

INSPECTION REPORT

Harrogate and Area Pupil Support Centre

Harrogate

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 130339

Headteacher: John Bell

Lead inspector: Noreen Buckingham

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 259076

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, permanently excluded/at risk of exclusion

School category: Pupil referral unit

Age range of pupils: 11-16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 40

School address: 59 Grove Road
Harrogate

Postcode: HG1 5EP

Telephone number: 01423 536111

Fax number: 01423 538031

Appropriate authority: Local Education Authority

Name of chair of governors: Jonathan Edwards

Date of previous inspection: N/A

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The centre admits pupils aged 11-16 years who are at risk of being permanently excluded or who have already been excluded and pupils aged 14-16 years who have been permanently excluded and who are unlikely to return to mainstream school. The younger pupils aged 11-14 years initially attend the centre for 12 weeks but this can be extended for a further 12 weeks if necessary. The centre has links with 28 high schools and has a diverse population some of whom have statements of special educational needs. It also has links with local colleges, training agencies and a number of employers for work placements. Having 40 pupils on roll means that the centre is full and has a waiting list. There are far more boys than girls. The majority of pupils aged between 11 and 14 years spend some of their time in a mainstream school with the intention of returning to full time attendance there. Prior to coming to the centre many have been out of school for some time and because of this their attainment on entry is below what would normally be expected for their age. All pupils are from white backgrounds and come from mixed socio-economic areas.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16722	Noreen Buckingham	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Music
			German
			Humanities
			Physical education
11368	Katherine Lee	Lay inspector	
23549	Helen Eadington	Team inspector	Science
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Information and communication technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Harrogate and Area Pupil Support Centre is a very effective centre and provides a very good quality education for the pupils. This is because leadership and management are very effective, the curriculum is very good and teaching and learning are good overall enabling pupils to achieve well and in some instances very well. The centre gives very good value for money.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is an excellent leader who manages the school very well and who has a very strong commitment to the future development of the centre.
- Teaching and learning are good overall mainly due to secure subject knowledge, very good planning and assessment which enables teachers to know the individual abilities of the pupils.
- The overall curriculum offered to pupils is very good and prepares pupils very effectively for the next stage of their lives.
- The very good care and support pupils are given. They are valued and respected by all staff who know them very well.
- The very good achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design.
- The centre is well regarded by mainstream schools and this enables many Key Stage 3 pupils to reintegrate successfully.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn about living in a multi-ethnic society.
- There are too few opportunities for self assessment by pupils which limits their understanding about how they can improve their learning in subjects of the curriculum.
- Few opportunities for improved levels of independent learning are provided.
- The constraints of the building limit pupils' opportunities to develop their independence and interpersonal skills as a preparation for returning to mainstream school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good

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

Achievement overall is good and some older pupils achieve very well. All pupils do very well in art and design and ICT. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. These subjects are allocated a good amount of time which enables pupils to make good progress in their basic skills, especially speaking and listening. Targets set on individual education plans (IEP) are closely matched to pupils' needs and progress is assessed regularly. Pupils know their targets in literacy and understand what they have to do. In science, design and technology and personal, health and social education (PHSE) pupils are achieving well. Achievement in music and German is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, in relation to externally accredited units, college courses and work placements. There is no difference between the achievements of boys and girls.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Because of this most pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance improve but there are occasions when some flout the rules and disrupt lessons, however these outbursts are always managed well and pupils do return to work. Achievement against the targets set in individual behaviour plans (IBP) is good and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils have few opportunities to learn about life

