

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **IMPACT PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Bootle

LEA area: Sefton Education Authority

Unique reference number: 104849

Headteacher: Margaret Bridson

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger  
23587

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> April 2003

Inspection number: 254379

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 students:	14-16 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
Unit address:	Mast House Derby Road Bootle Merseyside
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Appropriate authority:	Sefton Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Nigel Toothill
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23587	Alastair Younger	Registered inspector	Art and design	The characteristics of the unit The unit's results and students' achievements How well are students taught?
9176	Gillian Barker	Lay inspector		How well does the unit care for its students? How well does the unit work in partnership with parents?
30142	John Morris	Team inspector	Science Physical education Citizenship	How good is the curriculum?
10228	Sue Russam	Team inspector	English Religious education	How well is the unit led and managed?
8212	Judith Jones	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History	
30205	Terry Kenna	Team inspector	Maths Music Personal, social and health education Special educational needs Educational inclusion	Students' attitudes, values and personal development

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT**

IMPACT was formed two years ago to provide an alternative curriculum for students who have difficulties in coping in mainstream schools because of poor behaviour or attendance. As a result they have made little progress prior to their admission and attainment on entry is very low. Many students have been excluded from previous schools. Of the 118 students on roll, 69 remain on the registers of their mainstream school but only five attend both IMPACT and their school. Boys outnumber girls by about 3:1 and nearly all students are white and English speaking. There are no travellers or refugees. Sixteen students have statements of special educational need, 10 for emotional and behavioural difficulties and six for moderate learning difficulties. IMPACT operates two distinct programmes. One, for 15 Year 10 students, has been operating for two terms. It is housed in Mast House and is run along the lines of a traditional PRU. It is still developing through negotiations with secondary heads. The other, for 103 Year 11 students, is longer established, making use of a wide range of work-based programmes on five different sites. Most students are drawn from the most disadvantaged areas of the borough, which is itself one of the most disadvantaged in the country.

### **HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS**

This is a very effective unit. With great success, it meets its main aim, 'To provide an alternative curriculum of quality education and training for those students for whom a mainstream education does not provide the environment to promote learning'. Students make good progress in a wide range of subjects and activities. Their personal development is excellent. Teaching, instruction and tuition is very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. All of this is achieved at a realistic cost; IMPACT is giving very good value for money.

#### **What the unit does well**

- It makes excellent provision for promoting students' personal development.
- Teaching and instruction is of very high quality.
- There is a very good, innovative, curriculum for Year 11 students; extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- Students achieve well academically and their personal development is excellent.
- There are exceptionally strong links with other institutions and the local community.
- The care of students is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The management structure; by creating a new level below the headteacher to share responsibilities.
- Facilities for teaching science.

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

### **HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

IMPACT is a new unit, formed after reorganisation of Sefton's provision for students being educated other than at school.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 10	by Year 11	Key	
English	B	A	very good	A
mathematics	B	B	Good	B
science	B	B	Satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	Unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	Poor	E

\* IEPs are individual education plans for students with special educational needs

Academic achievement overall is good even though teaching is very good. This is mainly because non-attendance often slows students' progress. The difference in progress in English, between Years 10 and 11, reflects teachers' differing expectations. A few higher attaining pupils in Year 10 could achieve more if expectations were higher. In both year groups, progress in speaking and listening is a strength. Many students remain reluctant to express themselves imaginatively in writing. Achievement is good in all areas of mathematics. Last year 22 students gained passes in GCSE English and mathematics. In science, students make good progress overall but have limited opportunities to do chemistry experiments. Students achieve very well in physical activities and art and design and well in music. In addition, students achieve great success over a very wide range of work-based and practical activities which are well matched to individual interests and abilities. Success in these activities and the great gains they make in their personal development leads to a very high number of students being offered work or further training when they leave.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Very good. Most students overcome their dislike of education. Year 11 students, in particular, show considerable commitment to learning new skills that will prepare them well for entering the workplace and achieving success in examinations.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This represents excellent progress from the very poor behaviour that has led to many of them being excluded from previous schools. Bad behaviour rarely interferes with learning and training providers on other sites often comment on how well students behave. Inspectors observed no bullying, racism or sexism. There have been only six exclusions, each for short periods, over the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. By the time students leave, most have made staggering progress in the way they relate to adults and other students. In work placements and training venues they demonstrate ever increasing responsibility, learning for instance the importance of timekeeping and working co-operatively.
Attendance	Attendance is a problem. The figure of nearly thirty per-cent absence is very high. However, about one fifth of all students had not attended their previous schools at all in the term prior to their referral. Many are now attending on a frequent basis and this represents very good progress. Figures are distorted by a core of habitual non-attenders for whom the LEA is seeking alternative provision.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of students:</b>	
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

