

INSPECTION REPORT

FERNWOOD PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Middlesbrough

LEA area: Middlesbrough

Unique reference number: 133571

Headteacher: Mrs Valerie Neel

Lead inspector: Sarah Mascall

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th March 2004

Inspection number: 259074

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Pupils who are permanently excluded or at risk of
School category: Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
Age range of pupils: 11-14
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 43 (as with all PRUs this varies)

School address: c/o Tollesby School
Saltersgill Avenue
Middlesbrough
Postcode: TS4 3JS

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Appropriate authority: Local Education Authority
Name responsible Officer: Dave Sands

Date of previous inspection: Not previously inspected

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small PRU that serves the whole of Middlesbrough. The Unit takes pupils in Years 7 to 9 and they are taught in mixed age groups. In the week of the inspection there were 43 pupils on roll. Pupils are either at risk of or have been excluded from previous schools. Boys outnumber girls about 5:1 which is typical for this type of provision. There are very few ethnic minority pupils and none speak English as an additional language. This reflects the local population. There are a high number of pupils with statements of special educational need (currently about a quarter of pupils). Three pupils are in the care of the local authority. Almost half the pupils are on the rolls of mainstream schools and attend the Unit part time. Nearly all pupils come from the very deprived areas of the borough and attainment on entry is below average. The Unit has gone through a period of disruption because of difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff and a lack of clarity concerning its role. The Unit is due to move to a new site in September of this year. It gained the first part of the healthy school's award in 2003

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20536	Sarah Mascall	Lead inspector	Science, history, geography, art
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27409	Susan Hunt	Team inspector	English, PSHE and citizenship
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Fernwood provides a **satisfactory** education for pupils. It has many strengths. Leadership and management are good and are having a positive impact on improving the quality of education provided. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and as a result pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The Unit provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this contributes to pupils' standards of behaviour and good attitudes to learning.
- Effective leadership of the Unit and good teamwork have resulted in a consistent approach to the planning and teaching of lessons.
- The care and welfare of pupils is very good.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- Pupils who attend the Unit on a part time basis as well as their mainstream schools do not receive their full entitlement of 25 hours education.
- Procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing are being established but at present they do not ensure that work is matched to individual pupils' abilities.
- Parents are kept well informed by staff and are well supported by the home/school liaison officer.
- Arrangements for the formal training of staff linked to performance management are unsatisfactory.
- The accommodation is poor and this prevents aspects of the curriculum being taught.

The PRU 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 9	Satisfactory	Good

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

Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory**. Their progress in developing their speaking and listening skills is good. Overall in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography pupils make satisfactory progress. As a result of good support from staff during the day and lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship pupils make good progress in their personal development. Pupils have limited opportunities to study physical education and design and technology and do not make the progress they should in these subjects. Those pupils who do not attend full time do not achieve as well as they could because they are not studying a sufficient range of subjects. Pupils make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes to school are good. There are good systems to encourage pupils to go to school and attendance is satisfactory. Many who have not attended school in the past attend lessons in the Unit on a regular basis. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and pupils respond to this and behave well. Relationships with staff are very good. Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** and often good. Teachers plan their lessons in detail and are consistent in the way they work. As a result pupils are aware of what they will learn when they arrive in the class and understand what is expected of them. Good use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy ensures that pupils' literacy skills are developed appropriately

in all subjects. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are being introduced but at present teachers do not have sufficient information to ensure that the academic needs of individual pupils are met. The curriculum is adequate. It focuses well on English, mathematics, science and ICT and is further extended by humanities and art. There is good emphasis on promoting PSHE and citizenship. Because of problems with accommodation subjects such as design and technology and physical education are not formally planned or taught. It is unsatisfactory that pupils with statements of special educational need are not being taught all subjects of the National Curriculum as is required. Pupils are cared for very well and given good support in learning to manage their behaviour. Links with parents are good and staff do all they can to involve parents although not all parents respond to this. The community is used well to improve opportunities for pupils to learn and develop. Links with mainstream schools are good. The Unit has a good programme to support pupils returning to mainstream schools. However not all schools are keen to accept pupils back from the Unit and do not always provide a suitable education for those who are dual registered. Schools appreciate the support they are being given by the Unit staff in helping them to prevent pupils being excluded from their schools. Accommodation is poor and this prevents staff from teaching all aspects of subjects, particularly in science and art. Resources are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Over the last two years the headteacher, with the support of the management committee and Local Education Authority (LEA), has been successful in making good improvements to the teaching and learning within the Unit. She is very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the Unit and provides a very good role model to staff. The headteacher is well supported by the acting deputy head and the senior management team. There is a strong team spirit where the pupils are the centre of all that is done. Management is good. The day-to-day management of the school is good and staff lead their subjects well. Staff have worked very hard to develop the provision and are keen to improve what they do. However the performance management of staff, and its links to staff development, is not yet fully in place and opportunities for staff to develop their expertise in subject areas are limited. There have been problems in recruiting teachers, however unqualified teachers and teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

