

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ETHOS PRIMARY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 133673

Headteacher: Mrs S. Stainton

Lead inspector: Mrs C. Marsh

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 259073

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school: Medical and mental health needs, pregnancy and EBD  
School category: Pupil Referral Unit  
Age range of pupils: 5 – 16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 87

School address: Kess Centre  
Off Rawthorpe Terrace  
Rawthorpe  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
Postcode: HD5 9NY

Telephone number: 01484 226513/226500  
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Appropriate authority: Kirklees LEA  
Name of responsible officer: Mrs J. Normington

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

This pupil referral unit (PRU) has been open two years. The unit occupies part of a school site in Huddersfield.

The unit exists to provide education for pupils aged 5-16 (not just primary pupils, as the name might suggest), who for a variety of reasons are temporarily unable to attend school. The reasons may include illness/injury, anxiety-related problems, pregnancy, or emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. It is the aim of the unit to ensure that, where possible, these children are educated in accordance with the national curriculum and through liaison with their home school, in order to ensure the least possible disruption to their education and a smooth re-entry to school as soon as possible.

Children with illness are educated at home or in hospital; anxious non-attenders are taught in three groups, one for pupils in Years 7-9, and two for pupils in Years 10-11, on a part-time basis, i.e. for mornings or afternoons; pregnant pupils and school age mothers attend for mornings only.

Primary pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who are at risk of exclusion from school are taught in the unit on a time-limited one-term placement. In addition, a number of "exceptional cases" – pupils with severe and complex special needs including Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) – are taught on a one-to-one basis in a range of venues, until an appropriate placement is found for them.

At the time of the inspection, there were 87 pupils on roll. Attainment on entry varies but overall is below average. Six pupils had a statement of special educational needs, predominantly for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils for whom English was not their first language.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2113	Mrs C. Marsh	Lead inspector	Science
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1204	Mr D. Bolton	Team inspector	English, Information and Communication Technology
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), which opened in September 2002, has had to struggle with inadequate accommodation – a weakness that has prevented it from providing full-time education for the majority of its pupils. Pupils' attitudes are mainly good. However, the progress and achievement of pupils are unsatisfactory. This is linked to the quality of teaching, which is also unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and governance by the Local Education Authority (LEA) is poor. This has held back the unit's development. **The unit is not providing a satisfactory standard of education. It currently provides poor value for money.**

**In accordance with section 13(7) of the Schools Inspection Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees that special measures are required in relation to this unit.**

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The unit is failing to provide full-time education and the curriculum is poor, mainly because the accommodation and resourcing are inadequate.
- There is too much unsatisfactory and poor teaching, leading to unsatisfactory achievement.
- Weaknesses in leadership and management and poor governance have resulted in pupils receiving an unsatisfactory standard of education.
- Thanks to the efforts of staff, the unit creates a caring environment in which pupils feel secure and valued.
- Older pupils have the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications.
- Pupils generally behave well and show positive attitudes to their work, helped by good relationships.
- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are poor.
- Some pupils stay in the unit for too long.

This new unit has not been inspected before.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 6	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
Year 9	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
Year 11	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

Standards of attainment vary but are mostly below average for pupils' ages. Taken overall, **achievement is unsatisfactory**, even taking into account the range of emotional, behavioural, social, psychological and medical difficulties pupils have. Achievement varies unacceptably, according to the group pupils are in. For pupils receiving hospital and home tuition, achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who attend the groups for anxious non-attenders achieve well in English and mathematics, thanks to teaching that is effectively planned and lessons that are often taught well. In other groups, pupils do not achieve enough. Many have too few taught lessons each week and over time they do not cover as much work as they should. Other reasons for underachievement include weaknesses in the teaching and the way work is planned. Achievement in science is poor. In spite of this, older pupils have achieved public examination results in a number of subjects; the achievement of some pupils in such examinations, even where the range of subjects is limited, shows what is possible. Re-integration rates are not as high as they should be – some pupils remain at the unit for too long.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.** Attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, with good improvements for some. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, although not enough is done actively to promote this.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the unit is unsatisfactory.** While the unit helps to keep pupils in education, who might otherwise be excluded from it, **teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall.** There is a small amount of good and very good teaching (particularly in the groups for anxious non-attenders in Years 10 and 11); but there is too much that is unsatisfactory and poor, and this is leading to unsatisfactory achievement. Assessment is poor and this prevents the unit from tracking pupils' progress effectively. The unit provides a poor curriculum, not least because of a shortage of taught time – itself the result of inadequate accommodation and resources. Pupils and parents are supportive. Links with parents and with mainstream schools are satisfactory and, together with satisfactory levels of care and support, help pupils to overcome barriers which might otherwise exclude them from learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the unit are unsatisfactory.** The leadership provided by the head and other staff with responsibilities is unsatisfactory, as is the management of the unit. Governance is poor. The headteacher has established a positive ethos amongst staff and has gained their commitment to the unit's aims. However, there are weaknesses in strategic planning, in monitoring the quality of provision and in support for improvement. Statutory requirements have not been met concerning performance management and the annual reviews for some pupils with statements of special educational needs.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT**

Parents are supportive of the unit. They say they are pleased the service has stepped in to help their child. This is especially the case for pupils receiving teaching at the hospitals or at home, where teaching is praised by parents for keeping their child on course with their learning. Parents would like to see more subjects taught at the unit and would like their children to receive full-time education. A number say they are not sure whether or not their child is making good progress in their work.