Teaching is a strength. Most of the best teaching is seen in Year 11. Teaching of Year 10 students is good overall. English teaching is good in Year 10 and very good for Year 11 students, where work is particularly well planned and challenging. Teaching of mathematics, science and PHSE is very good. The great ability of all staff to promote personal development in every lesson makes a significant contribution to students' progress and strengthens teaching considerably. Exceptionally strong relationships between staff and students, built upon trust and understanding, underpin the success of teaching. Teamwork amongst staff is strong. Lessons are made interesting and teachers are very good at ringing the changes when they detect that students are losing interest. Students' work is promptly marked, usually with helpful comments added to help students understand how they could improve. Occasionally, the work set for more able students is not sufficiently challenging. All staff contribute well to promoting students' reading, writing and number skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There are two distinct curricula. The Year 10 curriculum is good; it focuses on the important subjects of English, mathematics and science and balances them well with a suitable range of other subjects and activities, often with an emphasis on promoting personal development. The Year 11 curriculum is very special in the way that it balances academic study and personal development in an environment that introduces students very successfully to the world of work and training.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. There are very effective arrangements for identifying special educational needs and reviewing students' progress.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. All staff have a very heightened awareness of the importance of promoting students' personal development and waste no opportunity to promote it. Students are helped to make sense of their lives and discover what they can contribute to the lives of others. They are given many opportunities to develop better social skills. A sense of identity is promoted through extensive studies of local culture.
How well the unit cares for its students	Very good. Child protection procedures are carefully followed and there is a heightened awareness of health and safety issues. Assessment procedures are effective and help staff to understand students' needs and abilities. In recognition of many students' history of frequent absence, extremely thorough and sophisticated systems for monitoring and improving attendance have been developed.

Parents think very highly of IMPACT. Many have expressed gratitude for the way staff have helped their children. Staff recognise the importance of working closely with parents whenever possible. Parents' views are sought at frequent intervals and they are always invited to reviews and celebrations of their children's progress.



## HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is an exceptional headteacher. She has a crystal clear vision as to how to best meet the aims of the unit and her leadership is exemplary. The lack of a clear management structure below her leads to her carrying an unrealistic workload. Day-to-day management of Year 10 provision is satisfactory. Staff are taking increasingly effective responsibility for different areas of the curriculum.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The local education authority in its role as appropriate authority has offered very good support in many areas but has not produced a curriculum policy to establish the entitlement of students. The management committee is supportive and is kept very well informed of relative strengths and weaknesses by the headteacher.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Good. A close eye is kept on the quality and effectiveness of the wide range of provision for students. The headteacher monitors the performance of staff as part of performance management procedures but time constraints mean that formal observation of teaching is infrequent.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The local education authority manages the budget. Unit staff monitor expenditure exceptionally carefully. Great care is taken to make the best possible use of available funding through negotiating best value when seeking service-level agreements with training providers. Student absence creates an inefficiency as provision has to be made whether or not students attend.

There is a good, dedicated staff and morale is high. Accommodation is satisfactory but a few areas are in poor repair and the small size of the science room occasionally causes problems. IMPACT's own resources are satisfactory but very good use of resources in the community and in training venues makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is always someone to talk to about their children's personal development</li> <li>• The way staff support their children</li> <li>• The opportunities the unit gives their children to succeed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More detailed information on academic progress</li> <li>• A wider range of academic subjects</li> <li>• More work being sent home</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. It feels that a suitable amount of information is given to parents as a matter of course and that staff are always willing to add to this if parents request. The range of academic subjects offered to students meets requirements for a unit such as this but the lack of a local education authority curriculum policy means that parents are not sure what their children's entitlement is. A suitable amount of work is sent home.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The unit's results and students' achievements**