in today's diverse multi-ethnic society and limited scope for developing interpersonal skills at break times in readiness for a return to mainstream school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, they plan their lessons very well and use assessment information to give them very good knowledge of pupils' individual abilities. The curriculum offered is very good with pupils at Key Stage 4 having a wide range of opportunities to gain accreditation at GCSE level and in National and Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). They can access appropriate college courses and experience a range of work placements. The curriculum is enhanced by outdoor education activities and currently a rural studies course. The pupils are very well cared for and receive very good support and guidance although occasionally a few younger pupils feel insecure at times.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good because the headteacher has a very clear vision for the centre. He is an excellent leader who influences and motivates staff and pupils through his passionate commitment and adherence to the centres' aims and values. Very good systems have been established to promote a rigorous analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher is very well supported by an able deputy and other members of the senior management team. The recruitment of high calibre staff is a strength. The management committee provides good leadership and management and supports the work of the centre developing its' role as a critical friend. The centre is well placed for further development especially in terms of outreach support to help schools in their management of pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with what the centre offers their children and feel that their relationships with the centre are positive. They appreciate the care and attention the pupils receive and how hard all staff work to give pupils the best education they can. Equally pupils generally enjoy coming to the centre and like the activities and support they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Organise opportunities for pupils to be involved in their own assessment of their achievements in subjects.
- Find ways to increase their understanding of the multi-ethnic diversity of today's society.
- Give pupils more opportunities to learn independently.
- Find ways for enabling pupils to spend time in more informal settings where they can improve their interpersonal skills in readiness for returning to mainstream school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below what would normally be expected for their age. However pupils' achievements overall are good and in some instances in Key Stage 4 achievements are very good because pupils are given very good opportunities at college to access externally accredited courses and sometimes do as well as their mainstream peers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in art and design and ICT is very good.
- Achievement in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and in PHSE is good.
- The centre has set realistic targets to improve the all round performance of pupils.
- There is no formal way of following up how successful the centre is at reintegrating pupils permanently.
- There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve as well as they should.

Commentary

1 Some pupils have been out of school for some time before attending the centre and their irregular attendance and poor attitudes to school has meant that they have not made as much progress as they should. Some pupils have large gaps in their learning and as a result attainment on entry to the centre is below what would normally be expected for pupils of this age. There is no significant difference between boys and girls.

2 The targets set by the centre are realistic and aim to not only raise academic achievement but also pupils' behaviour and attendance. The centre also shows a strong determination to do its best to reintegrate pupils into mainstream schools. The aspect that needs further development is the centres aim to ensure that pupils will remain in mainstream provision for six months after leaving because currently there is no formal way of following this up and finding out.

3 The majority of pupils make good and sometimes very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans and behaviour plans. Teachers and pupils are very mindful of behaviour targets which are assessed at the end of each lesson. Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve as well as others due to the very good understanding teachers have of individual abilities and the good support they receive in lessons.

4 Achievement is very good in art and design and in ICT because of the very skilled teaching and very carefully planned lessons. In these subjects the teacher has very high expectations of what pupils will achieve. Lessons are exciting and there are very good cross-curricular links between the subjects. Very secure subject knowledge and very good behaviour management linked to very positive relationships means that pupils make very good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire. Many pupils gain externally accredited awards.

5 In English, mathematics, science, design and technology and PSHE pupils' achievements are good and in some instances in Key Stage 4 they are very good when some pupils are expected to gain reasonable grades in GCSE examinations. In particular pupils are given good opportunities to develop their speaking skills, expressing their ideas and accepting other points of view in a structured environment. The additional literacy or numeracy sessions at the end of the day are good opportunities for pupils to improve and build on their basic skills. The consistently good teaching and well thought out lessons result in pupils learning well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils show good attitudes to their work and their life in the centre. They have a good rate of attendance and the centre is successful in promoting good attendance. Most pupils attend regularly and agree that they like being at the centre. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. The centre works hard to support and develop pupils' personal qualities. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils work hard and achieve well in lessons due to the very good relationships with adults and good teaching.
- Most pupils behave well because of the high expectations of staff but the poor behaviour of some pupils can disrupt lessons and so affect the learning of others.
- There is very good provision for moral and social development.
- There are few opportunities to develop interpersonal skills at break times
- More could be done to develop pupils' awareness of living in a diverse multi-ethnic society which is less well promoted.

Commentary

6 Most pupils try hard in lessons and so make good progress in their learning. They respond well to the encouragement and support given by all adults in lessons and throughout the day. Staff constantly try to help pupils to feel good about themselves and boost their self-esteem. Parents agree that their children's learning has improved because they have gained confidence. While most pupils try to behave well, others find this difficult at times. Pupils are right to feel that others do not always behave well. In the best lessons, class teachers are very skilled at managing behaviour, using a firm but friendly approach which works well to settle pupils. They insist on high standards of behaviour and ensure that lessons are interesting to capture pupils' attention. However, despite their efforts, there are times when pupils waste time through silly and restless behaviour which leads to pupils not achieving as well as they can.

7 Behaviour at break times is good because staff act as very good role models and promote a very social atmosphere in which pupils play together under the watchful eye of staff. However, the nature of the building with no outside space means that younger pupils have no independent opportunity to develop the complex interpersonal skills needed in mainstream school and which have let them down in the past. Pupils' moral development is very good because staff make sure that they understand the centre's code of conduct and reflect on the consequences of their actions. Discussions in tutorial times are used well to sort out problems or worries that have arisen during the day. Whilst there are some opportunities to promote multi-cultural understanding, pupils have few opportunities for learning about life in a diverse multi-ethnic society.