Pupils say that they feel valued and secure in the unit. They appreciate the care shown to them by staff and the individual attention they receive. Some are particularly pleased with their improved attendance. Some say they would like to be taught for more hours at the unit and cover more subjects.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the unit should do to improve are:

- Provide pupils with their entitlement to full-time education and to a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. (This will involve resolving the issue of inadequate accommodation.)
- Improve the quality of teaching, in order to raise achievement.
- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance, including strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and support for improvement.
- Put in place systematic arrangements for assessment and for tracking pupils' progress.
- Help more pupils to get back into school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Standards of attainment vary but are mostly below average for pupils' ages. Taken overall, achievement is unsatisfactory – for too many pupils progress is unsatisfactory, even taking into account the range of emotional, behavioural, social, psychological and medical difficulties they have.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- For pupils who attend the groups for anxious non-attenders in Years 10 and 11, achievement is good in English and mathematics; for pupils receiving home and hospital teaching, achievement is satisfactory.
- Other pupils do not achieve well enough because of weaknesses in the teaching – and achievement in science is poor.
- Pupils make progress in developing positive attitudes to learning, and this helps to keep them in education.
- Many of the older pupils who attend the unit gain some nationally recognised qualifications.
- Although some pupils return to school successfully, others remain in the unit for too long.

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards of attainment in the unit are below average for pupils' ages. Many, but by no means all, pupils come to the unit with levels of attainment which are below average for their ages, and in some cases well below – some with a history of disrupted education, because of their medical condition or social, emotional or behavioural problems. Others, however, come with attainment close to average or even above average. Given their starting points, there are pupils who make good progress and achieve well during their time in the unit but, at present, too many are not making as much progress as they should for a number of reasons. There is too much underachievement.

2. Achievement varies unacceptably, according to the group pupils are in. From available evidence, achievement is satisfactory for pupils receiving hospital and home tuition. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who attend the anxious non-attenders groups, make good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics, thanks to teaching that is effectively planned and lessons that are often taught well. The problem is that they have too few taught lessons each week and cover only a restricted curriculum – because of an overall shortage of accommodation leading to an education that is only part-time. The progress they make in individual lessons shows what can be achieved, but over time they do not cover as much work in as many subjects as they should. Because many of these pupils remain in the unit for long periods of time – indeed most do not move back into school – the issue becomes more serious. In spite of satisfactory or even good progress in the pieces of work they do tackle, even these pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve what would be expected in a mainstream school.

3. In other groups, particularly the group for anxious non-attenders in Years 7-9 and the group for pregnant pupils and school age mothers, there are other reasons for underachievement, in addition to the shortage of taught time that results from insufficient accommodation. These concern significant weaknesses in the teaching and in the way work is planned, as well as the fact that best use is not being made of the limited time that is available. For a very small number of individuals, intermittent or poor attendance is a problem that holds back their achievement in all subjects. Some teachers are not systematically identifying and targeting individual pupils' needs well enough; and, as a result, pupils do not make enough progress in overcoming their learning (or indeed their personal) difficulties. The lack of proper assessment and tracking of pupils' academic progress in all subjects only adds to the problem. In the case of science, achievement is poor because it has not been



taught often enough, nor has sufficient account been taken of the requirements of the national curriculum.

4. A measure of success for the unit might well be the number of pupils who increase the time they attend mainstream school to the point where they are successfully reintegrated full-time. The figures provided by the unit show that primary pupils and pupils receiving hospital and home education have made successful transitions back into full-time education over the past year. For all other groups, not enough has been done to prepare pupils for successful reintegration and to move them on. Too many remain at the unit for too long.