1. Students who attend well often achieve very well but the high rate of absence means that a significant group of students does not make enough progress and this results in overall achievement being good even though teaching is very good. The impact of absence is greatest in English, mathematics and science. These are all subjects where students have previously had difficulties and which they most closely associate with previous failure in school and where attendance is most closely linked to the requirements of completion of coursework. Other than the divide between students who attend and those who do not, there is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls or pupils of different ability except in Year 10 English, where higher attaining pupils are occasionally not set sufficiently challenging work.
2. The best achievement is seen in Year 11, where the wide range of activities taught out of Mast House gives students the chance to succeed in subjects that are often new to them. Pupils are motivated by the realisation that they are being very well prepared for entering the workplace and adult life. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is of fundamental importance in this process. The attention that all teachers pay to developing students' personal and social skills, whatever the subject being taught means that achievement is particularly good. As a result, students regularly meet most of their targets for improvement.
3. Students with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning. They develop positive attitudes towards their work as a result of the very good teaching. The unit is thorough in its procedures for identifying students with special educational needs and very good individual programmes are set to target these needs.
4. Achievement in English is good overall. Many students in Year 11 make very good progress because learning opportunities are varied, relevant and meaningful. Expectations of what Year 11 students can achieve are high and the work they are given is challenging and stimulating. Students in Year 10 make satisfactory progress overall. Occasionally, their progress is good. This is most evident in the development of their speaking and listening skills. In Year 11 students identify and analyse arguments and opinions raised by classical and modern authors. They make good progress in their analysis of text, such as the opening scene of Hamlet. They draw comparisons between characters such as Mr. Bennett in 'Pride and Prejudice' and Atticus in 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. Students have a good grasp of the impact of the media and advertising as a result of some imaginative studies, such as that of Luhrmann's film version of 'Romeo and Juliet'. Many students find greater difficulty generating their own imaginative writing. Year 10 students make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills. For many students in Year 11 progress in reading is very good because interesting material is chosen carefully to motivate and encourage their interest. In summer 2002, Year 11 students demonstrated their very good progress when 23 of the 24 pupils entered gained passes in the GCSE examination.
5. Good achievement in mathematics is a result of high quality teaching that ensures students are producing significant amounts of good, well-presented work. Last year, all Year 11 students gained passes in GCSE and Entry Level examinations. Students gather information from a wide range of sources and draw accurate graphs. They

develop an understanding of algebra, writing formulae for the calculation of the area of triangles and rectangles. Mathematical vocabulary broadens considerably; in statistics, for instance, students talk confidently about relative frequency, mode and median when working out which team is leading the Premier football league, and which may be relegated. In number work, they compare fractions, decimals and percentages and calculate with care. They measure precisely, for instance, when measuring a table for a new top.

6. Achievement in science is good. Students are gaining the confidence to participate positively within science lessons. In previous schools many have frequently been excluded from science lessons for reason of safety. This is evident in the generally low knowledge and understanding of science on entry. Students study the Entry Level certificate course. Achievement in the 2002 examinations was good. In Year 10, when studying 'the maintenance of life', students recognise that humans lose water in sweat and that sweating helps cool the body. Students take a pride in the presentation of their work, with well-structured reports using tabulation, graphs and written evaluations. They develop a wider science vocabulary and the confidence to use it during discussion. Visits to places such as the Science museum in Manchester, the Space exhibition and Planetarium at Liverpool museum and the Catalyst museum in Widnes broaden the learning experiences of the students. Limitations in the accommodation result in students having insufficient opportunities to conduct their own experiments, particularly in chemistry and this limits progress.
7. Achievement in art and design is very good. Work prepared for GCSE examinations shows good use of colour when pupils use paint, pastels and crayons to create imaginative compositions. A very good understanding of tone is evident in geometric and abstract patterns developed from pencil drawings. Improvements in drawing techniques are evident in still life compositions. There is good reference to the art and design of different cultures through the creation of patterned lanterns, fans and lettering in the Chinese style. Students' work shows that they have understood the influence of the famous architect, Gaudi, correctly describing his style as Neo Gothic and Art Nouveau with surrealist and cubist elements. Visits to the Tate gallery have stimulated honest, good reviews of famous artists' work. Artwork conveys a very good sense of excitement, especially in the very good, large-scale work being done on a mural for public display. In the 'Positive Futures' initiative, students have produced good photographs of local landmarks and portraits and created imaginative designs for T-shirts. Computers are being used to prepare these designs for production.
8. Achievement in practical activities is very good. The 'Young Enterprise Project' provides an excellent opportunity for Year 11 students to work as a team to design, make and market a range of high quality products, which they successfully sell at local trade fairs. The project prepares students very well for the world of work and contributes significantly to their personal and social development. Students develop a very good knowledge of the properties and use of materials and tools. They apply their knowledge and skills in a wide range of work-related activities such as painting and decorating, joinery, brick-laying, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Year 11 students understand the importance of setting out and preparing materials to form the base of a brick wall. They select appropriate tools, such as a spirit level and trowel, and work hard to ensure the bricks are correctly aligned. Year 10 students prepare and cook a midday meal once a week for staff and themselves. They agree a new menu each week, giving them the opportunity to develop new skills when working with different foods, equipment and cooking methods. They understand the importance of healthy eating and of food hygiene in the kitchen.