Overall parents are pleased with the progress their children make. They feel they are well informed about what happens and are very appreciative of the support they have received from the home school liaison officer. Pupils like the PRU and comment that they have made good progress. They feel they are valued by staff and can talk to them about their problems.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the Unit, together with the LEA, should do to improve are:-

- Ensure that those pupils attending part time receive their full educational entitlement.
- Continue to develop assessment procedures to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met.
- Ensure that the new accommodation enables the PRU to teach a wider range of subjects.
- Ensure that performance management procedures and training opportunities are in place for all staff.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs are met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils work hard and make good progress in lessons. However teachers' planning is not matched to pupils' individual needs and as a result their progress over time is satisfactory.
- Personal, social and health education is well promoted throughout the Unit.
- Pupils' literacy skills are developed well in all subjects.
- Pupils with statements of special educational needs and those who attend part time do not have the opportunity to achieve in the subjects they are entitled to be taught.

Commentary

1. When they start at the Unit pupils' attainments are below national expectations because their education has been disrupted as a result of periods of exclusions and non-attendance. There are high expectations by staff that pupils will work hard and as a result pupils develop their skills and knowledge well during lessons. However because planning is not focused on individual pupils or matched to their age range, pupils' achievements over time are satisfactory rather than good. This is the case for all pupils including those with additional special needs. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls. In standard assessment tests pupils achieve almost as well as their peers in special schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Several achieve Levels 4 and 5 in English, mathematics and science. However because attendance is low for these tests the results are not representative of the overall ability level of pupils in Year 9.
2. In English pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They develop good speaking and listening skills and their achievements in reading and writing are satisfactory. Although pupils benefit from extra lessons in basic skills these are not yet structured enough to ensure pupils build on their skills in a systematic way. Achievements in mathematics and science are satisfactory. There are high expectations of behaviour and very good relationships support pupils' behaviour and ensure they make progress in lessons. In information and communication technology (ICT) there has been a good investment in computers and equipment. This together with confident teaching is enabling pupils to develop their skills appropriately. In all other subjects pupils make satisfactory achievements over time.
3. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal, social and health education and citizenship. They benefit from a very consistent approach from teachers and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in terms of their social behaviour. They make good improvements in their behaviour and personal development. This helps them significantly in conforming and learning how to behave in class. They make good progress against the targets they are set in their individual education plans (IEPs).
4. Pupils' literacy skills are developed well throughout the Unit mainly because teachers use the National Key Stage 3 Strategy well. All teachers offer good opportunities for pupils to participate and contribute in lessons. Their ideas are valued and as a result they are confident to speak in front of a group. They listen well to each other, such as in a history lesson when pupils talked about what they had found when looking at sources concerning Bastille Day. They learn how to spell key words in each lesson and develop a good understanding of what these words mean. Pupils are encouraged to develop their writing skills because teachers in nearly all subjects

expect them to write full answers to questions. Where worksheets are used these are designed so that pupils have enough space to write in detail and this encourages them to write more.

- Nearly a quarter of pupils have statements of special educational needs. The Unit provides those who have been excluded from school permanently with as full a curriculum as it can. However, this does not meet the requirements of their statement and as a result they do not have the opportunity to achieve as well as they should. There are also a number of pupils who are educated on a part time basis in the Unit and their mainstream schools should provide for part of their education. In a large percentage of cases there is no provision for these pupils other than the Unit and this is unsatisfactory because they are not being able to achieve in the full range of National Curriculum subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other qualities are **good**. Their behaviour, moral and social development is **good**. Their spiritual and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well managed by staff and this enables them to develop good attitudes to learning and improve their behaviour.
- The very good relationships between staff and pupils and the care and support pupils receive promote their confidence and social development well.
- There is a good focus on developing pupils' awareness of moral and social issues.
- The Unit has good procedures to promote attendance, but there is no formal or systematic exchange of information about attendance between the Unit and mainstream schools.

Commentary

- The good systems for managing pupils' behaviour result in many pupils developing strategies that improve their behaviour. Pupils' targets are prominently displayed in each classroom and staff refer to them regularly. In addition, pupils attend a behaviour review twice a day so that their behaviour targets can be reinforced and checked. This system motivates pupils to learn, particularly with the opportunity for each pupil to pick their chosen activities for each Friday. Pupils do know right from wrong and respond well to the high expectations that staff have of them. Opportunities are taken in lessons for example when studying Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' to understand the rights and wrongs of people's actions. Pupils enjoy being at the Unit, they appreciate the expectations the Unit has of them and realise their learning has improved because they are better behaved and attend better than they did in their mainstream school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	40	45	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1		

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

- Staff work well with pupils. Considerable thought is given to the advice offered to pupils to improve their social skills and awareness of moral and cultural issues. The very good relationships between staff and pupils allows staff to deal effectively with difficult issues that arise. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own actions. They have a good

understanding of the need for rules and show respect for the views of others. Pupils are also encouraged to take on responsibilities. For example pupils mark each other's answers when they are revising work from previous lessons. They do this sensibly and with care, often working together well to complete the activity.