5. In spite of these weaknesses, there are pupils with positive attitudes and good attendance, whose stay at the unit makes a real difference, building their confidence and self-esteem and helping them improve their attitudes to learning. These include primary pupils, those pupils taught in hospital and at home, and the oldest anxious non-attenders. Older pupils have achieved public examination results in a number of subjects, and the opportunities for them to gain nationally recognised qualifications is a positive feature of the work of the unit. The good achievement of some pupils in such examinations, even where the range of subjects is limited, shows what is possible.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance and personal development, including their personal, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils generally behave well and show a positive attitude to their work, helped by good relationships.
- Individual education plans are not used effectively to address individual pupils' personal and social development needs or to target specific improvements in attendance for some pupils.
- For pupils who have been out of school for a long time, there is a real improvement in their attendance, but there are still some pupils with attendance problems.
- Not enough is done to promote pupils' personal development.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is never less than satisfactory and is frequently good, although records show that, in the past, there have been instances of very challenging behaviour in the primary unit. The use of exclusions to deal with serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour has been appropriate. Staff show a consistent respect for pupils in all groups; this is reciprocated and underpins the promotion of good behaviour throughout the unit. Teachers throughout the unit have appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to them. Pupils get on well with each other and feel secure and valued. This is helping them to settle to work willingly and develop more positive attitudes to learning. In the lessons inspected, pupils' attitudes were best when teaching actively involved them and had a consistent focus on raising achievement. In these lessons pupils were interested, enthusiastic and highly motivated to learn and achieve. Pupils showed the least interest in their work, and achieved less than expected, when there was no focused teaching and pupils were left too much to their own devices.

7. Although all pupils have individual education plans, with the exception of the primary unit these are frequently too general and are not targeted well enough at individual pupils' specific needs. This is particularly so for the anxious non-attenders, who have experienced significant problems both in attendance and in making successful social relationships. While there is real improvement in attendance for many pupils in this group, individual education plans are not being used effectively to help pupils who still have attendance problems to accept realistic targets for improvement. Similarly, for pupils who have suffered anxieties about coping in a group situation in school, individual education plans are not being used to set small, stepped targets for improvement.

8. Most pupils now have good, and in some cases excellent (100%), attendance, whereas for many of them – particularly those in the groups for anxious non-attenders – previous attendance was poor. Both pupils and their parents are rightly pleased with the improvement. This is helped by the fact that staff of the unit are rigorous in following up absences, contacting home promptly on the first day of absence and working closely with the education welfare service. However, in spite of the unit's best efforts, a few pupils continue to have serious attendance problems.

9. The unit provides a safe and secure environment, where each member of the community is respected and valued. Through their daily interaction with staff, backed up by positive relationships and appropriately high expectations of behaviour, pupils receive effective support for their moral and social development. Indeed, some pupils make real gains in their personal development. This is particularly so in the group for anxious non-attenders in Years 10-11, where pupils are actively encouraged through the teaching approaches to take part in group discussions and where a range of external visits and visitors help to promote their self-confidence and self-esteem. However, things are not the same in the group for anxious non-attenders in Years 7-9, where pupils have too few opportunities to learn to work together or to cope in a group setting, in readiness for a return to school. For these anxious non-attenders, too little is done to identify the underlying causes of the anxieties and then to tackle these in a systematic way. For too many pupils there is a lack of planned support for their personal development – and the situation is not helped by the lack of a planned programme of personal, social and health education. While the pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers receive and appreciate high quality support and advice from the nursery nurse in charge of the crèche and from the midwife and health visitors, this does not sit within a coherent programme of personal development designed to help the girls to move forward confidently into their next stage in life.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
Unit data	10	Unit data	8
National data	N/A	National data	N/A

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – any other Black background
No ethnic group recorded

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
73	7	
1		
1	4	
1		
5		
4		
1		
1		
1		

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIT**

The quality of education provided by the unit is unsatisfactory. While the unit helps to keep pupils in education who might otherwise be excluded from it, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. There is a small amount of good teaching, but there is too much that is unsatisfactory and poor, and this is leading to unsatisfactory achievement. Assessment is poor and this prevents the unit from tracking pupils' progress effectively. The unit provides a poor curriculum, not least because of a shortage of taught time – itself the result of inadequate accommodation. Pupils and parents are supportive. Links with parents and with mainstream schools are satisfactory and, together with satisfactory levels of care and support, help pupils to overcome barriers which might otherwise exclude them from learning.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Assessment of pupils' work is poor.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is too much unsatisfactory and poor teaching, particularly in the group for anxious non-attenders in Years 7-9, and in the group for pregnant pupils and school age mothers.
- Teaching for the anxious non-attenders in Years 10-11 is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes good.
- Assessment is poor, with too little attention paid to tracking pupils' progress – and this is contributing to unsatisfactory achievement.

### **Commentary**

10. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, because there is too much poor and unsatisfactory teaching. However, the picture is complex. Some groups of pupils receive teaching that is largely satisfactory and sometimes better. This applies to pupils receiving hospital and home education and to pupils in the unit's primary class. Teachers know pupils' personal circumstances and conditions well and are warm and caring. Where pupils' difficult behaviour undoubtedly presents a particular challenge to teachers (for example in the primary group, or in the case of some pupils with exceptional needs who are taught one-to-one), this is not usually allowed to prevent learning. The way teachers manage these lessons, with routines and procedures that are clear and consistently reinforced, helps to prepare these pupils for what is expected in their mainstream school.