Attendance

8 The good attendance of pupils reflects the positive ethos and warm relationships, which are evident in the centre. Parents find this a big change in their children as previously most had been poor attenders in mainstream school. They commented at the pre-inspection meeting that the centre "tries hard to find something to interest each child." Pupils on college courses and work experience are also eager to attend their placements. For example, pupils going on the rural skills course were all appropriately dressed for outside work and keen to set off for the day. The centre is quick to find out reasons for absence and to reward good attendance with weekly certificates.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (88.2%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.9%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9%

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

Exclusions

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	2	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The centre provides a very good quality education for pupils. Teaching and learning are good, the curriculum is very good and enhanced by links with other school and colleges and by a good range of work placements. Pupils receive very good support from a number of agencies who help prepare them well for leaving the centre.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons very well and use strategies and activities, which successfully engage pupils who have previously lost interest in learning.
- Most teachers have very secure subject knowledge, which supports pupils' learning well.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs are supported well by staff.
- Homework is not used consistently to support and extend learning.
- Some pupils' disruptive behaviour is not always appropriately managed and consequently has a negative effect on others, limiting their learning.
- Assessment is used very well to set individual targets but the use of self-assessment to help pupils understand how they can improve their work needs developing.

Commentary

9 The quality of teaching is good overall and ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory with the majority of teaching being good or better and as a result pupils achieve well and make good progress.

10 Common features of most lessons are the detailed planning which shows the activities relating to the learning objectives and indicates how the lesson will unfold, the very good relationships between teachers and pupils and teacher's secure subject knowledge. Pupils are treated with respect which builds their self-esteem and they respond well with some confidence.

11 Most teachers are confident and enthusiastic about their subject and this has a significant impact on pupils' learning especially in art and design, ICT and design and technology. In these subjects the practical element is well presented and pupils enjoy producing something they can be proud of. Teachers' expertise and lively approach drive lessons at a good pace and little time is lost and because teachers know pupils' abilities well they are able to challenge pupils and extend their learning effectively.

12 All adults are aware of pupils' behaviour targets and refer to them regularly but do not have the same level of awareness about pupils' literacy and numeracy targets. The centre places a high priority on improving behaviour but sometimes pupils choose to disrupt lessons, don't want to work and leave the class. Having to manage these situations limits the learning opportunities of others because too much time is spent on managing the behaviour than on teaching. However these occasions are few and in most lessons behaviour management is firm and positive.

13 Teachers plan lessons very well with clear learning objectives which show a good understanding of pupils' individual abilities. In some English lessons pupils have their individual written learning targets to remind them of what is expected. Good questioning, relevant resources and engaging tasks maintains pupils interest. Although there are few girls in the centre teachers ensure that they are included in all lesson activities. Learning support staff are used effectively to support particular pupils and this means that they are usually able to maintain a focus on the activities in the lesson.

14 The centre has a policy about homework which indicates an expectation of some homework once pupils have settled in, but during the inspection very little homework was set which means that opportunities to reinforce and extend pupils' learning are lost. This doesn't help those pupils who are returning to mainstream schools where there will be an expectation that homework is completed. There is some confusion among parents as to whether their child is given homework to do or not and their involvement in their child's learning is limited.

15 Very shortly after being admitted to the centre pupils are assessed in English and mathematics so that work can be pitched at the appropriate level and any gaps in learning identified. This information is used to draw up individual education plans and set targets which are monitored frequently. Pupils' progress is tracked very closely and end of module assessments let teachers know what pupils have learned, however, pupils aren't always aware of how they can improve and are not regularly involved in any self-assessment of their work. Through their very thorough assessment procedures the centre knows pupils strengths and weaknesses very well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	9 (28%)	13 (41%)	8 (25%)	1 (3%)	-	-

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 overall curriculum offered to pupils is very good. It prepares them very effectively for the next stage in their lives. The accommodation is very well maintained and all areas are enhanced by displays of pupils' work, most notably of art. It has been very well adapted to provide specialist teaching areas. However, the centre has no outdoor space where pupils can take informal breaks in the fresh air, which many commented on. The curriculum is enhanced well by the a number of visitors and further enriched by the many visits pupils make into the local area and further afield.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is very well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.
- There is a very good programme of college courses, careers education and work experience placements.
- The centre's internal accommodation includes well-planned specialist teaching areas.
- The centre is very well resourced.
- The centre site has no external space for pupils to use.

