Pupils aged 11 to 14 continue making good progress with their independent reading skills through reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books from the centre library where their lessons take place. In the texts they read together as a class, including works by Shakespeare, Tolkein, poetry, modern plays and media texts such as news articles, pupils can identify the main features of each genre and their comprehension work on each text shows that they have a good understanding and recall of what they have read. In Years 10 and 11, the oldest pupils read a very good range of texts for their GCSE or Certificate of Achievement courses, including Shakespearean and more modern drama, short stories and novels and a variety of war poetry. Although pupils of all abilities read the same texts, these are supported by the use of abridged texts and video versions, and by differentiated tasks and approaches devised by the teacher and drawing from course books at different levels.

5. In writing, primary pupils make good progress in writing in a range of styles. For example, they can rewrite the story of the Three Little Pigs, devise their own third verse to Robert Louis Stevenson's poem *Windy Nights*, write a journalism piece after studying the key features of news articles, and record information that they have researched using appropriate headings to delineate the work. In support of their writing, they write and use mnemonics to help them to remember accurate spellings of traditionally difficult words such as 'chocolate', 'dangerous' and the difference between 'practice' and 'practise'.

6. Pupils aged 11 to 14 make good progress in writing about the texts they read. For example, they can write a comparison of characters in the play *Our Day Out* by Willy Russell, a biography of Shakespeare when they study *Macbeth* and they use their imagination well with a good range of appropriate adjectives when devising their own characters based on those in *The Hobbit*. In support of their writing and spelling, pupils learn about patterns in word endings and plurals, about verb tenses

and they can use the right punctuation for the format they write in, for example using speech marks for reported dialogue.

7. Older pupils aged 14 to 16 make very good progress in their writing. Building on what they have achieved already, they write maturely in their coursework in English and other subjects, for example the Child Development optional course. Over the two-year course, they develop the skills of writing to analyse poetry, compare different texts, to explore issues and to describe characters. More able pupils can write essays that compare well with work produced by mainstream peers. Pupils of all abilities can use the skills of skimming and scanning the text to find certain points or to locate key vocabulary. They understand how to construct and use glossaries of unknown terms to support their understanding of difficult texts. Because pupils join the Centre from a variety of different mainstream schools with a wide variety of educational experience, their handwriting varies in style and quality from pupil to pupil, but in their time at the Centre most show a significant improvement in the quality of their handwriting and the presentation of their work as their attitudes to learning improve and they take growing pride in what they write.

8. Achievement in mathematics is good and pupils progress well in all year groups. Even within small group sizes, the attainment range is very wide and progress is most striking when high levels of differentiation are effectively implemented. The primary class caters for pupils in years 4,5 and 6 and these pupils benefit from a clearly organised programme in which the four rules of number are emphasised and consistently reinforced. Pupils in all year groups create a substantial body of work that clearly demonstrates their ongoing progress. Pupils aged 11-14 and 14-14 show a marked and steady development in their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. Their work is consistent in its pattern with that conducted by mainstream school departments and the preparation for return to school at the end of the key stage or progression to the Centre's own examination courses is thorough.

9. Pupils are developing a deeper understanding of science and their achievement is generally good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, as a result of the increase in hours since September and good planning, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to study to GCSE level. There are now greater opportunities for pupils to study all of the Attainment Targets to a more appropriate depth. The investments in resources, use of ITC, and the development of a laboratory, have all helped to provide pupils with increased learning opportunities that have supported their progress and achievement.

10. Pupils in the primary class follow nationally recommended schemes of work, focusing on every day Science and understanding how the body works and should be cared for. Pupils learn of the effect of air resistance on a paper object in flight and are developing their understanding of scientific methods and vocabulary and can discuss the importance of "fair testing" and the factors that might affect this. Pupils demonstrate prior knowledge through their discussions and pupils in years 8 and 9 have good opportunities to experience scientific investigation, which is also a strong feature of the subject in years 10 and 11. Pupils realistically develop their knowledge and conceptual understanding in a practical way and in one year 8 lesson, pupils were observed working on understanding the corrosive effect of weather on everyday building materials such as granite.

11. In year 10 pupils follow either a science single or double GCSE award dependent, upon which class they are in and this is reflected in the number of lessons they receive to support this. Pupils in year 11 follow the single award. Module exam results show that that pupils have made good progress, with a number achieving A and B grades. Pupils demonstrate a good scientific vocabulary, and in one year 11 lesson pupils were observed talking in familiar terms about measuring in Newtons and about ductile materials.

12. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in lessons in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). They increasingly develop skills of organisation and can confidently raise issues of importance. Form periods addressed issues regarding charities and fund raising and how they themselves could become involved, building up to 'Red Nose' day. Pupils have the opportunities to consider and discuss the value of the family and parenting within course units of English and child development. Pupils achieve increased personal confidence and social skills that allow a number to consider a transition back into mainstream schooling. Pupils increasingly understand and value individual differences and can recognise and support each other when circumstances are upsetting.

13. Child Development is offered as an option to all pupils in Years 10 and 11 in the main centre, and is appropriately including in the core curriculum for all pupils in the young mothers group. The course follows a GCSE syllabus and most pupils who remain at the centre for the full two years gain accreditation in the subject. Pupils study and discuss theories of child development and engage in practical activities that will help them as parents to make informed decisions such as whether to breast feed or bottle feed their babies and how to keep them safe and healthy, for example, by learning how to sterilise feeding equipment properly.