11. In the group for anxious non-attenders in Years 10 and 11, teaching is usually good and sometimes very good – a key reason why these pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. This is because the teachers have a good grasp of their subject and know what needs to be taught to pupils of this age – and how to go about it. They prepare their lessons well, with clear objectives, matched to the needs of individual pupils and to the requirements of the syllabus. They plan relevant, interesting activities that will take pupils from where they are to where they need to be. Their teaching is clear and confident and it interests and motivates pupils, keeping them actively engaged and progressing at a good pace. Work is structured to ensure success, whilst retaining a real challenge and making pupils think for themselves, thanks to effective, probing questioning.

12. However, other groups fare less well. In the groups for anxious non-attenders in Year 7-9 and for pregnant pupils and school age mothers, there is too much unsatisfactory and poor teaching. Although teachers set a calm, friendly working atmosphere where pupils feel valued and safe and are ready to learn, too often lessons are not planned adequately. Indeed, some lessons, such as revision lessons for mathematics, science and English, appear not to be planned at all. In many subjects, but particularly in science, teaching is not helped by the lack of written lesson plans and of adequate records and assessment data. Teachers are not clear enough about what they expect

pupils to learn and, at times, pupils cannot see where the lesson is going. In some lessons, instructions and explanations are unclear, and sometimes inaccurate, confusing pupils; questioning is not focused sharply enough; time is not well used and the pace is too slow. As a result, in such lessons, pupils learn very little and too little is achieved. In lessons where pupils are supposed to be completing work set by their schools, pupils are left for too long to work alone, without the teaching and planned support they need. Sometimes, when help is offered, adults' insecure grasp of the subject is another factor holding back pupils' progress.

13. Overall, assessment is poor and, in particular, pupils' progress is not tracked or recorded in any systematic way. In too many cases, teachers know too little about what individual pupils know and can do and they are not confident enough in assessing the quality of their work. In too many groups, there is a weakness in identifying what pupils (and teachers) need to focus on next in order to improve performance. Academic targets are rarely included in pupils' individual education plans.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	4	12	6	7	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is poor. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory, given the constraints. Accommodation and resources are poor.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The unit fails to provide a full-time education and for too many pupils the curriculum is unacceptably narrow as a result.
- The accommodation has been made bright and attractive, but it is inadequate for the purpose – a key reason why pupils are only taught part-time.
- Older pupils have the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications.
- There is no planned personal, social and health education programme, and this works against pupils' personal development.
- The curriculum many pupils receive does not do enough to prepare them to cope back in school.
- Thanks to the initiative of some teachers and home tutors, some pupils get worthwhile opportunities for learning beyond normal lessons – but others do not.

### **Commentary**

14. Of the groups of pupils attending the unit, only one attends for both morning and afternoon sessions – the group of primary pupils with emotional and behavioural problems who have been excluded from school or are at risk of exclusion. The other groups (pregnant pupils and school age mothers, and the three groups of anxious non-attenders) attend for either morning or afternoon sessions only – not because they are not well enough to attend for longer, but because there is not enough room for all pupils to attend at the same time. Parents, pupils and staff alike all say that they would welcome more time. The result is that, for part-time pupils, the curriculum is too narrow. There is a sensible focus on the core subjects of English and mathematics, but other subjects, including the core subjects of science and information and communication technology (ICT) do not get the time they need, or are not taught at all. For most pupils, there is no regular opportunity for planned physical activity. Staff have done a good deal to make the accommodation a pleasant, attractive, well ordered working environment – but there is simply not enough space to provide all pupils with the full-time education required, and the facilities are too limited. The lack of an

appropriate outside play area is another constraint. There is no suitable space, either, for those pupils with extreme behavioural problems and complex special needs who come to the unit for one-to-one tuition. Having such pupils educated in the same setting as anxious pupils is not working well. The LEA has recognised the need to find more suitable premises, but at present the inadequate accommodation is a key reason why the unit does not provide an acceptable education and why pupils do not achieve enough overall.

15. In spite of this, older pupils have the chance to be entered for public examinations at age 16. This is a positive feature of the provision, in spite of the constraints in which it has to operate. Records show that pupils receiving home or hospital education are able to keep up with their studies and go on to take a good range of GCSEs. Pupils who attend the unit itself (school age mothers and anxiety related non-attenders) are also able to gain nationally recognised qualifications, albeit in a limited number of subjects.

16. On the other hand, a particular weakness of the curriculum is the lack of a planned programme of personal, social and health education – normally a key aspect of the work of a PRU. Although elements of citizenship are introduced in an informal way to some pupils (for example, the older anxious non-attenders), and aspects of health education are covered in the work done with school age mothers by health visitors and midwives, the unit does not have a co-ordinated programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils' progress in this important respect suffers as a result.