9. History and geography are not taught as discrete subjects. Aspects of both are covered through work undertaken for the ASDAN Youth Award and in personal, social and health education and citizenship. For example, Year 10 students are developing an awareness of community issues across the world. They study the work of charities in the community and plan a community project which helps them to develop an understanding of issues surrounding homeless people. Students learn about and appreciate differences in nationalities and religious and ethnic identity. They develop an understanding of wider global issues, economy and democratic institutions and values. Students are able to find information about significant international and national events from sources, such as newspapers, magazines and reference books. They have written good reports, recording for instance the main facts on topics such as the American Shuttle disaster.
10. Students achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT). They become competent in word processing and improve their skills in desktop publishing, using graphics, finding information and accessing the Internet. Students have successfully designed a range of documents for a company of their choice. They combine their own ideas with information from a wide variety of sources, incorporating clip-art and graphics and decide on font size, page layout and orientation. One student, for example, designed a company logo for a Chinese restaurant, producing a fax sheet cover, letters, a flyer to advertise the restaurant's opening and an attractive menu for under 8's. Year 11 students working on the Young Enterprise project use their ICT skills to produce a company report, budget spreadsheets and agendas and minutes for meetings. At the area board final they successfully used a PowerPoint presentation to a large audience to promote their company. Students are proficient in the use of a digital camera and have worked on web page designs and image manipulation. They apply their ICT skills well in several areas of the curriculum. In mathematics, they produce graphs and tally charts and also produce computerised music using an electronic keyboard synthesizer and mixing desk.
11. Students achieve well in music; this is linked, in the main, to ICT. Students produce music tracks, using sounds they have pre-recorded. They use keyboards, synthesizers and a mixing desk to develop their track showing an understanding of musical terms such as; key, bass line, waves, loops, pitch, tempo and pace.
12. Achievement in physical activities is very good. The programme is an important part of the PHSE programme to encourage students to use their time in a positive way and is linked to health and hygiene education. In Year 10, students participate enthusiastically in football, golf, street dancing, rock climbing, ice-skating, swimming and exercise awareness. An outstanding feature of the Year 10 programme is the work done by a group of boys coaching students from a local primary school in football skills as part of their course for the Football Association Junior Football Organisers Award. The response of the boys as coaches was excellent as they encouraged the younger children whilst developing their self-belief and confidence to demonstrate activities and coach the youngsters. In a good contribution to extra-curricular provision, students are encouraged to use leisure passes for swimming and aerobics in the evenings and at weekends.
13. Religious education is not taught as a discrete subject but students achieve very well as they develop their knowledge and understanding of world faiths through the inclusion of well planned links with their other studies. In English lessons, for example,

as part of their work on the impact of media techniques they have compared multicultural and multi-faith factors relating to the conflict in Iraq. Recently students participated in Chinese New Year celebrations. Through events such as this they grasp the importance of how religion features, as part of special occasions, and the various ways in which these are acknowledged. In less formal learning situations students contribute maturely to discussions about beliefs.

14. Achievement in PHSE is very good. Many students significantly improve their social skills, such as co-operating, helping others and interacting appropriately with their peers and adults. They improve their understanding of their own and others feelings. They learn about responsibility, choices and consequences and make very good progress in developing their own values and thinking about how their actions affect others. They improve their understanding of the world around them, helped by the visits they make outside the unit, and the contacts they have made through the sponsorship of an African child. Achievement in PSHE makes an important contribution to students' personal development and also helps them rebuild their self-confidence and sense of self-worth. Achievement in citizenship is very good. Students learn to play a helpful part in the life of the centre and play their part within society by involvement in a wide range of projects. Students complete eight hours of community work on the 'Changemakers' community project working with the homeless and the Salvation Army. This gives them an insight into the conditions that some of the less fortunate members of society live in and the work that is being done to help them

#### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. Students take a pride in the unit and value it because they realise that they themselves are valued. The neatness of their books and the high quality of their work show that they usually take care with their work and are proud of their achievements. It is very clear that the students feel at ease with the social interaction of the unit as they talk to their friends and adults during the breakfast club which most attend prior to lessons.
16. Students say they feel safe, secure and respected. As a result, they respond very well to the high expectations of good behaviour. They keenly pursue individual targets for improvement. In lessons they quickly settle down to work and behave very well. Very effective teaching helps this. Students show great respect for equipment such as computers. They treat the building and its contents with respect. There is little litter and all help to tidy up. Students are courteous and respectful to visitors and are happy to show and discuss samples of their work. There is no evidence of intimidation or aggression. Students with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to their work and, with very good support and encouragement, are developing their self-confidence very well.
17. Personal development forms the foundation for the excellent work being done at IMPACT. Students overcome previous difficulties and express growing confidence in their own self-worth. Students learn to take decisions and evaluate their own work. National Records of Achievement show how students learn to value their own progress and increasingly see themselves as able to contribute to society. Students respond well to opportunities to work cooperatively. They rise very well to challenges, such as work experience in the Young Enterprise initiative, putting on a PowerPoint presentation, or coaching younger students in football. As a result they make good social contacts and manage themselves very well in a range of situations. Excellent

relationships between students and staff are based on mutual respect and underpin the very good attitudes students develop to their education.