14. Pupils' literacy skills are reinforced through opportunities to write extended pieces of work, for example when they undertake a longer child study as part of their course requirements. They also have opportunities to use designing, making and evaluation skills when they devise an educational toy for children and then trial it with a child of an appropriate age. Pupils produce good quality coursework and gain a thorough knowledge and understanding of key subject terminology and concepts through the weekly vocabulary tests. The knowledge that pupils gain about parenting and the opportunities that teachers give for pupils to work together make a good contribution to their moral and social development. In the young mother's group the emphasis is placed on making the course relevant to the girls' own circumstances. The same topics are covered but are made more practical by drawing on the experience of those who have already had their babies and by making toys and devising activities that the girls can use with their own children. For example, when studying sensory development, the teacher chose to concentrate on the development of hearing and linked this to a child's language development, with pupils going on to make an audiotape of songs and rhymes to use at home with their babies.

15. Religious education is taught to all pupils, including those in the young mothers group, as part of a combined programme which the Centre calls REDS: religious education, drugs awareness and sex-related education. Overall, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in the subject, with increasing progress being made as pupils get older. In the primary class, pupils study what the Bible says about the Creation, and learn about the story of Adam and Eve. Later in their study of Christianity, they consider the story of the Good Samaritan. They also gain basic knowledge about other major world faiths, including Buddhism, Sikhism, and Islam. In support of their spiritual development, pupils think about prayers of thanks and consider what belonging to a particular faith means to people individually, with family at home, and when in a public place of worship. They have opportunities to learn about the place of the Church in society and what religion contributes to people in a community, for example through providing youth clubs, choirs and senior citizens' social events. To support their moral understanding, they discuss ecological issues such as rubbish pollution and how we can best look after the Earth.

16. Older pupils from 11-14 consider how different religions began, for example Christianity and Hinduism. They think about prayer and worship and understand that these are elements common to many world faiths. In their study of major religions, pupils can compare their religious buildings and they can research facts about celebrations from different cultures, for example Divali and Chinese New Year. The oldest pupils from 14-16 continue to gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity, through studying the Life of Jesus, and extend their knowledge of other major world faiths by more in-depth studies of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. When considering prayer and

worship, they can write their own prayers that are relevant to their own lives, thus developing more spiritual awareness. Older pupils of secondary age respond well when given opportunities to work together collaboratively, and this contributes to their social development.

17. Pupils are making good progress and achievement in history and geography. Pupils learn via the purposeful lessons and the clear progression through topics. Pupils show a substantial body of work growing throughout all year groups and good progress is evident. High standards of presentation reflect the pride that pupils take in their work. Confidence in contributing orally grows steadily in the time pupils spend in the Centre. Primary pupils benefit from clear links between schemes of work in history and geography. They understand the basic facts of the organisation of village life in Saxon times as well as the present-day issues of transport in a village in India. When Year 11 pupils discussed the distinction between surrogates and suffragettes, they showed a ready grasp of the early twentieth century political climate and were fluent in their explanations.

18. Good progress has been maintained in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) since the last inspection. Primary pupils study National Curriculum units of work and they have made good progress in their acquisition of basic skills, for instance, in saving and retrieving work. They have demonstrated the ability to select 'Clipart' images and to reduce and enlarge these to produce attractive computer generated coloured pictures and patterns. Pupils in year 8 were asked to design, organise and retrieve sophisticated images in their creation of a website page. They gained substantial knowledge and understanding of the process and confidence in their own ability since they are well supported and encouraged by enthusiastic teaching. Pupils demonstrate increasing proficiency in the use of the technology and they are prepared to investigate and experiment with programs to enlarge their understanding. Pupils understand why they are practising various skills and most pupils can describe the kind of skills they will develop through their current topic

19. Pupils from 11-14 follow an accredited Entry Level course in ICT, which extends their experience in all the basic skills. The curriculum in years 8 and 9 will soon be enhanced by the adoption of the National Strategy for ICT. Pupils study a wide range of topics including use of the Internet, spreadsheets and other applications of basic functions. Year 8 pupils have achieved good results in the creation of a website page for a hotel, using aspects of word processing and in year 9 pupils have been engaged in interesting research into the reliability and accessibility of various websites.

20. In years 10 and 11, pupils follow Entry Level courses leading to an accreditation, which will soon be extended by the school's adoption of a GCSE short course in ICT, thus increasing the opportunities available to pupils in this subject. In the present course, pupils are required to prepare coursework-covering topics in Communication and Handling Data and in the more advanced use of spreadsheets. They have completed challenging topics on the production of websites and some pupils are working on detailed spreadsheets analysing patterns and similarities in planets of the Solar System. The pupils are encouraged to work independently and to seek their own solutions in the work set.

21. ICT is not generally used satisfactorily in other subjects. Pupils use computers in English lessons to help with re-drafting of their work and some pupils in year 10 have used the Internet to research and present a topic on English novelists. Pupils in the hospital service make good use of ICT facilities and regularly use the Internet for purposes of research.

22. A good standard of achievement has been maintained in Art since the last inspection. Pupils experience a wide variety of skills and techniques and show progress throughout the age range. Primary pupils have investigated patterns and produced effective work using simple shapes. They have looked at and reproduced patterns in eastern countries and in Ancient Egypt. They have

successfully used stencils in creating bold and colourful patterns and this has been mounted in a well-presented display. The pupils have also been introduced to block printing and enjoyed the opportunity to create large patterns using brightly coloured inks on polystyrene tiles.