17. For pupils attending the PRU itself, the curriculum is not sufficiently geared to preparing pupils to cope when they move back into school. The lack of taught time means pupils fall behind in too many subjects, making reintegration more problematic. The over-emphasis on individual tuition in some groups does not equip pupils to cope in a class setting. Weaknesses in curriculum planning (in part down to lack of subject expertise, curriculum leadership and up-to-date experience in schools) mean that the work does not adequately reflect what is going on in mainstream schools. In contrast, in English and mathematics for the anxious non-attenders in Years 10 and 11, curriculum planning is well informed and effective, to the benefit of these pupils.

18. Opportunities for enrichment are understandably limited because of pupils' circumstances. In spite of this, some pupils have benefited from worthwhile opportunities – they do better than others thanks to the initiative and imagination of individual teachers and home tutors. For home pupils anxious about returning to school, activities are planned outside the home in order to build up their confidence. Other pupils have been on useful study visits (for example, to the theatre, or to sites of historical or geographical importance) to help them with their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The unit takes satisfactory steps to ensure pupils' care and well-being but provision for support, guidance and advice is unsatisfactory due to inadequate monitoring. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to express their views and for involvement with school life.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The service creates a caring environment in which pupils feel secure and are valued – but procedures are not in place to safeguard and monitor pupils' access to the internet.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress in their learning and personal development is unsatisfactory.
- Careers education and guidance for older pupils is good but is not provided for younger pupils in Year 9.
- Induction arrangements and arrangements for the transfer of hospital pupils to home tuition are good.

## **Commentary**

19. Pupils' care and well-being is supported through the positive relationships which exist and by the detailed attention staff give to daily routines that ensure pupils are well cared for. A safe environment is created for pupils who are educated in the centre and due attention is paid to ensuring facilities used for off-site one-to-one tuition are conducive to learning. Primary pupils make good use of the small outside area at break time and are well supervised. Pupils report that they feel valued and secure. However the service has not yet established effective policies and procedures for pupils' internet use, including agreement with parents for their child to use the internet and appropriate internet protection.

20. The unit does not have an effective system for tracking pupils' progress in either their learning or their personal development. Too much is left to the individual teacher. For some groups, there is no systematic monitoring at all of pupils' progress. On the other hand, in the primary group, the rewards system, reintegration log and weekly progress assist monitoring of behaviour and encourage pupil involvement. However, the steps taken by individual teachers in some groups are not adequately co-ordinated and, as a result, there is no firm basis on which to set targets for improvement or to review how well they are being achieved. Arrangements for reviewing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Not enough use is being made of target-setting for individual pupils as a way of raising attainment and promoting personal development.

21. Older pupils have good access to a range of careers advice and support from the careers service that enables them to build their confidence, ready for the move to college and work. However, this provision is not currently available to pupils in Year 9. The unit works well with the careers adviser to prepare older pupils for life beyond the unit, through interview role plays, shadowing and taster schemes and accompanied visits to colleges and work placements.

22. The induction arrangements for pupils are effective in settling them into the unit quickly. Good attention is given at the referral stage to contact with parents, including home visits, and confidence is built early on. Staff are sensitive to pupils' anxieties and go out of their way to help with transport arrangements and to arrange for phased, supported "acclimatisation" visits. Arrangements for hospital pupils to transfer to home tuition were praised by school headteachers and parents, particularly where pupils are able to continue with the same tutor, providing helpful continuity in their studies and avoiding any administrative delays.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents and carers are effective. Links with the community are satisfactory, as are links with schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The unit successfully wins the trust of parents.
- There are some weaknesses in the provision of information to parents.
- The unit works to build its partnership with schools, who appreciate the service it provides – but the response of schools is variable.

### **Commentary**

23. The unit goes out of its way to contact parents at the point of referral and gain their support through home visits, by contacting the sending school and by working with any other agencies which may be involved with their child. This initial visit, together with regular telephone contact helps to build trust between the unit and home. Parents say they are pleased the service has stepped in to help their child. This is especially the case for pupils receiving teaching at the hospitals or at home, where teaching is praised by parents for keeping their child on course with their learning. Parents are canvassed for their views at the end of placements, with positive comments received, albeit from a limited number of returns – although parents would like to see more subjects taught and more teaching time at the unit. The school development plan outlines proposals for home school agreements with parents but as yet these are not in place.

24. Information to parents is satisfactory at the initial stage and home-school diaries are used effectively in some groups. Whilst parents receive written termly reports on pupils' progress, these tell parents too little about the progress their child has made in their work. There is no system of regular reviews where parents can discuss progress face to face.