Commentary

16 The centre offers a broad and balanced full time curriculum, which includes very good learning programmes. These are closely matched to the ages and needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the basic skills of English, mathematics and ICT. Additionally, all other subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, together with religious education and a very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Consequently a significant proportion of those in Years 7 to 9 make a successful return to mainstream schooling. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered a very good range of courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications, such as ASDAN, CLAIT, NVQ and GCSE. These courses, and the high quality careers education and work experience placements, prepare older pupils very effectively for the transition to further education or training, the world of work and for adult life.

17 All pupils have equal access to everything that is offered within the centre. However, a minority of those in Years 7 to 9, who present with particularly challenging behaviour, do not participate in, or benefit from, the weekly reintegration sessions in mainstream schools either because they are not ready or because of the difficulty in finding a suitable school. However, the centre is working to resolve this issue.

18 Provision for PSHCE is very good. It includes themes relating to the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, anger management, relationships and developing as citizens. Health education is a good example of the many cross-curricular links that the centre makes between subjects. Sex education is delivered through science and PSHCE and with the assistance of the centre's nurse. Pupils also benefit from the many opportunities they are given to reflect on their own behaviour and effort, both at the end of lessons and during their weekly tutorial sessions with their key teacher. The centre is aware of the need to further develop the tutorial system, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to develop a better understanding of their own behaviour as a preparation for leaving school.

19 The curriculum is enhanced by the centre's visitors including the careers adviser, the welfare officer and the local officer for drugs awareness, and by visits each year from local theatre groups. Further enrichment is provided through the many visits pupils make into the area for, for instance, sporting activities, fieldwork and theatre visits. They also benefit from innovative projects such as the rural studies course, and their personal and social development are promoted very effectively by regular outdoor activity sessions and residential visits to the Yorkshire Dales.

20 The accommodation has been very well adapted to provide specialist teaching areas for food technology, design and technology, art and design, music and drama, although the lack of specialist facilities for science lessons restricts the aspects of the subject which can be taught on site. The recently installed ICT suite is of an exceptionally high standard. At breaks and lunch times good use is made of a large common room and a multi-gym. The accommodation is very well maintained and all areas are enhanced by displays of pupils' work, most notably of art and design. However, the centre has no outdoor space where pupils can take informal breaks in the fresh air which many commented on. This limits the opportunities for them to develop independent learning and personal skills in preparation for their return to mainstream school. Resources for all areas of the curriculum are very good. Both the accommodation and resources are treated with respect by pupils and are very well used by staff. Resources make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The centre takes very good care of its pupils. It provides very good guidance and support to enable pupils to return to school or move on to the next stage in life. It involves pupils well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The centre promotes an ethos of care, guidance and support for all pupils.
- There are very clear and comprehensive procedures to promote and monitor pupils' personal development and behaviour.

- All staff know pupils very well and respect their views but some younger pupils are not always sure who they can talk to in confidence.
- Procedures for the administration of medicines need to be clarified.
- Pupils are aware of their behaviour targets and discuss them with teachers.

Commentary

21 The centre has a very caring atmosphere where all staff foster very good relationships with pupils. The warm relationships, promoted by all staff, show that all pupils are valued and that they have the chance to make a new start. Pupils receive very good support throughout the day which encourages them to do their best and make good progress. Parents are very pleased with this aspect of the centre's work. Most pupils, especially the older ones, agree that they can talk to an adult if they have worries but quite a number of younger pupils don't feel the same and are unsure who they can talk to if they have a problem. The centre takes good care to ensure pupils' welfare. For example, the headteacher was quick to improve safety notices when this was drawn to his attention but there is no indication of the rear fire exit in the centre. Procedures for the administration of medicines need to be tightened and made clear. Child protection procedures are very thorough and all staff have been trained in managing behaviour. A strong aspect of the centre's care is the very good knowledge of all pupils and their backgrounds which all staff have.

22 The centre uses the expertise of other agencies very well to guide and support pupils. For example, the education psychologist and the school nurse are involved in assessing pupils' needs as they come into the centre which helps pupils settle in quickly and receive the appropriate support to help them return to mainstream school. The very good links with the Connexions service enables older pupils to have access to advice for suitable work experience placements and support to go on to the next stage of training or work. The centre takes great care to praise pupils and reward their efforts and achievement which boosts pupils' confidence and self esteem. All pupils leave the centre with a comprehensive Record of Achievement which contain very well produced certificates for each course studied and are a testament to pupils' hard work. Parents say that the rewards are "fantastic" and that their children are proud to bring them home.