23. Pupils in years 8 and 9 have worked on themes such as 'Houses and Homes'. They have conducted their own research into suitable images and have re-created these using clay. They have made good progress in their knowledge of the techniques of rolling and shaping the clay and of cutting and pressing their work. Other pupils have made boldly coloured block prints of the skylines of foreign cities, embellished by minarets and steeples. Some pupils in year 9 have used collage effectively to make three-dimensional pictures of sea creatures and fish. Pupils of all ages worked successfully with a professional artist to produce an impressive mural displayed on the main staircase.

24. Older pupils in years 10 and 11 study Art as an option subject leading to GCSE accreditation. These pupils maintain a portfolio of their coursework which is based around their development of a range of techniques and skills and which they practise in weekly skills lessons. They have started adventurous work in Batik along with other work in clay, papier-mâché and screen-printing. The pupils are encouraged to research their own projects and to study the work of English and European artists. The pupils have a wide range of interests. Some have enthusiastically made sketches, drafts and copies of famous works by artists such as Morris and Picasso while another pupil has been engaged in adding decoration to a boot which she has sprayed a startling shade of gold.

25. Pupils of all ages and abilities are making satisfactory progress in music. Pupils have been introduced to a range of musical genres and styles of song. They have opportunities to compose and perform music through devising appropriate percussion accompaniment to a variety of poems, raps and songs, including a poem about Chinese New Year and a Bangladeshi rhyme about Kaigal (Hands). In appreciating music, pupils can listen carefully to a recording of their own performance and are starting to make comments as to the quality of what has been composed and suggestions as to how it might be improved. In a self-assessment questionnaire completed by all classes studying music, pupils were able to name favourite bands, songs and types of music, and many pupils could say how they felt when listening to these, for example "relaxed", "tired" or "dreamy". In developing their musical knowledge, pupils can name different types of percussion, say where they come from and how they are played, for example whether they are beaten, shaken or struck. They know that some percussion instruments are commonly found in large orchestras.

26. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory in physical education. Pupils generally pay good attention, following instructions and enabling them to fully participate in all activities. Primary pupils have access to appropriately chosen activities and make good progress in developing their co-ordination of movement, as well as learning the skills involved in small team games such as badminton. Similarly, older pupils make appropriate progress in their individual skills and understanding of team games and many appreciate the tactics involved when playing in a team. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of health and safety aspects and the importance of 'warming up' before activities and 'cooling down' after activities.

27. Good progress has been made in the Primary department in Design Technology. Pupils have worked on literary themes and have designed and produced pictures and moving models for both 'The Lion King' and 'James and the Giant Peach'. The pupils have used different materials of card, paint, glue and fabric to create a spectacular display and they have learned about the effects of using different textures and surfaces such as painted polystyrene tiles and cotton wool clouds.

28. Pupils study Food Technology in the secondary department. Pupils in years 8 and 9 have designed and made healthy sandwiches while some pupils in year 9 have experienced and made Italian food ranging from pasta to pizzas. Pupils have been able to bake and investigate various kinds of bread. They have gained in understanding of how to make scientific tests on the quality of food.

They have enjoyed tasting a variety of English and foreign cheeses and giving their opinions on flavour and texture.

29. Pupils in years 10 and 11 study Food Technology as an optional subject leading to Entry Level and GCSE accreditation. These pupils have worked on healthy diets and looked at the characteristics of basic foodstuffs such as oil and bread. They have extended their knowledge of testing of foods, comparing the flavour and sweetness of various brands of custard and yoghurt. The curriculum has been enhanced by the introduction of the Sainsbury's 'Taste of Success' awards. These topics give the pupils a realistic framework for their practical and academic study.

30. Drama is a new subject in the curriculum and is studied by pupils in year 10 as an option leading to Entry Level accreditation. Pupils study mime and improvisation as well as scripted work. They are required to study published texts and to act in character. They have studied modern texts such as 'Blood Brothers' and worked on characterisation in sections of the play. Pupils soon lose their inhibitions and show a great deal of motivation and concentration in their involvement with their dramatic character and the group effort. They enjoy giving positive comments about the group's efforts and enjoy the opportunity provided for them to act as director of the play's production. Pupils have made very good progress. They perform confidently and have learned such things as how a change of voice or even tone can change their character. They have learned the importance of moving correctly and facing the audience.

31. Lessons in French have been recently introduced into the Centre as result of the increase in hours in September, and the subsequent extension to the timetable. As such, the subject is in its early stages of development, helping to establish a language culture and to develop basic skills, knowledge and understanding amongst the pupils. Currently French is taught to only two of the four classes in years eight and nine, which inhibits equal opportunities and detracts from the support for inclusion when pupils are being considered for a return to mainstream schooling. Lesson observations and an analysis of the term's schemes of work, show that pupils progress since September has been satisfactory. Pupils are helped to develop a basic vocabulary, to learn to count, to understand how to meet and greet people, and how to discover further information about them in French. There is also evidence of work on getting to know the geography of the country; particularly on identifying its major cities and regions. This cross-curricular link helps to consolidate and develop pupil's work in Geography.

32. Pupils brought sense of life to the subject by holding a "French day" in the autumn term. This involved a French café being set up, allowing pupils to eat and drink the coffee and croissants they had ordered in French.

33. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make appropriate to good progress with their learning and personal development. Reviews are effectively carried out and transition plans implemented appropriately.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

34. The provision for pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are strengths of the Centre. The Centre has made good progress since the last inspection in these regards. The result is that pupils make good progress in their learning and there is a strong work ethos and a positive and pleasant atmosphere in the Centre. Pupils show interest in their work and many demonstrate genuine enthusiasm for it. Sustained concentration on the task in hand is a marked feature of the great majority of lessons. Many pupils consider the Centre to have a very beneficial impact on their lives after unhappy experiences in their previous educational placements. In a very positive way, pupils regard the Centre as their school and are loyal to it. They do not see it as an easy option and respond to appropriate academic and behavioural expectations in a way, which matches the expectations of a

mainstream school. The level of pupil contentment and loyalty is a challenge for the Centre when attempting to effect transitions of pupils back into mainstream education.

35. Behaviour in the Centre is good and shows improvement since the previous inspection. The Centre is a very orderly community. A central strand of good or very good behaviour in lessons allows teachers to concentrate on the promotion of learning. The atmosphere of most sessions is very purposeful and positive. Progress in behaviour is evident between the two final key stages. Older pupils work within a strikingly cooperative and mutually supportive atmosphere. A small number of pupils in years 8 and 9 have yet to conform fully to that ethos, but remain part of a well-behaved cohort. Bullying is not a significant problem and when it does occur, very good procedures are in place to deal with it.

36. Good cooperative work amongst the pupils is a characteristic of the Centre. There is well-developed respect for the views of fellow pupils, which encourages a willingness to offer personal views in discussion. Pupils work within an atmosphere where they grow in confidence and feel secure to take risks within group discussions. To be wrong is seen as a learning experience and not an embarrassment. Pupils demonstrate a liking and respect for adults and there is good use of humour. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils and the general behaviour and demeanour of the key stage 4 pupils is a strength of the Centre.

37. Personal development is very good. Pupils, particularly older pupils mature well as independent learners. Pupils respond well when they are given responsibilities and the 'Buddie' system is viewed very positively by new or troubled pupils who know whom they can go to for support and a listening ear.

38. Attendance is unsatisfactory when compared with the expectations of mainstream schools, although there has been improvement since the last inspection. It has to be remembered that pupils are often referred to the Centre having had a record of poor attendance or non-attendance over a considerable length of time. Bearing this in mind, many pupils make significant improvements with their personal attendance and under that criterion, attendance is good. Home-educated pupils often have deep-seated anxieties that often lead to a fear of new situations in school and elsewhere. Their attendance problems can be exceptionally resistant to improvement. Punctuality is good, and little time is wasted between lessons or at the start of the day and after morning break or lunchtime.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

39. The quality of teaching is good overall. Nearly three quarters of lessons across all year groups and settings are good or better and the quality of the teaching is directly matched to the quality of pupils' learning. Only one lesson was judged to be less than satisfactory.

40. Most lessons have appropriate aims and start promptly. This ensures that pupils are focused on lesson outcomes and are aware of what the teachers want them to know, understand and do by the end of the lesson. Time and resources are efficiently and effectively used, with learning support assistants play a key role in supporting the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills in lessons, allowing them greater access to lesson content. Some pupils with reading difficulties receive good quality additional help from learning support assistants on a 1:1 basis.

41. The teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good overall, though there is a variation between age groups. Teaching of pupils in English is good in the primary class and in years 8 and 9. The teaching of English in years 10 and 11 is very good. The teaching of mathematics is good in the primary class and years 10 and 11. It is satisfactory in years 8 and 9. In science, teaching is satisfactory in years 8 and 9, good in years 10 and 11, and very good in the primary class. Although these subjects are well taught, and pupils make good progress, they would

each benefit further from a coordinator to take a strategic overview of all aspects of teaching across the key stages.

42. Many aspects of good teaching skills and their impact on pupils learning were demonstrated in a variety of lessons during the inspection. In one year 11 English class in which the pupils watched a video on parenting, excellent teacher preparation and probing questioning brought about a high quality speaking and listening debate amongst pupils. As a result of this, pupils' interests were stimulated and they were able to draw on and extend, their speaking and listening skills. These pupils are developing their understanding of the complex themes and issues covered and raised by the literature, which greatly enhances the quality of their coursework submissions.

43. At the same time, pupils were able to observe the courtesies of discussion work and to express reasoned and well thought out opinions. In this lesson pupils were comfortably working at the national average level of attainment for their year group. In another lesson in science, good teacher subject knowledge and use of ICT saw the use of an "eye cam" to illustrate the structure of an onion cell by electronically linking a microscope with a TV monitor. The impact of this was to enliven and focus pupils' attention, helping them to expand on, and acquire, new knowledge and understanding in an area in science that could otherwise have been less stimulating if taken from textbooks. The effective use of a well chosen video and later experiment to illustrate this, using an acid solution on a variety of rock samples, allowed pupils to clearly see how science had an impact on their everyday environment and to develop a practical scientific thought process and observational skills.

44. Overall the weakest element within teaching of pupils of secondary age is the use of assessment. A review of pupils' work books in all phases, shows that teachers' marking is underdeveloped, with little evidence of teachers making critical comments to help pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects. In addition, the lack of formative assessment hinders target setting, levels of support, and purposeful planning to meet the needs of both the more able and the less able pupils from lesson to lesson. With the exception of a number of primary pupils, the lack of any baseline assessment for pupils as they enter the Centre potentially prevents the gathering of information on their levels of progress during their stay. This could unnecessarily inhibit the transition process for pupils who may be returning to mainstream school, and does not help to inform subject planning in the short, medium or long term. Similarly, homework could be further developed to increasingly challenge and stimulate pupils' learning.