18. Attendance is low and absence is the single factor preventing better progress. There is evidence, however, of considerable individual achievement when previous histories of attendance are taken into account. Many students who have records of continuous absence at their former schools have made spectacular improvement. A Year 11 student for example, with no previous attendance, reached 82 per cent in the autumn term and is now attending 100 per cent. Analysis of 22 Year 11 students who had nil attendance in the two terms prior to their admission shows that all but 3 have improved. There are 14 persistent non-attenders on roll. The local authority recognises that it was unlikely that any of these pupils would ever attend and is reviewing ways of meeting these students' needs. Registers are taken before morning and afternoon sessions. Training providers also take registers. The project worker concerned with attendance visits each weekly. Attendance at work experience is carefully monitored.

## **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

19. Teaching is very good overall. The best teaching is in Year 11. Here, IMPACT staff are particularly good at setting students work that challenges each individual without out-facing them. Pupils see the relevance of tasks that reflect their growing maturity and respond particularly well to the opportunities teachers give them to discuss tasks and ways of completing them. Many different providers are used for the teaching of Year 11 students. Teaching in these situations is by personnel not employed by IMPACT. The quality of this tuition is carefully monitored by IMPACT staff and students are achieving particularly well in all of the curriculum areas taught. It is clear from this that the quality of tuition is at least on a par with the teaching by IMPACT staff. The benefits of this arrangement are the access that tutors and trainers have to high quality resources and the special skills that tutors and trainers demonstrate in practical and work-based skills.
20. The teaching of Year 10 pupils is more classroom based, usually in Mast House. This teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate a very good understanding of students' needs and the demands of the subject being taught. Lessons proceed with few interruptions because they are well planned, incorporate activities which interest students and are well managed by teachers who demonstrate a high amount of skill in motivating students and reducing incidents of bad behaviour. As a matter of course, teachers check what students have remembered from previous lessons before embarking on new learning. High quality additional support from classroom assistants is very well directed to the students who need it most, either by want of their behaviour or their learning difficulty.
21. Very good attention is paid to helping pupils to improve their basic skills in reading, writing and number work whenever possible and not just in English and mathematics lessons. In addition to this, all teachers recognise that contributing to students' personal development is a fundamental part of their job. They are particularly successful in this, balancing it very well with ensuring that students are also learning the subject being taught. Much of the success of teaching results from the relationships between staff and students. Students respect the fact that staff are trying to help them, they recognise the relevance of tasks, either classroom or workshop based and this helps to encourage them to put as much effort as possible into their work. Prompt marking of students' work, often with the addition of helpful

comments helps students to recognise the progress they are making and encourages them to persevere. Strong teamwork results from very good preparation and communication between teachers, support assistants and outside providers.

22. The quality of teaching for students with special educational needs is very good overall. Teachers and support assistants have very good awareness of how to meet individual needs. Teaching strategies are supportive and sensitive and consequently all students are fully included in all activities.
23. English teaching in Year 11 is very good. The standard of English teaching for students in Year 10 is good. Year 11 activities are well planned, challenging and relevant. Students are helped to formulate their thoughts and ideas to present in essay form through skilled use of questioning techniques by the teacher. Students are motivated by the teachers love of the subject, as well as by enthusiastic and lively interactive discussions. Written work is rigorously marked with helpful comments and suggestions about how it could be further improved. Students are given meticulous guidance about the use of punctuation, grammar and the presentation of work. Year 10 lessons are often less demanding and, as a result, the pace of learning is occasionally too slow, especially for more able students. Too many lessons rely on the same range of materials for all students.
24. The teaching of mathematics is very good. Great attention is paid to presenting work that is interesting, challenging and achievable. High priority is given to praising effort and achievement as a means of increasing self-esteem and students respond well to this. Teachers' planning is of very good quality and lessons proceed at a brisk pace with a well-structured flow of activities. Lessons have a good balance of explanation, demonstration, discussion and practise. Expectations are high. There is an effective emphasis on teaching the language of mathematics. Teachers are quick to sense students' change of mood and to take preventative action where this is needed. For example, in a good Year 10 lesson, the teacher upped the pace and avoided problems by moving a potentially disruptive student quickly on to his next computer activity.
25. Teaching in science is very good. Teachers encourage students to gain the confidence to predict, analyse and discuss results. Work is well marked with clear guidance on how pupils can improve it. Teachers are usually successful in overcoming the limitations of the accommodation, though occasionally the cramped classroom contributes to difficulties in behaviour management and the variety of activities, especially in chemistry, that can be provided
26. Practical activities are well taught. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and there is careful and effective explanation of tasks and expectations before pupils start work. Aims and learning outcomes are made clear to the students and as a result they start practical tasks with a good understanding of the job they have to do. There is a good relationship between staff and students who are regularly praised for their work and good attitudes. As a result, students feel confident and work conscientiously. Students are encouraged to work independently whenever possible, with teachers sensitively intervening to help them identify how they can improve their work.
27. The teaching of physical activities is very good. Staff are very enthusiastic and provide very good role models. Key features of the teaching are that all students are

expected to be dressed appropriately for physical activity, ground rules are made clear and the teamwork of staff is very good. There are very good links between the co-ordinators for each age group.