23 The pastoral system, based on the key teacher, is central to the centre's tutorial system to guide pupils to improve their attitudes and behaviour. The system is based on the necessity for pupils to make the right choices in their decisions, to think about their own actions and how they affect others as well as themselves. The centre recognises that some pupils would benefit from more time with their key teacher and are trying to find ways for this to happen. Pupils all know their targets for behaviour and the points system used in every lesson which is recorded in the weekly report books. The best use of these reports is when class teachers discuss pupils' achievement towards their targets with pupils playing a full part in assessing themselves. The tutorials at the end of the day are used well for pupils to reflect on their day and to think of how they can improve tomorrow.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The centre promotes a very good partnership between home and the centre which enable both to work together for the benefit of pupils. There are very good links with other schools, colleges and the community

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the centre's efforts on behalf of their children.
- The centre keeps parents extremely well informed of their children's progress.
- Links with the community and colleges are used very well to extend pupils' learning and experience.
- There is no regular means to keep parents up to date of centre matters.

Commentary

24 Parents are very appreciative of the work of the centre and many feel that their children have improved greatly while they have been there. They feel comfortable to approach the centre and agree that the centre consults them and seeks their views. The centre provides parents with very useful weekly reports of pupils' progress, both academic and in behaviour and attitudes. Pupils'

targets are shared with parents and they are given a clear picture of progress or problems encountered during the week. Parents also like the way that the centre telephones them to report positive comments and that it encourages them to telephone the centre if they have a concern. They commented that staff always make time to talk to them and give them a lot of support. Some parents would like more information about centre matters on a more regular basis, for example, parents were unaware of staff changes.

25 In addition, parents at the pre-inspection meeting agreed that they would like to know more about the centre's successes such as in examinations and in reintegration into mainstream school and also they would value a chance to meet each other for support and discussion. The centre has recognised this and has begun to make plans to start such a group.

26 Working with 28 high schools gives the centre a unique insight into what different schools offer enabling the centre to make sensitive choices for pupils returning to mainstream education. The majority of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to make a successful transition back into school following their time at the centre. The very positive partnerships with local colleges and training providers enables older pupils to undertake a number of vocational and GCSE courses which enhance the curriculum offered by the centre. The well organised work experience programme is very well supported by local businesses. The centre and its partners work very well together to provide opportunities for pupils which will help to ease their transition into further education or work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good and are key factors in the establishment of a very successful centre. The headteacher's energy and imagination result in a clear sense of purpose and a very positive ethos. The governance of the centre is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher.
- Senior staff provide good role models.
- The school is rigorous in evaluating its work.
- The leadership is passionate in ensuring that each pupil is valued and given the best possible chance to improve.
- There is a strong sense of staff unity and team identity.
- The headteacher fosters innovative approaches to the curriculum and behaviour management.
- The management committee are very supportive of the centre's development.
- The new members of the senior management team are ready to assume leadership responsibilities.

Commentary

27 The headteacher has led the centre with ambition, skill and drive since its opening three years ago. This has led to a centre that has a clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for its very challenging pupils. He has recruited a staff team who work very closely to create an atmosphere where pupils are totally supported and feel valued. He has established a learning environment of high quality with very good resources that is highly respected by staff and pupils alike. It is a credit to his vision and leadership that, given the very challenging pupils that attend the centre, the fabric and resources are treated with absolute respect. This results in a centre where there is a strong sense of purpose and a determination to improve the behaviour, motivation and standards of achievement for each individual pupil. The headteacher has earned enormous respect and loyalty from the staff and pupils. This has meant interesting and innovative approaches to the curriculum, which have provided very good opportunities for pupils to regain their motivation for learning and develop a new sense of direction in their lives. The senior staff are very good role models and their very good teaching sets a high standard for others to follow. The headteacher and senior staff have implemented very effective systems to monitor the achievements of pupils, the patterns of pupil behaviour and the impact of teaching. This results in pupils knowing that the centre is very

concerned to support and include each individual in every aspect of what the centre offers. Although this is a very big challenge at times, the leadership of the centre is totally committed to providing as many opportunities as possible to as many pupils as possible.