45. Overall pupils' attitudes towards their work are good. This is supported by very positive relationships between pupils, teachers and learning support assistants. Adults clearly have a good understanding of the wide variety of personal factors that can negatively affect pupils learning. This level of understanding has made it possible for pupils to concentrate for longer periods in class and to expand their opportunities for leaning. A discussion with pupils in all key stages found that pupils appreciated the efforts of all adults, with many of pupils stating for the first time in their education they had made good academic progress and had begun to realise that they had the capacity to learn.

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

46. Overall, the curriculum and range of learning opportunities provided by the Centre are good. There have been many improvements in this area since the last inspection, including the recent successful change from a limited part-time curriculum to a full-time provision that gives pupils access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Although there are many good features in this aspect, there are still areas remaining for development that are only satisfactory at present. These include the curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14, the effectiveness of strategies or teaching basic skills, equality of access and the further development of relationships with partner institutions. Pupil's literacy skills are reinforced as well as their religious knowledge and

understanding. For example, in the primary class, the use of writing frames supports and improves pupils' writing. In lessons with older pupils, attention was paid to the correct use of speech marks when planning a script for a role-play, and work is recorded in a variety of written forms

47. The curriculum provided for primary pupils is good. It is well planned to address the age and ability of pupils in the class and to prepare pupils for return to mainstream education wherever possible by the end of Year 6. The primary curriculum includes good implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and the teacher draws from appropriate age guidelines for the range of pupils in the class at any time. Other subjects are planned on a two-year rolling programme to cover the units of study of the National Curriculum, including in science, history, geography, art, physical education and religious education. There is specialist input from other staff in music, design technology and information and communications technology. Improvements might be made by extending the use of information and communications technology to support pupils' learning in all subjects and by more liaison with subject co-ordinators for pupils aged 11 to 16 to ensure a smooth transition for those pupils needing to remain at the centre for the start to their secondary education.

48. The curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14 is satisfactory. Although it now provides all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, there are some weaknesses that need addressing. The system of streaming pupils by ability for all subjects is not based on secure procedures for formative assessment and not all pupils are necessarily appropriately placed for all subjects. However, though they may be reaching different attainment levels in the core subjects, there is no arrangement that allows pupils to study English with the lower attainers and mathematics with the higher attainers where this would be appropriate as the two streams follow different timetables. There is another inequality of opportunity in that only the higher stream classes have access to learning French at the moment, whilst the less able have basic skills sessions. Whilst this may be helpful for some pupils, it does not prepare pupils effectively for return to mainstream education where they will need to study a modern foreign language, and reduces equality of access and opportunity to only satisfactory.

49. The Centre has started to implement the national strategies for pupils aged 11-14 for the core subjects satisfactorily. However, there is a lack of a whole-Centre approach to the teaching of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology and their use to support learning in all subjects of the curriculum. This is an area for further development.

50. There are good links made with literacy through the inclusion of a range of poems and rhymes and in the opportunities given for pupils to write and record their work in a variety of ways. As a newly introduced subject, pupils are currently studying the same things in every year group. This is appropriate in the short-term in order to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding, but the curriculum needs further development.

51. The range of learning opportunities and the curriculum provided for pupils aged 14 to 16, including that for pupils in the young mothers group, is good. It includes access to the core subjects of mathematics, English and science, to information and communications technology and REDS (religious education, drugs awareness and sex and relationships education) and introduces a range of option courses that give pupils a wider choice of subjects. These include history, geography, child development, leisure and tourism, art, drama, elements of food technology and the Youth Award. Many of these courses are accredited and give pupils a range of opportunities to gain national recognition for their achievements. The arrangements for the young mothers group provide them with good opportunities to continue their education whilst they are awaiting the birth of their babies, including completion of examination courses in many cases, and ensures that they are aware of the range of options available to them after their children are born.

52. Pupils aged 14 to 16 also have work-related education, have access to careers advice and undertake a good range of work experience, tailored to their needs. They receive very good support

from the deputy headteacher and other Centre staff when choosing and carrying out their work experience, which can be stressful for many pupils to face because of their special educational needs. The flexible arrangements that have been introduced effectively support this process. For example, there are opportunities to delay work experience until Year 11 if this is better for pupils than doing it in Year 10. Some pupils do two weeks in the same placement whilst others prefer to try two separate weekly placements. Some pupils cope well with placements in large commercial companies or department stores, others need smaller shops or to work with only a limited number of employees.

53. The Centre provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the range of learning opportunities for all pupils. At lunchtimes, there are opportunities to use the information and communications technology suite as study support for homework or as a leisure activity by playing computer games; to play football in the nearby sports hall or to participate in other games such as table tennis, badminton and table football. Pupils interviewed appreciate these but would like opportunities to play basketball added to the range. There are opportunities to participate in a whole-Centre annual performance each year, with pupils doing costume and stage design and marketing as well as taking part as performers. Good use of the community also extends the range of learning opportunities offered to pupils at the Centre and enhances the curriculum, including links with the army who provide activities, residential training placements and careers advice, and the emergency services through 'Crucial Crew' safety training. The Centre also has a wide range of community links through its work experience programme. The headteacher benefited from having a business partner from a local aerospace company for a year, and primary pupils have recently taken part in a council-run poetry e-mail competition.