25. The unit works hard to build its partnership with schools, who speak well of its responsiveness. It canvasses views of schools on the success of placements when pupils return to mainstream school. The limited number that respond are generally positive. Schools like the unit to take their pupils and are happy for them to be there. However, in practice the effectiveness of the links varies between schools. Some schools are good at providing the necessary information about pupils and about the work they would like them to do, in order to keep abreast of what is happening in school. In other cases, however, key information is not forthcoming and this affects the work that the staff of the unit are able to plan – leading to unsatisfactory provision for pupils in some subjects.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the unit are unsatisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is unsatisfactory, as is the management of the unit. Governance is poor.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The lack of strategic planning for the establishment of a new PRU has resulted in unsatisfactory provision.
- Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation by both the unit and the LEA have resulted in pupils not being taught well enough and in statutory requirements not being met
- The headteacher has established a positive ethos amongst staff and has gained their commitment to the unit's aims and vision.
- The recently established senior management team has made a sound start on planning for improvement.
- The lack of curriculum leadership is contributing to pupils' underachievement.
- The leadership in the unit is not focussed enough on raising pupils' achievement and on improving teaching.

### **Commentary**

26. The unit has suffered from a lack of strategic planning by the LEA, coupled with a lack of educational steer and appropriate resourcing. The result has been that too little emphasis has been given to pupils' achievement and personal development, and to planning and securing improvement. Until very recently, the unit had no clear idea of where it was going or of its priorities for development. It was left to struggle with inadequate premises, a weakness that has prevented it from providing full-time education for the majority of its pupils. This continues to be a serious barrier to improvement. The provision for primary pupils was introduced without adequate planning and without adequate curriculum advice and support. Consequently, this provision has had a difficult start, particularly since the first cohorts of pupils came with very challenging behaviour problems.

27. The lack of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision within the unit by both the LEA and the headteacher has meant that there has been no clear understanding of how pupils, particularly in the groups for anxious non-attenders in Years 7-9 and for school age mothers, are being let down by unsatisfactory teaching. In these groups pupils are not being taught well enough, with the result that they make inadequate progress in their learning. The unit's strengths and weaknesses have not been well enough known by the LEA and by the management committee of the service. In fact, statutory requirements have not been met concerning performance management and the annual review for some pupils with statements of special educational needs. It is thanks to the recently appointed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator that the gaps in annual reviews for some pupils have been identified and a plan put in place to remedy the situation. The LEA's failure to

monitor the quality of provision has also resulted in the lack of guidance given to the headteacher on strategies for more effective delivery of the curriculum, on how to raise pupils' standards of achievement, on strategies for assessment and on how to improve the quality of teaching. The management committee receives a report from the unit only once a year; this does not put it in a position to hold the unit to account or to provide adequate support.

28. Arrangements for curriculum leadership (including subject leadership) are currently inadequate, something that the unit has recognised in its development plan. The lack of knowledge of recent curriculum developments in mainstream schools by both the headteacher and the teaching staff is a further barrier to improvement. This is affecting the quality of provision in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and also helps account for the lack of appropriately planned provision for personal, social and health education throughout the unit.

29. The unit has valued the support it has received from the head of the pupil referral service for the introduction of a senior management team. This new team has made a sound start to planning for improvement, producing a detailed improvement plan for the current year. It has successfully involved all staff in establishing a vision for the unit and in gaining their commitment to this vision and to the unit's aims. The headteacher has successfully created a positive ethos amongst the staff and within the unit as a whole which enables pupils to feel secure, valued and accepted. What is lacking, however, is a clear emphasis, both within the aims of the unit and in its daily practice, on raising pupils' standards of achievement and improving the quality of teaching.



## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4

#### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory** overall.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Within the unit itself, there is too much weak English teaching that is leading to pupils' underachievement.
- Year 10 and 11 pupils in the groups for anxious non-attenders achieve well, thanks to very good teaching.
- The lack of overall leadership and management of the subject is contributing to the patchy overall provision.

#### Commentary

30. Overall, achievement in English is unsatisfactory – although this hides a very varied picture. Evidence available on pupils who receive home and hospital education shows that they make satisfactory (and sometimes good) progress and that they achieve satisfactory standards. As far as their medical conditions allow, they not only keep up with their work, but actually move forward in it – as the GCSE grades of older pupils confirm. This works best where schools provide good quality information about pupils and detailed plans about the work they want them to tackle – and where this is matched by a good understanding on the part of their tutors of what is required in the subject at the level concerned. At the unit itself, the Year 10 and 11 anxious non-attenders achieve well, thanks to the quality of planning and teaching. They improve their ability to express themselves accurately and coherently, and often sensitively, both in speech and in writing. Their work in literature, for example, shows very good progress in understanding and responding to layers of meaning. They show good insights into the writer's intentions and to the impact of a wide range of literary devices. Importantly, they show a real interest and enthusiasm and grow in confidence and in their ability to work constructively with others, building on their contributions – an important aspect of their personal development, given the particular needs of these pupils. Other pupils, however, do not achieve well enough. There is too much underachievement among pupils in the primary class, in the class for Years 7-9 anxious non-attenders, and in the group for school age mothers. This is because of weaknesses in the teaching. Pupils continue to produce work of about the same standard; they do not make enough progress and do not learn to overcome weaknesses – and some have significant weaknesses in basic literacy – or improve the quality of what they do.