28. It was not possible to observe music, art and design and ICT teaching but students' work, their enthusiasm for all three subjects and discussion with the teachers responsible provides ample evidence for the teaching of all three subjects being of the same high standard as found elsewhere.

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

29. The rationale behind IMPACT is to provide an alternative curriculum that focuses on re-engaging students in learning, and narrowing the achievement gap. It is very successful in meeting this aim. The curriculum offered is very closely in line with the DfES 'Alternative Curriculum Pathways Strategy'. Suitable provision for Year 11 students is very well established. Emphasis is laid on equipping students with a wide range of employability skills and academic qualifications as a basis for progression through the National Qualification framework. Important aims are the raising of achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Alongside these core skills are a wide variety of accredited vocational options. There is a strong and effective emphasis on enhancing personal and social skills. Individual programmes are very well adjusted to meet specific needs.
30. Curriculum provision for Year 10 students is good and developing well. There has been good progress in linking the Year 10 and 11 options as an overall programme. For instance, every Friday Year 10 students participate in a range of courses including bricklaying, plastering, painting and decorating and carpet laying. The aim of these is to spark an interest for options in Year 11.
31. Curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is very good, in particular the support for learning and personal development. One student commented "Before coming here I wasn't getting on with anybody - this centre has really changed the way I think about life, I think that I now have a future". Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good. Opportunities for planned transfer of these key skills to other curriculum areas are developing well. The provision of additional support enables boys and girls to take advantage of every available activity.
32. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. Year 11 students are successfully involved in the 'Young Enterprise' project and a canoeing and outdoor pursuits course. Year 10 students go climbing at an indoor centre and have visited the Science museum in Manchester, the Space exhibition and Planetarium at Liverpool museum and the Catalyst museum in Widnes. A few Year 10 boys play for a local football team managed by the PE co-ordinator. Following an induction course to prove they can manage their behaviour effectively, students are given a monthly pass to use the local leisure centre after school hours. As a result, they are gaining in confidence and self esteem to use the facilities well. In particular, they are managing their own behaviour and influencing their friends to become active participants. An effective link with Youth Only Zone (an initiative to reduce street crime on Fridays and Saturdays) provides additional opportunities for creative leisure activities.
33. Careers and vocational education support is excellent and forms an outstanding feature of the success of the programme. All students have a Connexions action plan



and are very well supported by Connexion's personal advisers. Excellent individual profiles support the teamwork between IMPACT staff and external agencies. The success of IMPACT in the academic year ending July 2002 can be measured by the fact that of 65 leavers, only one was unplaced in work, training or college.

34. The support and contribution of the local community to students' progress has been excellent. Students are currently involved in the design and painting of a mural showing important aspects of the history of Bootle and famous sportsmen and women from the area. A local artist has contributed artwork on local scenes. The willingness of local firms to accept students for work placements is a key to the success of the programme. There is very close teamwork with employers and training providers to boost the desire of students to extend their learning. The use of outside teams and specialists to support the vocational and personal progress of students is excellent. The Fire Service at Croxteth has involved Year 10 students on a 'Young Fire Fighters' course to promote an understanding of fire safety, community responsibility and teamwork.
35. Students are inspired and challenged to reflect on their attitudes, behaviour and how to change. One student, whilst coaching primary school students in football skills, commented, "I wish I had been coached like this when I was in primary school.... I really enjoy seeing them enjoying themselves". Outstanding adult teamwork is creating positive change in the lives of students and enabling most to see a real future for themselves. Students are encouraged to manage their own behaviour by involving them in setting and reviewing their own targets helped by the records of progress kept by staff. One student told inspectors, "I don't give cheek to the teachers in this school because they're all sound ... they respect me, listen to me and help me. I'm really proud of the improvements I have made".
36. The breakfast club and break and lunch times provide wonderful opportunities for students to learn how to socialise with each other. They usually respond by showing very good manners and co-operation. 'Young Enterprise' has provided Year 11 students with the opportunity of speaking publicly and gives clear evidence of improved self-esteem, teamwork and personal presentation. Involvement in the Football Association 'Junior Instructors Course' teaches students how to encourage younger children. Social development is closely linked to excellent provision for cultural development. There is a strong emphasis on developing knowledge and awareness of the local culture and the wider cultures of the world. Students look at one different culture each month. The weekly meal made by students is often linked to this. A display on other cultures bears the quotation "As long as we respect each other's beliefs and allow others to practice their religion freely the world should be a happy place." During discussion on the poster, one student said, "I support Liverpool and ..... (a member of staff) supports Everton, but I don't hold it against him!".