54. The Centre has established constructive relationships with some of its mainstream partner schools and the hospital where it provides a very good level of educational support to children. Not all schools are fully supportive in providing information about pupils and young mothers referred to the Centre or assisting in the reintegration of pupils from the Centre when they are ready to return to mainstream education. The senior managers of the Centre have identified this as an area requiring development and are already planning to work towards improving this aspect of provision.

55. Overall, the Centre makes good provision for pupils' personal development, including good provision for their moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when these areas were found to be mainly satisfactory.

56. Pupils' moral development is fostered in a range of ways, through formal teaching sessions and in other areas of the school. In REDS (religious education, drugs awareness and sex and relationships education) lessons, there are opportunities to discuss a range of moral issues, such as what is an appropriate age to become sexually active, and to learn to identify and respect similarities and differences in personal beliefs. Pupils have the chance to hear speakers from other professions and agencies, including police officers, magistrates, social workers and school nurses, thus broadening their awareness of how society works. In English, they talk about the morality of war when reading the poetry of war poets from different times. They also consider what are appropriate parenting skills. For example, in a very effective lesson with Year 11, pupils watching clips from a television documentary on spoilt children, debated whether there were any circumstances in which spoiling was appropriate, what were the likely reasons for parents doing this, and what might be the long-term effects on their children. Outside lessons, moral issues are addressed in focussed form tutor periods each day. For example, in the week of the inspection the theme was 'charities' to reflect the run-up to the Centre's participation in Comic Relief. Older pupils have the chance to see the benefits of helping others in a practical first-hand context through acting as peer counsellors/buddies to pupils who are newly referred to the Centre.

57. Pupils develop their social skills and awareness through a good range of opportunities provided by the Centre. Pupils who have been out of full-time schooling for extended periods, or who have had unhappy experiences in mainstream education prior to attending the Centre, learn to behave appropriately in a classroom situation, to relate to staff and other pupils, and to work independently or co-operatively in pairs or small groups. Through lunchtime and other extra-curricular activities and trips, they learn to play together in a team, share their leisure time with others and to behave in socially acceptable ways, culminating in the oldest pupils successfully undertaking work experience in a variety of commercial placements. For those pupils whose special educational needs result in their having related behavioural problems, the Centre provides anger management training. Pupils of all ages interviewed during the inspection really value the advice and support that they receive from staff and feel that it helps them to develop in confidence and to deal with their problems.

58. Currently, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and cultural development. There are opportunities for pupils to share their views and opinions and to reflect on feelings, emotions and beliefs in subjects such as religious education, personal, social and health education and English, and in form tutor time. However, these are often incidental, rather than planned by the staff to ensure that pupils develop a wider understanding and awareness of spiritual matters. Similarly, as curriculum subjects develop to meet the needs of a full-time education for pupils, there are increasing opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of cultures, in religious education, modern foreign language, geography, music and art, and our cultural heritage in history and through the range of texts studied in English. There are visits to theatres, museums and art galleries and the Centre puts on its own performance each year, involving all pupils in some capacity. Again, although these opportunities are present, they are not yet planned for as a coherent programme or monitored to evaluate their success. This is an area for development. The headteacher is aware that improvements need to be made in this aspect of provision, and has already planned that in the Centre's new accommodation there will be a quiet room inside and she is considering an area for reflection outdoors.

59. Overall the Centre makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Many pupils who come to the centre feeling that the education system has failed them in some way, or that they have themselves failed within it, are helped to improve their attendance and behaviour, gain success in their learning and have the confidence to return to mainstream education or to be actively involved in further education or work-related placements when they leave the centre.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

60. Pupils are well cared for, both in the Centre and in the hospital facility. All adults know the pupils well and are sensitive to their individual needs. They help them to become more confident and to progress in their learning, especially those pupils who have a previous history of disrupted or non-attendance at their previous school.

61. Child protection is secure, with locally agreed procedures in place. The Centre now needs to make sure that training is disseminated to all staff, especially those new to the Centre, and to carers, so that all procedures are well known by everyone. There is good liaison with other agencies in this area.

62. Risk assessments have been carried out to make sure that health and safety issues are well addressed. Some arrangements, such as those in place for older pupils to sign out and in, at lunchtime need to be more closely supervised, and an evaluation of whether it is appropriate for pupils to be allowed off site carried out. There are good arrangements and effective liaison with escorts who transport pupils to the Centre each day.

63. Behaviour management generally works well. A system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood which results in pupils being sure of the boundaries and benefits of good behaviour. There is a positive focus to staff interactions with pupils, reflected in generally good or very good standards in most classes and around the Centre. Some pupils find it difficult to moderate their behaviour and ongoing training of new staff is required to ensure that the assertive policies recommended are carried out consistently. Counselling from senior staff, form tutors and subject teachers is always available to all pupils and because staff have undertaken training in 'emotional literacy' this is of good quality

64. The monitoring of attendance is very good. There has been an increasingly intense focus on attendance monitoring since the arrival of the new deputy head teacher, who has put in place several rigorous measures to make sure that pupils and parents are aware of the need to attend regularly. This has resulted in improvements in the attendance of most pupils, including many whose attendance was poor before they arrived at the Centre. Parents are phoned on the first day of absence and reasons noted carefully. Pupils are tracked to see how their attendance record develops and there is valuable support from the Education Welfare Service.