31. In view of weaknesses in these particular groups, the teaching of English overall is unsatisfactory. There is nevertheless some sound teaching of English by other teachers and tutors – for example, those involved in home and hospital education – and some very good teaching. In English lessons seen with the older anxious non-attenders, well prepared, well paced work was clearly related to the requirements of the syllabus, thanks to a good level of subject expertise. It was presented in a lively, accessible, motivating way, and expectations were high. Very effective, probing questioning challenged pupils to get below the surface of what they were reading and to develop their ideas. Pupils were actively taught what they needed to know in order to improve. They relished the intellectual challenge. In the other groups attending the unit, this did not happen. There was too much unsatisfactory and often poor teaching. Teachers do not have a good enough grasp of the national strategies for teaching English and are unclear how to teach in a way that will achieve the objectives set in the national frameworks. In some groups, pupils are left too much to their own devices, working on their own through the work set by their schools. Teachers do not adequately plan the use of their own time in the classroom; they do not do enough to identify pupils' needs and tackle these in a systematic way; they do not teach pupils what they need to learn; they do not ensure that pupils

receive a properly planned and balanced “diet” of work that will allow them to move forward. In two groups, very little is done at all to develop pupils’ speaking and listening skills.

32. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Although a specialist English teacher acts as a point of reference to other staff and gives advice where this is sought, particularly where public examination work is concerned, she does not carry a subject leadership role. At present, there is no arrangement for overall co-ordination and leadership of the subject, for shaping curriculum planning, for assessing and tracking achievement, or for monitoring and developing the quality of what is provided. This helps to account for the patchy, unsatisfactory nature of provision.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

33. Not surprisingly, in light of the lack of a co-ordinated approach, the teaching of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory – in spite of the effective work done by a few individual teachers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **unsatisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Year 10 and 11 pupils in the groups for anxious non-attenders benefit from good teaching and make appropriate progress.
- Teachers’ lack of knowledge of national strategies, particularly in Years 7-9, is preventing pupils from achieving as much as they should.
- Unsatisfactory and poor teaching in the groups for school age mothers and for Year 7-9 anxious non-attenders holds back pupils’ progress and achievement.

### **Commentary**

34. Attainment is below average for pupils’ ages, although some pupils reach the standards expected and a few exceed them. Progress and achievement are unsatisfactory overall – although this is not the case for all groups of pupils. The lack of baseline assessment and information about pupils’ prior attainment make the identification and tracking of pupils’ progress difficult, particularly when coupled with the lack of systematic on-going assessment. This is holding back pupils’ learning and achievement, because it prevents them from receiving the focused teaching they need in order to address the gaps in their knowledge – particularly in the groups for school age mothers and for Year 7-9 anxious non-attenders, where pupils underachieve. In the primary class, there is a sound emphasis on helping pupils to develop competence in basic numeracy. For these pupils, achievement is satisfactory. They make appropriate progress in developing confidence in adding and subtracting, in recognising fractions as part of a whole, and in following simple compass directions. In the groups for anxious non-attenders in Years 10 and 11, achievement is good. The more able pupils in these groups are being well supported to cope with the varied demands of the GCSE syllabus, while the lower attaining pupils receive good, systematic support for the development of their mathematical competence and confidence through the wide range of modules leading to certification through the unit award scheme.

35. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, although it is never less than satisfactory for primary pupils and is often good for the Year 10 and 11 anxious non-attenders. Teaching is best where the planned learning objectives are clear to the pupils, and indeed to other adults helping pupils with their work. In the Year 10-11 anxious non-attenders’ group, pupils’ thinking is well challenged and the teacher’s explanations are clear. In these lessons the teacher maintains a consistent focus on raising achievement and, through an appropriately wide range of activities, injects pace into pupils’ learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, this is because planning is weak, there are no clear learning objectives, the teacher reacts in an unplanned way to pupils’ problems as they arise,

and some adults lack adequate knowledge and understanding of the work being covered. Understanding of the national strategy and framework for teaching mathematics is weak.

36. There are no clear arrangements for leadership and management of the subject across the different groups of pupils. Assessment is weak and this prevents satisfactory tracking of individual pupils' progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

37. The development of numeracy across the curriculum is poor; it has not been thought through.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **poor**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Too little science is taught.
- There is too much weak teaching leading to poor achievement.
- Not enough account is taken of the national curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources for science are poor.
- Lack of subject leadership and management is contributing to poor provision.