8. The Unit has a comprehensive system of reporting incidents of bullying and racial tension and the handling of these is effective. Considerable work has been undertaken to promote racial harmony and there are now no incidences of racial harassment for the black and mixed race pupils within the Unit. There is no daily act of worship but there are moments when pupils do reflect on their behaviour, an example of this was when a pupil admitted in an open letter that she had bullied another girl and really regretted it.
9. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory, pupils learn about multi cultural issues in history, geography and citizenship. Pupils are developing a knowledge of their local environment when they visit their local swimming baths, planetarium and the area of Roseberry Topping in Middlesbrough where they say they are always amazed at what they can see of their town from the top of the hill!

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	17%	School data	8%

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

10. Most pupils like attending the Unit because it provides them with a welcoming and supportive environment and thus the overall level of attendance is satisfactory. About two thirds of the pupils now have good levels of attendance. This represents considerable improvement in attendance by many pupils who in the past had refused to attend their mainstream school.
11. The Unit, well supported by the educational welfare service, uses a good range of systems to promote good attendance, including, as a last resort, action through the courts. However, for those pupils who attend part time, there is no systematic way in which information about attendance is effectively exchanged with their mainstream schools and therefore no formal way of knowing if pupils are receiving the level of education to which they are entitled.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** and often good. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. There are **good** opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum. Pupils are **very well** cared for. Partnership with parents and the majority of mainstream schools are **good**. The provision for supporting pupils returning to mainstream schools is **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are consistent in their approach to managing pupils' behaviour.
- There are high expectations of what pupils will do and very good relationships which ensure that pupils work hard in lessons.
- Teachers follow the National Key Stage 3 Strategy which results in a consistent structure to each lesson.

- There is not sufficient attention paid to matching work set to the needs of individual pupils.
- Assessment is not yet effective in ensuring that pupils' progress is closely checked.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	17	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They are quick to notice pupils' achieving, whether this involves them working quietly for a few minutes or answering a question. They praise pupils frequently and use the reward system very well, recording pupils' points on a regular basis. Teachers know their pupils very well and both teachers and support staff react quickly to defuse situations whether it is through a quiet word or by distracting a pupil. Teachers do not hesitate in dealing with unacceptable behaviour or a breach of the Unit's rules. Hence, for example, a pupil knows if he or she swears they will be reprimanded. These very high expectations result in pupils knowing what the boundaries are and, in the majority of cases, conforming to them well.
- Humour is used well by all staff and the very good relationships and high regard in which staff are held ensures that pupils settle quickly in lessons and listen to teachers. Pupils work hard because they know that is what is expected of them. When work is difficult they ask for help knowing that the support they get will help them learn. The majority of pupils can be encouraged to participate even when they are clearly having a bad day. They are keen to do well and take care over their work, ensuring it is well presented.
- Evidence from teachers' planning and observation of lessons show that all teachers use the same format and structure in all lessons. Very good use is made of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Teachers set out the objectives for the lesson on the board, display key words and ensure that there is a starter activity. At the end of the lesson teachers check pupils' understanding of the work that has been done. Pupils know what to expect in every lesson and this supports their behaviour very well. All staff begin their lessons with a starter activity which is a revision of the work they have done previously. Pupils settle well to completing this and this helps focus them on the next stage of learning. They practice the key words and during the lessons all teachers, through a variety of activities such as a quick spelling test or games such as hangman, ensure that pupils know the words and can spell them. The plenary session is used well to help pupils recall what they have learnt and to discuss how hard they have worked during the lesson.
- During the inspection in nearly all lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was good. However, teachers do not effectively plan work for individual pupils. The planning for the lesson gives details of what is to be taught and how, but there is very little evidence of planning work that will match the needs or ages of individual pupils. Worksheets are the same for all pupils and teaching assistants are used to help the pupils who may struggle to read. However this limits the use of staff and also inhibits pupils from becoming independent learners. It also results in pupils in Year 7 for example doing the same work as those in Year 9 pupil. This limits pupils from developing the same knowledge and understanding as their mainstream peers.
- Procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing are being established but they are very new and not sufficiently developed to ensure that work is matched to pupils' individual abilities. At the present time when pupils arrive at the Unit they are tested only in reading and spelling levels and