65. Teachers' marking is not consistent and is underdeveloped in terms of helping to show a pupil how to improve. There is little evidence of teachers making critical comments to help pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects. In addition, the lack of formative assessment hinders target setting, levels of support, and purposeful planning of work to meet the needs of for both the more able and the less able pupils from lesson to lesson

66. Links with outside support agencies such as social services and the voluntary sector are good. Area teams provide an integrated service to the Centre, and there are also productive partnerships with health agencies, particularly the school nurse, who is viewed affectionately by pupils and whose contribution to the curriculum, health matters and general support to pupils, parents and staff is appropriately valued. This good liaison helps to monitor and support pupils' personal development.

67. Guidance to pupils is provided by a good system of sex and drugs education, which has a strong social and moral focus and involves the discussion of the consequences of actions. A system of peer co-counselling is having a beneficial effect on resolving problems and increasing the confidence and responsibility of the pupils involved. This is echoed in the Centre's approach to bullying and racism, which is very good. One girl wrote to inspectors to explain how in the Centre she had escaped from the constant fear of bullying she had experienced in her previous school. Several pupils who lacked confidence previously spoke of their feeling of worth and success fostered at the Centre enabling them to consider a transition back to school.

68. Pupils who are ready for a return transition to their previous or different school are guided carefully on their choices. One boy was observed making a phased re-entry to his secondary school, where the Centre had participated in carefully planned support from the school, and where he was accompanied by a learning support assistant and sensitively and subtly supported. Another girl and her mother were guided by the Centre to come to a decision about choices post 16, tailoring the information to the needs of the pupil, her capabilities and ambitions.

69. Young Mothers are well guided and supported in an atmosphere which seeks to enable them to make the most of academic opportunities and to give them practical skills and knowledge. Pupils in home tuition and in the hospital benefit from well-established practices which link in exceptionally well with medical priorities and provides a holistic approach to their education.

70. Pupils' personal and social education is good. It provides a well- integrated approach to the centre's aims and supports the social development of pupils, helping them to sympathise with others,

to develop skills of organisation and raise matters of importance. A form time every afternoon is used to discuss areas such as fundraising for charity, where primary pupils on the inspection were making plans for Red nose day. Sex and drugs education contains strong elements of PSE, as issues of decision-making and judgements are discussed in a mature manner.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

71. Parents expressed their high opinion of the effectiveness of the Centre in the returned questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting. Communication with parents is good. Parents are given many opportunities to remain fully informed about their child's progress. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are held at the Centre with the aim of supporting the pupils' reintegration into mainstream schools. Parents are always invited to these reviews. They value their inclusion in the meetings and a high proportion of parents attend. At reviews, parents are provided with a thorough summary of their child's work and progress and, together with other concerned professionals, fully discuss the child's academic and social targets and possible career options.

72. The quality of the reports is good. The reviews are well organised and staff ensure that each aspect of the pupil's progress has been efficiently documented. Parents take a full part in discussions about their child's targets and they feel fully involved in important decisions about their child's future. They also comment favourably on their access to other professionals.

73. Staff follow good practice in ensuring that parents who are unable to attend the review meetings are kept fully informed by telephone. Parents are telephoned whenever there is a concern over their child's behaviour and they also appreciated the good practice followed by the Centre in telephoning them when their child has experienced success in some aspect of academic work or their behaviour improvement.

74. The Centre tries to communicate with parents on a daily basis through the use of logbooks, which every pupil carries. Pupils and staff complete a log of activities for every lesson. Pupils write details of homework and any extra work in the log. The regular use of the log as communication between home and school gives many parents a good opportunity to remain informed about the curriculum and to support their child with schoolwork in the home environment. There is sound policy of telephoning parents on the first day of a pupil's absence. This communication is supported by an effective practice of making home visits to parents where staff and parents may discuss a range of issues in a familiar environment.

75. Parents comment very favourably about the improvements they have noticed in their children's behaviour, confidence and self-esteem since attending the Centre. They feel the Centre to be very supportive of them and their child and are very pleased with the strong messages, which the Centre gives of valuing the excellent relationships between the Centre and the home. Parents are particularly pleased with the opportunities they are given to share in their children's success and in the specific information they are given to enable them to fully support the Centre's efforts in providing suitable educational opportunities for their child. The Management Committee that meets each term to discuss the development and strategic management of the Centre, benefits from having a parent representative.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

76. The leadership and management of the headteacher and her senior management team is providing an effective team and a clear focus for the continued progress of the Centre. Necessary development areas are recognised and appropriate strategies are being discussed and considered. The monitoring, co-ordination, support and development of the hospital education service, home tutoring

and the education of young mothers is good. These aspects of responsibility are viewed equally in importance when Centre development is being considered.

77. A full complement of teaching staff and a recently appointed deputy headteacher add strength to development co-ordination and successfully ensure that pupils receive a good level of education. Staff enjoy their work, take their responsibilities seriously and consistently pursue the positive ethos of the Centre. Subject co-ordinators, many having only recently taken the responsibility, need to consider monitoring and developing their subjects across year groups with particular regard to transition between key stages and the cross-curricular coverage issue of subjects and basic skills. The headteacher understands the strengths and weaknesses of staff well and has conducted constructive and perceptive monitoring of teaching. Performance Management procedures have given this area structure and focus. All teachers have individual targets, against which improvements can be judged. The setting of objectives, coupled with the improvement plan means all staff have a clear vision of where they are, where they need to go and what needs to be done to get there. Internal communication is good and staff meetings follow carefully considered agendas and are well minuted.