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?**

37. IMPACT has taken care to take into consideration the whole range of its provision and to see that all those involved fully understand procedures for child protection and health and safety. Sensible arrangements are in place to provide risk assessments and to ensure that students are trained in safe ways of working. Work experience placements are monitored by regular visits and training providers are approved by the Learning Skills Council.
38. Students are provided with very good opportunities to explore their opinions and feelings about health matters. Outside agencies are involved to ensure that they have

access to skilled professional advice. IMPACT has a clear insight into the question of confidentiality and appropriate guidance is given. There is a well thought out policy on drug misuse. Internet access and the use of e-mail are controlled and require the presence of an adult at all times.

39. The behaviour management policy links all the factors that influence behaviour. It is very consistently applied and as a result there is little disruption of lessons and few serious incidents are on record. Training providers operate their own disciplinary procedures and are in constant touch with the unit to report progress or problems. Each provider is allocated a project worker and is visited weekly by the head of centre. On induction all students sign a behaviour agreement.
40. Students receive very clear information about what to do about bullying and their support is enlisted in preventing it from happening. Reward systems are directed to behaviour and attendance as well as learning. They are used imaginatively to produce a sense of team spirit and ownership, especially at Year 10 where all students work together to gather enough points to purchase something for the unit. At the moment a new snooker table is their target.
41. Very good measures to promote good attendance result in considerable improvements for many individuals. Project workers, teaching staff, training providers and the educational welfare officer co-operate very well in maintaining computerised records of attendance and quickly following up absence. Considerable effort is put into creating an environment which is welcoming. There is a realistic appreciation of the student point of view and an understanding of the aspects of education which may prove a hindrance to attendance. Certificates for good attendance are awarded and good attendance helps earn bonus points.
42. A regular pattern of assessment focuses strongly on personal development. The checking of students' academic progress is good overall but in English, while marking is very good, assessment is not yet well structured. Training providers effectively test pupils' progress in key skills. Very good use is made of a wide range of external accreditation to motivate and reward students. Review systems help staff adapt courses to suit the needs of individuals. A detailed system of recording gives a good daily picture of development, which is reviewed more formally at weekly or fortnightly meetings.
43. Schools receive regular reports for dual registered students. These concentrate on attendance, behaviour and progress. A system of individual education planning has been adopted for all in Year 10. In Year 11 all students have action plans and those with special needs also have individual education plans. Good, well-presented records of achievement are produced. These are helpful in securing recognition when students move on.
44. IMPACT provides a very good level of care for students with special educational needs. Targets are regularly reviewed and students are fully included in these reviews. Teachers and support assistants are responsible for the daily needs of students with special educational needs and together keep very comprehensive records of achievement.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

45. Parents are very grateful for the work done by IMPACT for and with their children and say so in their responses to the unit's questionnaire and in letters of thanks. It is clear that IMPACT helps many when they feel unable to communicate with their child. Staff realise how important it is to work closely with parents and to enable them to feel part of their children's education. Staff are adept at communicating with parents and carers whenever there is a chance to praise progress. There are sensible agreements, signed by students and parents on admission and in disciplinary cases, for example, re-admission after a drugs related incident. A strong feature of IMPACT is the use of project workers to work alongside families to promote good attendance and to help students cope with family difficulties. As a result, in many cases there is an improvement in communication within the family itself.
46. The friendly, supportive atmosphere of IMPACT is conveyed to parents by the willingness of staff to work out of hours and to make themselves easy to contact. Parents like the way in which absence is followed up quickly and the help they are given to get their children to attend. The educational welfare officer negotiates on the family's behalf if it is unable or unwilling to raise issues itself. Project workers take care to explain to parents ways in which they can help their children learn. Formal reporting to parents is regular and they are invited to reviews. As a result, parents gain very good first hand insight into what their child is doing. Proper records of all parental contact are kept and are fed into daily meetings and more formal reviews.
47. All literature produced for parents is attractive and well produced. As the pocketed brochure is also used for general publicity purposes, its language is not necessarily easily understood by all. The inserts on, for example, attendance and bullying are clear and helpful. Parents' attitudes to the unit have a very positive effect on the response made by their child. The fact that there is in some cases a spectacular improvement in attendance reflects the relief and hope felt by parents. A parent is on the management committee and brings to it direct and valuable experience of the difficulties and tensions felt by parents