learning targets are set for these. However, this does not influence teachers' planning for their lessons other than through the allocation of teaching assistants to individual pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well focused on ensuring that pupils study a suitable range of subjects but part time pupils and those with statements of special educational need do not receive their full curriculum entitlement.
- Pupils' experiences are broadened by the good activities outside the classroom. However there is no formal, structured planning for these activities to ensure pupils' skills are developed.
- The accommodation limits what pupils can be taught and how effectively they can be helped and supported.
- Pupils' personal, social and health education is supported well.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is very newly developed. Considerable thought has gone into ensuring that appropriate time is allocated to the teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT. As a result full time pupils within the Unit receive a reasonable range of subjects including humanities and art.
18. The Unit ensures that pupils attending part time study a similar range of subjects. However a quarter of pupils are dual registered but do not have opportunities to spend time in their mainstream school and therefore they do not have access to the full National Curriculum. New systems introduced by the LEA will ensure that pupils are no longer dual registered and from September 2004 the provision for the three remaining dual registered pupils will be reviewed.
19. The curriculum for pupils with statements of special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Although they benefit from the curriculum provided by the Unit they are not receiving their full entitlement and this is not appropriate. These pupils do not have access to the range of subjects that they are entitled to. Pupils' statements are reviewed regularly but the provision outlined within them is not being met. The LEA is aware of the inappropriateness of this situation and is no longer referring pupils with statements of special educational need to the Unit.
20. There is a good focus within the curriculum for PHSE and citizenship and time is given to enable pupils to develop their skills through discussions with staff during tutor periods. Arrangements for a breakfast Club and lunchtime are good. Staff and pupils spend time together both in the morning and at lunchtime, talking over the activities and problems of the day. This proves effective and helps support pupils' social development well. Careers education and guidance is well supported by regular visits to the Unit from Connexions when either work is done with individuals or it is delivered to whole groups.
21. The accommodation is poor and the Unit cannot offer a range of practical activities, such as design and technology and physical education. However the Unit does ensure that pupils have access to formal swimming lessons. The new ICT suite ensures that ICT forms a good part of the curriculum for all pupils at the Unit. There are appropriate plans to move the Unit to a new, more suitable site in the near future.
22. The Unit extends pupils' experiences well through activities outside school. Although there is only a planned timetable in the Unit for Monday to Thursday, the Friday choice, earned during the week, includes activities the pupils might not otherwise experience, such as visits to the local leisure centre, ice-skating and wall climbing. Other trips, such as to the Planetarium or the local football stadium, promote and support learning well. They also help encourage an understanding

and appreciation of the world and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. However there is no long term planning for these Friday activities and opportunities are missed to develop the curriculum further.

23. The levels of staffing and resources are satisfactory. Although there have been problems with recruiting teachers the Unit has made good use of unqualified teachers and has given them good support to enable them to plan and teach lessons. The lack of small rooms limits the amount of private support and guidance that staff in the Unit and from outside can give to individual, or small groups of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well** cared for. There are **very good** arrangements to ensure their health, safety and welfare. Pupils receive **good** quality support and advice. Their views are sought and acted on well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff know the pupils very well and this helps them provide the good quality support and guidance pupils need in their personal development.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils returning to mainstream are good.
- The welfare of pupils is a major focus for staff.
- The Unit involves pupils well in its work by seeking their views and acting on them.

Commentary

24. Staff work hard to develop and maintain the very good relationships that evolve with pupils. These are crucial in helping staff provide the individual targeted support and guidance to help the pupils work towards achieving their personal targets. Their very good knowledge of pupils means that all pupils are treated as individuals and support is tailored well to support their personal development. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development is satisfactory. Targets in pupils' IEPs are appropriate and pupils are involved in setting their own targets. Staff are constantly reminding pupils of their targets and encouraging them to meet them. However the lack of focus on developing and supporting each pupil's academic skills results in pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress in their work.
25. Support for those pupils who return to mainstream schools is effective. The co-ordinator ensures that there are good procedures for consultation and the views of the pupils involved and those of the school are taken into consideration. There is good flexibility and the Unit is sensitive to the needs of the pupils in tackling new areas and subjects and support on these occasions is always available. Planned reduction of support means the pupils can progress at their own rate and are not left floundering and in danger of failing.
26. Staff show considerable care and concern for pupils. They are vigilant in their child protection procedures and know what they need to do. Daily discussions before and after school ensure that staff are well informed and ways of tackling situations are explored and shared. Good relationships have been developed with outside agencies, including Connexions and social services. These ensure that pupils are well supported. Staff work closely with the educational psychologist and receive good support and advice in working with individual pupils. Health and safety procedures are very good and the Unit provides a safe environment in which the pupils and the staff can work together.
27. The staff spend a lot of time talking to pupils individually about their aspirations and their views are taken into account. Their views are also sought collectively on the running of the Unit and this helps them to see that they are valued and can influence the Unit's work. Pupils evaluate their own and other's behaviour at the end of each lesson and respond to surveys on aspects such as a breakfast club and the rewards they would like to receive for good attendance. The

involvement of and openness with pupils is an intrinsic part of the Unit and contributes greatly to the very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents particularly like the personal contact they have with staff.
- Although information about the pupils is slow in being given to the Unit good links exist with most secondary schools.
- Not all the newly formed academies are keen to support re-integration of pupils back into their schools.
- The new outreach provision is being developed well.
- The Unit makes good use of local facilities to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