78. The headteacher has managed the many recent changes with confidence and staff and resources are deployed to successfully support pupils' learning. The forthcoming move to new premises is being effectively planned. The headteacher is ably supported by her deputy, transition coordinator, teaching and support staff who all share high expectations in developing strategies that help pupils achieve individual success. The strength of team spirit pervades the Centre and staff on home and hospital tuition.

79. The local education authority, acting as the appropriate authority has provided ongoing and effective support and guidance for the work of the Centre.

80. The headteacher has the support of a management committee that includes representatives from the local community, councillors and elected teaching and non-teaching representatives from the Centre. The current absence of local headteacher representatives, should be considered in the light of adding an important element to development discussions. There is an active parent representative who does provide an important perspective to proceedings. The committee receives a range of data to consider, including comprehensive reports from the headteacher and occasional inputs and policy proposals from members of staff. The headteacher and the chair, who herself manages a pupil referral unit have an effective working relationship and communication is effective. The headteacher has yet to receive a Performance Management interview and the management committee should identify an external adviser to undertake the process without delay. The committee is aware of the need to further develop their monitoring function to ensure it maintains effective accountability for the Centre's continued development. It will also be important for the committee to consider the 'voice of the child' and to ask themselves at the end of each meeting "what have we done in the last two hours to make it better for the pupils?"

81. The headteacher with the support of her staff, area manager and school adviser has successfully led the Centre through a period of change and growth. The headteacher is an effective net-worker and maintains good communication with local headteacher groups and a variety of LEA working parties. Her strong local knowledge and effective liaison with local mainstream schools has clearly supported the inclusion agenda and the transition arrangements for her pupils.

82. In the financial year 2003/4 it is proposed to extend devolvement of the budget to the Centre, but as yet there has not been confirmation and planning has had to consider standards funds and capitation as in the 2002/3 financial year. This decision needs to be made without delay to allow effective medium and long term improvement planning. Currently the monitoring and accounting of spending within the Centre is done very well. The Centre effectively provides the local education authority with accurate figures to show the relative costs of each part of the provision. The Centre

office is efficiently managed and positively contributes to the smooth running of the establishment. The 'front of house' office staff are friendly, helpful and provide both a professional welcome to visitors and very welcome support to the pupils who value their contact. Overall, the management of financial resources is effective and considering the good teaching and good pupil achievement the Centre is giving good value for money.

83. The Centre is well staffed. Teachers demonstrate all the necessary skills to successfully promote pupils' progress and support their potential return to school. Many staff have mainstream school backgrounds and retain a clear view of mainstream pupil standards that helps to offer appropriate challenges to pupils in the Centre. Learning support assistants are very effective and make a positive contribution to the learning ethos of the Centre as well as greatly contributing to pupil progress and achievement.

84. The current accommodation appropriately supports the curriculum, although the planned move to refurbished premises promises to further enhance the quality and quantity of accommodation. Staff and pupils find the current shared premises conducive to learning and pupils' achievements bear testimony to this. There are sufficient rooms for a variety of activities and the building is of good quality. The Centre is maintained well and cleaned to a good standard. The internal decoration in the classrooms and around the Centre is good. The jointly used sports hall used for physical education is rather run down and resources have to be transported for each lesson as there is no central storage facility. There is a very pleasant overall feeling that supports a very positive learning environment that is effectively enhanced by the interesting and informative wall displays. Outside play and grass areas are currently adequate for pupil use, although the new premises will offer enhanced outside provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE CENTRE DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. In order to improve the Centre, the headteacher and local education authority should now:

- ◆ Ensure that assessment processes are effective in terms of:-
 1. Monitoring and recording pupils' learning and progress
 2. Informing the next stage of planning and pupil development
 3. Informing the development of appropriate individual pupil targets that provide challenge and progression
 4. Their consistent use in all teaching and learning opportunities

- ◆ Ensure the induction, support and ongoing training opportunities for staff provide:-
 1. Confidence and developing skills to effectively manage pupil behaviour so that it does not unduly impact on pupils' learning
 2. The skills and developing knowledge to meet the educational needs of a wide range of pupil ability
 3. The Centre with the confidence that staff are fully aware of policy expectations and that they are consistently understood and delivered

It is important that other areas for development as referenced in the main text of the report are fully acknowledged and strategies developed to ensure their improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	37	21	1	0	0
Percentage	1	17	51	29	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. The total number is substantially less than 100 and care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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	103

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs including home tutored	19
Number of pupils on the Centre's special educational needs register including home tutored	85

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
Centre data	13.9

Unauthorised absence	%
Centre data	7.3

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	4
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	95
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	10	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[4] – Y[11]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y6 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

Financial information * the unit does not have a devolved budget

Financial year	[]
	£
Total income	[]
Total expenditure	[]
Expenditure per pupil	[]
Balance brought forward from previous year	[]
Balance carried forward to next year	[]

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	3.8
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	103
Number of questionnaires returned	19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	12	5	1	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	10	7			2
Behaviour in the school is good.	7	9	2		1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	8	7	4		
The teaching is good.	10	9			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	5	3		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	10	7			1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	11	8			
The school works closely with parents.	9	6	3		1
The school is well led and managed.	12	5	1		1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	10	8	1		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	5	2	1	4