#### **HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?**

48. Leadership is excellent and management is good overall. Stated aims and values are exceptionally well reflected in all of IMPACT's work. The headteacher, key staff and management committee have taken very successful measures to set high standards. Their shared commitment to bring about continuing improvements is exemplary.
49. The excellent headteacher has a very clear educational and community vision for the future development of the centre. Her plans for the development of the centre are fully supported by Local Education Authority staff, management committee and parents. The headteacher has a deep commitment to enabling all students to achieve their full potential and to have a happy and fulfilling experience during their stay. She is a good organiser who gets things done and has the ability to take other people along with her. She has a high profile in the centre and has very good knowledge of both the academic and personal characteristics of every individual. She very successfully balances the demands of being a headteacher with her off-site management role and responsibilities of liaising with training providers.
50. The headteacher has a management style which helps to compensate for there being no deputy headteacher and no senior management team. The whole teaching staff is involved in the decision making processes and many also have management responsibilities. All co-ordinators play an important role in the development of the

curriculum and in the drive to raise standards. The headteacher and the Local Education Authority inclusion officer carry out monitoring of teaching and classroom practice. Nevertheless, the lack of a deputy or senior management team creates an overburden of work for the headteacher and one of the ways this is evident is in the limitations in formal monitoring of teaching. The headteacher has already identified this current weakness as an area for improvement.

51. The management committee meets regularly. It is kept very well informed by high quality, honest reports from the headteacher. As a result, members have a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The committee represents a wide cross-section of the community. Many members are frequent visitors to Mast House and the off-site bases, attending meetings and social functions. There is good liaison between the chairperson of the management committee and the headteacher and they work closely on issues that arise between scheduled meetings. Members have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are appropriately involved in shaping the direction of the centre, in monitoring and evaluating the centre's performance and in ensuring best value for money.
52. Clear priorities for development are based on good procedures and strategies of self-evaluation, with a clear focus on raising standards and improving provision. The improvement plan contains the detail necessary to provide a framework for staff to work to. It contains clear targets and details of monitoring. The plan covers next year's developments in detail, but also includes links to longer term priorities. The management committee and all staff are fully involved in the production of the plan and the identification of the priority areas for development. Rising standards in literacy and numeracy and the vast range of facilities for vocational training courses are good examples of IMPACT's successful improvement planning.
53. Performance management is well established and is of a good standard. The headteacher and management committee give a high priority to providing professional support for staff. Improving teachers' subject knowledge and competence are seen as important steps in raising the quality of teaching and learning in the centre. There has been considerable training for staff and management committee members during the recent successful service reorganisation. The well-planned programme for staff training is increasing the confidence of staff to meet the challenges of teaching new areas of the curriculum. It is also helping to improve the students' levels of attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
54. The budget is held by the LEA and there is no provision for external funds to be carried forward from one year to the next. Expenditure is exceptionally carefully managed by IMPACT staff. Great care is taken to ensure that all available external funding, from many sources and initiatives is correctly spent and accounted for. This is of crucial importance because any income from these sources not spent in the current year is potentially lost. This situation will become of less significance as new lines of funding, arranged through the LEA, come on stream
55. There is a good number of staff and when personnel from outside providers is taken into account there is a very wide spread of experience and expertise which is very well used to help pupils to make progress. Mast House is an old building and several areas, particularly those used for recreation and dining are in poor repair. In science, though the current accredited course only requires limited experimental work, the facilities available at the Mast House site limit experimental work. There are no library facilities and this limits students' opportunities for independent learning and reading for pleasure. IMPACT's own resources are satisfactory but very good use of

resources in the community and in training venues makes a significant contribution to the availability of very good resources.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

56. In order to bring about further improvement the headteacher, staff, management committee and local education authority should now:

- (1) Strengthen the management structure to relieve the burden on the headteacher; especially in relation to the formal monitoring of teaching (paragraph 50)
- (2) Improve the facilities for teaching science (paragraphs 6,25,55)

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

### ***Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection***

Number of lessons observed

19
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students

42

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	5	1	1	0	0
Percentage	5	59	26	5	5	0	0

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

### Information about the unit's students

#### Students on the unit's roll

	No of students
Number of students on the unit's roll	118

#### Special educational needs

	No of students
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of students on the unit's special educational needs register	118

#### English as an additional language

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	11.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	17.7

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

### Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
116	6	0

White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	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 students excluded.

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7-11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of students per qualified teacher	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

**Education support staff: Y7-11**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

authority

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the unit during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the unit during the last two years	7

**Financial information\***

Financial year	N/A
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	£
Total income	N/A
Total expenditure	N/A
Expenditure per student	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

\*The budget is managed by the local education

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	118
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	54	23	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	35	4	4	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	57	8	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	31	22	12	4
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	27	0	12	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	0	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	31	4	12	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	35	4	8	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	35	4	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	31	12	0	0