28. Parents show high levels of satisfaction with the Unit. The only concern raised by them relates to behaviour, and this was judged by the inspection team to be good overall. Parents speak positively of the help and support they receive, both with their children and over other matters. Members of staff develop good relationships with most parents and are welcomed into their homes. The work of the home school liaison officer is much appreciated by parents particularly in encouraging their children to attend regularly. These good relationships ensure that staff are supported by parents and pupils receive consistent messages, both from the Unit and home. Written information provided for parents is satisfactory but it is the face-to-face discussions and telephone calls that parents feel are best at keeping them involved and informed.
29. Parts of the local secondary mainstream school provision in Middlesbrough have been reorganised recently and this has affected the links between the Unit and a few mainstream schools. Links with all the existing schools are good. Constructive and supportive meetings and arrangements over the re-integration of pupils, either to their original school or to a new one, are in place and effective. The Unit tries hard to work with the newly formed city academies, but not all are helpful with the re-integration of pupils. Other links with schools promote the exchange of expertise between staff and are of benefit to all parties. However, in many cases initial information about pupils is not provided by schools or is slow to be passed on.
30. The Unit has recently established outreach provision which is working closely with mainstream schools to prevent pupils from being excluded. Planning for this is detailed and is ensuring that staff are used well. The support is valued by the schools and good links are being developed with a number of schools in the area.
31. The Unit has good relations with its immediate community. A local gym and a swimming baths are used to provide some access to physical education. Visitors from the community such as the police and the school nurse contribute well to the pupils' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher ably assisted by the acting deputy headteacher work as an **effective** team. The management committee provides **good** support particular from the chairperson.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear vision of the headteacher to develop the Unit and her enthusiasm are transferred to staff and pupils.
- Good management has enabled staff to develop their areas of responsibility well.
- Senior staff and the management committee, together with the LEA, have developed good plans to improve the work of the Unit further.
- The establishment of regular lesson observations and feedback has ensured that teaching across the Unit has improved and is now at least satisfactory.
- The management committee is very well led and very committed to improving the Unit.
- There is insufficient training through performance management to develop the skills of all staff, including the headteacher.

Commentary

32. The headteacher's drive to develop the Unit has moved it on since the Local Authority inspection of 2002. At that time the LEA judged the Unit to be failing to provide an effective education for its pupils. The LEA recognised the need to clarify the role and purpose of the Unit. Since this has been achieved the headteacher has been able to focus her attentions on developing the provision. She is extremely committed to the pupils and her dedication and enthusiasm are shared by staff.
33. Over the last two years there have been a number of areas of improvement particularly in the quality of teaching. The improvements have been brought about by the headteacher's good leadership and the generous amount of support given to the Unit by the LEA. Regular observations of lessons by advisers and the headteacher have enabled teaching and learning to improve considerably. There is now a whole Unit approach to planning and a consistent approach to teaching.
34. Management of the Unit is good. The headteacher is well supported by the acting deputy and the leadership and management team and they are an effective group. With the support of the LEA they have developed the Unit well. They have recognised that there is a need to teach in specific year groups and are already making arrangements to change the structure of the groups. Day to day management of the Unit is good and ensures that all staff are well informed. Staff carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They know the strengths and weaknesses within their areas of responsibility and have developed good plans for developing these. They are keen to listen to new ideas and accept support and advice readily. Considerable improvements have been made over the last two years because of the hard work of staff, the management committee and through the support of the LEA. The Unit has good capacity to continue to develop.
35. The headteacher has the support of an effective management committee. They meet regularly and are very well led by the chair and vice chair. They have a strong sense of purpose and are clear about how they want to ensure that there are good and effective links between the PRUs across the county. A major strength of the committee is that it is made up of a wide range of LEA personnel who know the Unit well. They have a great deal of experience and expertise to offer, and also deal with the Unit through their professional roles, for example, careers, consultancy and participation in joint lesson observations.
36. All those involved with the Unit, including the LEA and the management committee, are aware of its strengths and weaknesses and these are recognised within the present development plan. Through regular monitoring on a half termly basis the committee is fully aware of the progress the Unit is making in improving its procedures. A strong team spirit pervades the Unit and there is a shared commitment to provide pupils with a fresh start and not focus on their past. The Unit provides a caring and supportive environment and is successful at improving pupils' approach to their work, and has the capacity to improve further. The Unit is beginning to gather sufficient data to analyse in order to improve pupils' achievement, attendance and the quality of teaching and learning. However this is at an early stage of development.

37. The performance management of staff is not established. Targets for the headteacher have been set through the Unit's action plan and improvement plan. The headteacher has set herself the target of completing the NPQH award, which she has achieved. As yet the management committee have not set the headteacher's performance management targets. At present training for staff, linked to performance management, is not adequate to enable them to develop their skills further. The development of performance management for teachers and an appraisal system for non-teaching staff is a priority in the Unit improvement plan.
38. The Unit does not receive a devolved budget and therefore does not have the opportunity to prioritise spending in the way schools do. Where principles of best value can be applied, this is done well. The management committee is included in this through the headteacher's report and other agenda items for their meetings. The Unit also sets out to find out how parents and pupils feel about what is being offered to them. The Unit provides satisfactory value for money.

Significant barriers to further improvement.

- Recruitment of suitably qualified, specialist and experienced staff.
- Accommodation restrictions. There is no provision for physical education, design and technology and some areas of science. However there are plans for the Unit to move to a new site which should resolve most of the current problems linked to accommodation.
- The structure of the building restricts free movement of pupils around the building. Access to some classrooms is through other teaching rooms.
- Staff facilities are minimal.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 3

Throughout the following commentary overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and management and any other significant aspects that have an impact on pupils' achievements.

ENGLISH

Four lessons were observed, discussions with teachers took place and samples of pupils' work and planning were analysed.