### **Commentary**

38. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory and is preventing pupils making the progress they should. Until very recently, some groups were not taught any science at all, even though they were deemed likely to return to mainstream school. Where science is taught, lack of subject leadership, together with a lack of understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum means that whilst individual lessons are occasionally satisfactory, the overall diet of what pupils are taught is not good enough. As a result, achievement in science is poor.

39. For pupils aged 11-16, there are significant weaknesses in the way lessons are organised and taught. There is no scheme of work, lessons are not adequately planned, and do not take enough account of what individual pupils understand, know and can do in science. The teaching methods used are restricting what pupils can achieve. Lessons focus too much on the completion of exercises taken from textbooks. Too little structured, planned support is given to make sure that pupils have the opportunity to carry out investigations. Explanations are not clear enough and are sometimes inaccurate, and questioning is too often haphazard and muddled. The opportunities to exchange ideas and develop an understanding through discussion are too limited. The pace of lessons is too slow and pupils become bored and frustrated and, in the school age mothers' group, say so. Pupils rarely complete the work set by mainstream schools and too little work is covered in lessons.

40. Accommodation and resources for science are poor. There are insufficient resources for pupils to carry out the range of investigations appropriate for their ages. Books are also in short supply, both pupils' textbooks and reference materials. Teachers have had no recent in-service training in science, there is no subject leadership or management, and there appear to be no effective links with mainstream science teachers. Overall, the weaknesses in teaching and in the curriculum, together with the shortage of lessons, mean that pupils are not learning enough in science.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils do not achieve enough because the approach to teaching the subject is not planned or systematic enough.
- The recent acquisition of new computers has given a boost to the use of ICT – but there is still much to be done.
- Although staff have had ICT training, some still lack the confidence and expertise needed to help pupils in their work.

### **Commentary**

41. Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory. Pupils make most progress in using ICT to present their work – consolidating or extending their ability to use word-processing, incorporating graphics and WordArt – or in using the internet to search for information. Primary pupils have experimented with the program “Paint” and have programmed instructions into a Roamer. However, so far the approach for pupils of all ages has tended to be rather episodic and has not derived from a coherent curriculum plan. Pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding have not been developed in a systematic way and the progress they have made has been too slight. Pressure on curriculum time has meant that the subject has not been taught to all pupils – although some individuals have attempted work sent by their mainstream schools. Because of this, pupils have little or no exposure to important aspects of the subject, and, although they make some progress on a narrow front, they are falling behind their peers in mainstream school.

42. The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory overall. During the inspection, there was some satisfactory teaching where pupils got the help they needed in order to learn and apply a new skill. In one primary lesson, for example, pupils were shown how to create a flow chart and then successfully produced their own outline charts which they used to represent the life cycle of a frog. In general, however, there is too little teaching of ICT and, when pupils do work on ICT projects sent from school (for example, an introduction to basic spreadsheets), the teaching is confusing, in part because of adults’ inadequate grasp of the subject and in part because they do not prepare the lesson well enough. On such occasions, too much time is wasted, progress is too slow and pupils’ confidence is in danger of being eroded.

43. Until recently, the unit was poorly equipped for ICT, but recent investment in good equipment has given a new lease of life to the subject. The range of software is being built up and teachers are now looking for ways of harnessing the new potential. The unit has rightly identified as one of its priorities for development the wider use of ICT as a tool for learning. However, the success of these plans is put at risk because leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Although a teacher provides useful informal support to other colleagues on the use of ICT, there is no formal arrangement for subject leadership and co-ordination.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

44. Although some use is made of ICT to help pupils learn in different subjects, the use of ICT across the curriculum is less than it should be and is currently unsatisfactory – something that is recognised in the unit’s development plans.

### **OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

45. Work was sampled in other subjects. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards and achievement overall.

46. **Art and design** is taught in the primary classroom and by some home and hospital teachers. In the one lesson seen on perspective with one secondary aged pupil, the teacher was not able to persuade the pupil to engage in the lesson.

47. There is no planned programme of **personal, social and health education** across the unit. It was possible to see a careers session with one group, where pupils were preparing for mock job interviews. The teaching by the unit's link careers adviser was good; with expertise and humour, she enabled the pupils to understand how to create a positive impression on a prospective employer. One lesson was seen with primary pupils where pupils were considering frustration and the associated emotions. This was satisfactory, and made a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. It was sound preparation for pupils' return to mainstream school.

48. The unit has no facilities for **physical education** and sport. Most pupils have no regular opportunities for planned physical activities. However, in the one lesson seen (with the primary EBD pupils, using the facilities of the neighbouring school), the lesson was well taught and pupils enjoyed learning to throw and catch a basket ball, standing and running.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the unit</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the unit is	5
How the unit's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the unit	6
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	5
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the unit</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	6
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	6
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	6
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the unit seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the unit's links with parents	4
The quality of the unit's links with the community	4
The unit's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the unit</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the unit	6
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*