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils are confident to read aloud regardless of their ability.
- Extra time is allocated to extend pupils' basic skills but planning for these sessions is not effective.
- Pupils do not make the progress they could because planning is not linked to their individual needs.
- Teaching is lively and enthusiastic and holds pupils' attention well.
- Good support from the LEA has helped develop the subject well.

Commentary

39. Throughout the school pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well, regardless of their ability, because they are encouraged to contribute in lessons. They know staff listen to them and respect their views and as a result they become confident speakers. Pupils respect each other's comments because teachers provide good role models, and they listen well to each other. In English lessons pupils contribute enthusiastically to discussions, for example they can explain Macbeth's jealousy of Duncan and Banquo. There are high expectations that pupils will explain their ideas. For example, a Year 9 pupil points out that Macbeth, although a murderer, must have been a very brave soldier because he was so well thought of by King Duncan.
40. Pupils' achievements in reading and writing are satisfactory. This is also the case for those pupils with additional learning difficulties. The teacher uses her good knowledge of the pupils to ensure that the sections they read out loud are within their capability. Not all pupils are good readers but even those with limited skills and additional special needs are confident to read aloud. Pupils have read a range of texts and are clearly enjoying their current work on Shakespeare and showing good knowledge of the text through sequencing the story in the order of events. Pupils recognise the need to re-draft their work and take care over presentation. Evidence shows that their handwriting is improving. They have studied a range of poetry, including 'The Highwayman' and nonsense poems. Their work on a poem about race won them an award. A good innovation has been the introduction of extra lessons in basic skills. However as yet there is not a formal structure and programme for these sessions which would enable them to be more effective.
41. Pupils do not make better progress because lesson planning, although detailed, does not focus on pupils' specific needs or their age range. Whilst they are developing a good range of basic skills for example, in punctuation, the work pupils do is very much geared towards a specific age range. For example this term's work is preparing Year 9 pupils for their standard assessment tests and so all pupils regardless of their age do the same work. This is unsatisfactory. Planning does not provide pupils of different abilities with a more appropriate set of tasks.

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teacher uses humour well to encourage pupils to work hard, for example by using nonsense poems to gain pupils' interests and get them motivated in writing poetry. Teaching is energetic and the very good relationships that exist are used well to keep pupils focused and on task. The management of their behaviour is very good and the constant reminders of pupils' targets helps prompt them about details such as punctuation and the use of capitals. Pupils are attentive and feel sufficiently confident to contribute. Their work is celebrated by others in the class which makes them feel valued. The marking of their work is also good, supportive comments are made that help pupils understand what they need to do improve.
43. The subject leader has only been in post for a short time and has received good help and support from the English advisor. This has led to appropriate policies being established and good use of the Literacy Strategy. At present pupils are tested when they start at the Unit and information from these tests is being used to set targets for pupils. Evidence from pupils' work, however, shows that the work is not always challenging and the school recognises the need to develop and improve assessment processes.

Literacy across the curriculum.

44. Throughout the Unit, all teachers make the most of opportunities to promote language and literacy and pupils respond very well to this. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is used well to introduce new words and as a result pupils recognise key words for different subjects and know what they mean. For example, during an art session pupils could recognise words such as "cross-hatching" and "techniques". Pupils are encouraged to write at length, for example in geography they wrote a letter home about a trip to Alton Towers.

MATHEMATICS

Four lessons were observed, there were discussions with teachers and samples of pupils' work and planning were analysed.

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good management of behaviour and positive relationships with pupils ensure that pupils work hard in lessons.
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced effectively and supports teaching well.
- Assessment procedures are being developed and because of this, work is not yet matched to pupils' ability.
- ICT is not used enough to develop pupils' skills.
- The Unit has received good support from the mathematics advisor.

Commentary

45. Staff have high, but realistic, expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. As a result pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Because relationships between staff and pupils are very good, pupils respond well, work hard and behave well. Staff make very good use of humour and praise and encourage pupils at all times. This builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence and their achievements are satisfactory and often good. By the end of Year 9, pupils use mathematical language confidently. They understand the concepts of 'rotational symmetry' and 'mirror lines' moving objects clockwise and anti-clockwise and identify which shapes have symmetry. Pupils are competent in using 'degrees' when measuring circles, semi-circles and right angles, linking this work to being able to recognise directions.

46. Teaching and learning in lessons are satisfactory and often good. The new mathematics strategy for 11 to 14 year olds is being introduced effectively. Lessons are well structured and pupils know what they will learn because the objectives of each lesson are always displayed. They show good knowledge of key words and recall work well from previous lessons. The session at the end of the lesson is used appropriately to check that pupils have understood the work in the lesson. Staff work well together and there is a consistent approach in the way they work with pupils and in their management of behaviour, which supports all pupils' learning well. Work is marked appropriately and comments made that help pupils to develop their skills.
47. The Unit has developed a system for assessing pupils when they start at the Unit. This is beginning to be used to develop targets for pupils. However all pupils follow the same curriculum regardless of age and the needs of pupils in Years 7 and 8, particularly those who may have gaps in their knowledge, are not met. There are as yet no systems for assessing the progress pupils make or ensuring that their individual needs are met.
48. Staff use ICT to prepare lesson plans, but it is not used enough during lessons. This is a direct result of staff not yet having ICT training to develop their skills and knowledge. The Unit recognises this and ICT training is a priority in the current school improvement plan.
49. There has been disruption to staffing and at present the subject is taught by a temporary teacher. The Unit works well with the LEA consultant and this has enabled standards in mathematics to be developed. The Unit recognises that mathematics is an area for development and has appropriate plans in place.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, in science pupils use their numeracy skills when measuring temperature change, or measuring liquids into flasks and bottles. In art, pupils use their numeracy skills when deciding on scale of drawings. They discuss size, shapes and colours and identify different shapes both regular and irregular.

SCIENCE

Four lessons were observed, discussions were held with staff and samples of pupils' work and planning were analysed.

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very secure subject knowledge and good management of pupils' behaviour and resources ensures that pupils' develop an understanding of science.
- Good use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Poor accommodation limits pupils' opportunities to do experiments.
- There is insufficient planning to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- The subject has been developed well over a short period of time with good support from the LEA advisor.

Commentary

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and often good. There are high expectations by the teacher that pupils will learn about a wide range of aspects of science and she uses her subject knowledge very well to make lessons both interesting and challenging. As a result pupils' achievements, including those with additional special needs, are satisfactory and often good. Wherever possible resources are brought in to make the lesson practical and hold pupils' attention. For example, work on plants is supported by pupils being able to dissect a plant and

stick and label the different parts into their books. Through looking at, holding and studying a range of items pupils make secure judgments on whether they are good or bad conductors. The use of merits and a consistent, calm approach to pupils encourage a clear work ethos in lessons. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support behaviour and work quietly and effectively with individuals to get them involved in the lesson when they are initially reluctant.

52. The teacher is confident in her use of ICT and encourages pupils well to make use of computers. For example pupils carry out a survey on human growth and through working together are able to represent their findings on a computer-generated bar chart. A programme for the interactive whiteboard provides pupils with opportunities to place internal organs and other body parts in the correct place. The teacher responds to pupils' questions knowledgeably and extends their learning further in discussions.
53. Accommodation for the teaching of science is poor and impacts on what can be taught. There are no facilities for carrying out experiments. Practical work has to be limited to very simple experiments, such as separating and filtration or the teacher has to do them with the pupils observing. With no Bunsen burner or strong heat source the teacher is further limited in what she can do. Pupils comment on this and are frustrated that they cannot do more practical work in science. Health and safety are a clear priority of the teacher and she ensures that pupils are fully aware of the hazards in carrying out experiments. Pupils behave sensibly because they know there are high expectations of behaviour.
54. Although planning is detailed it does not ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met. As a result pupils in Year 7 learn the same as pupils in Years 8 and 9. This means that there are gaps in their knowledge in areas of the curriculum that pupils of a similar age in mainstream would have studied. Although there is a three-year rolling programme this would require pupils to attend the Unit for three years to cover the full curriculum for Key Stage 3 and this is unlikely to be the case for the majority of pupils.
55. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A considerable amount of work has gone into developing the subject with the support of the Key Stage 3 subject advisor. Evidence suggests that science was not taught until the recent arrival of the subject leader. The present subject leader is developing methods for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding and work has been done on leveling pupils' work. Work is marked and comments made but there is a need to ensure that the assessed levels are in line with mainstream assessments. Resources are being developed appropriately and an action plan for the subject is in place.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Three lessons were observed, several discussions with teachers were held and samples of pupils' work and planning were analysed.

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations enable pupils to make satisfactory progress.
- The strategy for pupils aged 11 to 14 (Key Stage 3) is being implemented effectively.
- Assessment is at an early stage of development.
- There is a need for staff training in the use of ICT to increase their skills and knowledge.
- Leadership of the subject has ensured that resources have been developed appropriately.

Commentary

56. The teacher has high expectations of what pupils will learn, as a result pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. The very good relationships in lessons enhance the progress pupils, including those with additional special needs, make. Pupils find the correct programmes and use them effectively. They write short 'control' programmes and have great fun using them to operate sensors such as hazard lights on a car or make a lighthouse flash. Pupils are proficient at writing 'flowcharts'. Occasionally they will use the interactive white board to demonstrate their ICT skills. This works well and pupils show great pride in their work, building self-esteem and confidence.
57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Subject knowledge is used well to provide challenge and there are clear expectations that pupils will work and behave in lessons. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is used well and pupils have a good knowledge of ICT language because key words are displayed on the board and pupils are expected to learn them. Support staff are well briefed to enable them to support pupils' learning effectively.
58. Learning resources have been developed well over the last two years. There is an ICT suite which enables classes to be taught together. The subject leader has good knowledge of the subject and leads and manages the subject satisfactorily. She has had considerable support from the LEA in developing ICT and has recently introduced an 11 to 14 assessment system. This is working well but has not yet had time to impact upon pupils' progress. She meets with staff informally and is always available to offer support and advice to staff on using ICT effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. ICT is used effectively in the teaching and learning of other subjects. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and nearly all have a computer. For example, in science the interactive white board is used well as a teaching aid during lessons. In English, pupils use word processing to enhance their work and improve presentation. In art, pupils use the Internet to research famous artists, download and print out their work. Pupils have been very creative with Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Mona Lisa', and used this as a base to develop their own interpretation of her famous smile. This works well and the effects are very humorous. A particular favourite is 'Mona Lisa in curlers'.

HUMANITIES

History and geography.

Two lessons were seen in history and one in geography. Evidence was also gathered from pupils' work, discussions with staff and scrutiny of teachers' files.

Provision for humanities is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high expectations that pupils will develop their knowledge and understanding in both subjects.
- Assessment is not used to ensure pupils' individual needs are met.
- Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well.
- The subject has been developed well.

Commentary

60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and often good. Pupils learn about a range of aspects. For example, in geography they recognise features of densely and sparsely populated areas whilst in history they show a good understanding of the English civil wars. There are high

expectations that pupils will develop an understanding of how to use sources to make considered judgements. In geography they use a newspaper article to look at the impact of migration. In history extracts from newspapers and books at the time of the French revolution give pupils good opportunities to compare and comment on the events of that time. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and can respond to pupils' questions, for example when involved in a discussion on symbolism and how Elizabeth I used it.

61. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Although expectations are high pupils do not do work that is similar to pupils of their own age in mainstream schools. Whilst they are clearly developing good skills, for example in analysing and using sources the curriculum pupils follow is the same regardless of their year group. In the majority of cases pupils complete the same worksheets. However there are times when tasks set are more challenging for more able pupils. For example a Year 9 pupil had to compare two sources and make judgements about what he found.
62. Pupils are encouraged to write in detail when responding to questions. In geography they were expected to summarise their findings on migration. Pupils use their geographical knowledge in writing about a trip to Alton Towers. Teachers produce their own worksheets and these are specifically designed to encourage pupils to answer in detail and rarely is there the expectation of one word answers. Opportunities for discussion are good and pupils are encouraged to put forward their thoughts and ideas. Good use of the Key Stage 3 strategy including the use of a starter activity which helps pupils to remember previous work covered.
63. A lot of work has gone into developing the subject and leadership and management are satisfactory. The curriculum ensures that pupils cover a range of aspects. Resources are improving although there are still not enough artefacts to support learning. The use of the community is being developed and pupils have looked at maps of Middlesbrough but have limited opportunities to study specific areas. Trips out of school such as to Roseberry Topping provide pupils with some understanding of the environment in which they live.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Judgements on music, design and technology, and physical education are not made because pupils do not study these subjects other than when opportunities arise through rewards on a Friday.

Art and design.

There is insufficient evidence to make judgements on provision. One lesson in art was seen and discussions held with staff and pupils' work was looked at.

64. The subject is led by a non-specialist who has worked hard to develop her knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils comment on how much they enjoy art and much of this is because of the teacher's enthusiasm. Pupils have developed a few skills in the subject and show an understanding of techniques such as cross-hatching. They are aware of the work of a range of different artists including Picasso, Cezanne and Renoir. Through the use of projects, for example, one on "buildings" the teacher has skilfully encouraged pupils to look at different structures and design their own buildings.
65. As yet pupils have limited opportunities to work with different materials and develop their skills in the wider aspects of the art curriculum. ICT has been used effectively to give pupils opportunities to re-design famous works of art such as the Mona Lisa. Accommodation is poor. There are no appropriate work surfaces or areas for keeping pupils' work. The teacher ensures that pupils' work is celebrated through good displays in the classroom and throughout the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons were observed, there was discussion with the subject leader and samples of pupils' work and planning were analysed.

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is effective in developing pupils' understanding of a wide range of relevant aspects.
- Pupils' achievements are well supported through the Unit's effective, caring ethos.
- Assessment is not in place, and marking does not indicate what pupils have achieved independently.
- All staff take the opportunity to teach the subject during daily routines and activities outside lessons.

Commentary

66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Planning is detailed but pupils' behaviour is not always managed effectively and this slows the pace of lessons at times. Tasks are challenging such as devising a fact sheet about making responsible choices. Lessons cover a wide range of topics, such as crime, cruelty to animals, the media and sex education. During the week of the inspection all classes were concentrating on the wider global issues of taking responsibility for their own actions. Planning is effective in that it is flexible and is used to meet the immediate needs of the Unit, for example, if there has been a drug or bullying problem the issues will be raised and dealt with within the PSHE lessons.
67. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in the subject because of the good support they get throughout the day. They know they can talk to staff and their personal and social development is promoted well. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets including a class target and they receive constant reminders of these during the day.
68. The subject leader with the support of the advisor has put in place appropriate planning for the subject. Assessment is not yet in place, and this is being developed. In addition the subject leader has identified the necessary training programmes she needs to attend in order to improve provision further. The subject contributes very effectively to pupils' social and moral development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the unit	4
How inclusive the unit is	4
How the unit's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the unit	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the unit	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-unit activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the unit seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the unit's links with parents	3
The quality of the unit's links with the community	3
The unit's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the unit	3
The governance of the unit	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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