28 The headteacher and senior staff consult all staff about the work of the centre and provide very good training opportunities to develop their professional skills. This results in consistent approaches to ways of working and the sharing of best practice. Therefore new staff feel supported and fully aware of the routine and systems that establish an ethos where achievement and improvement are the focus of the work of the centre. The effective use of all staff that works closely together results in a stable and united team that constantly monitors the targets that individual pupils are set. The new deputy head and Key Stage 3 co-ordinator are very effective in their roles in linking with external agencies, the induction of new staff and in maintaining the sophisticated systems for monitoring performance. They are working very well with the headteacher and are now ready to undertake greater responsibility in leading and planning the future developments of the centre.

29 The management committee are very supportive of the work of the centre and have worked with the headteacher to secure the high quality of provision that is very well respected by the partner schools. They recognise that the direction and evaluation of the centre has been very much driven by the headteacher. They are now working hard to develop their role in monitoring the work of the centre and sharing with the headteacher the future direction of the centre.

30 Effective day-to-day systems allow the centre to run smoothly. Office staff know the daily routines and are very efficient in carrying out their duties. Financial support from the LEA helps administer the budget which is closely monitored by the headteacher. Principles of best value are followed when purchasing new equipment or services and parents and pupils are consulted at least annually for their views about how the centre can improve the services it provides.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	391,360
Total expenditure	391,368
Expenditure per pupil	9784

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	0.00
Balance carried forward to the next	0.00

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils improve their speaking skills, enabling them to be more confident and socially aware.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 succeed in accredited courses that are matched to their ability.
- Pupils improve their writing skills, enabling them to write for different purposes.
- ICT is used well.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read a good range of literature, matched to their ability.
- The topics that pupils study capture their attention and motivate them.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The achievement in writing in Key Stage 3 is restricted by the negative attitudes of some pupils.

Commentary

31 All pupils make significant improvement in their literacy skills. This results in pupils taking accredited courses that motivate them to work hard and be persistent with the assignments that are set. Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils are motivated by the accredited courses that they take and are keen to do as well as they can. Considering the fact that many pupils have had their learning disrupted, they overcome this disadvantage by settling down to hard work and persevere with the assignment that are set. Pupils who are doing GCSE achieve very well and their work on war poetry and Shakespeare is at least in line with the national standard. These pupils use ICT effectively in the presentation of their work and in undertaking research on particular topics. Year 10 pupils also study a good range of literature but their writing skills need to be improved. Whilst they can lay out a formal letter properly they cannot express themselves concisely and clearly. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have weak writing skills. Pupils are often struggling to overcome their negative attitudes towards learning that they find challenging and work is not always finished and insufficient effort is shown to persevere and overcome difficulties. However, pupils do improve their writing skills through the opportunities and demands that they write for different purposes. They understand how stories need a structure and plot. They know that some writing, such as instructions or accounts of visits, need to be accurate and precise. They are able to apply the rules of punctuation to their work and the marking of pupils' work is effective in encouraging pupils to follow the rules.

32 A major strength in English is the opportunities provided for pupils to improve their speaking skills. In the best teaching, teachers engage pupils in lively discussions about topics that capture their imagination, focus their attention and motivate them to contribute their opinions. This leads to pupils having to justify their points of view, listen to the arguments of others and respect the fact that different opinions are held and are valid. The outcome is that pupils grow in maturity and are better prepared personally to interact with a wider range of people in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

33 Teaching is good because teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly and are very aware of what pupils are capable of and how their behaviour affects their learning. They recognise the negative attitudes that many pupils bring to the centre and set out from the very start to give pupils' confidence and a belief in their own ability. They teach with energy and use resources that will sustain the pupils' interests and motivation. They constantly support, encourage and praise pupils. The best teaching sets targets for improvement in aspects of English as well as their behaviour and the outcome is that over time pupils overcome some of their negative views and begin to achieve well.

34 The subject is well led and managed. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has been implemented effectively. The co-ordinator is a good role model and therefore other teachers improve through her support and guidance. There are very good systems for tracking the achievements of pupils and this means that all staff are knowledgeable of what pupils are capable of and set work that is appropriate. There is a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and firm and positive action is taken.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

35 Literacy skills are developed across all areas of the curriculum. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to practise speaking, listening and writing and this has a positive effect on pupils' achievements.

German

Provision in German is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject expertise of the teacher is very secure.
- Topics chosen are relevant to pupils' and planned well.
- Listening and speaking skills would be improved if more of the lesson was taught in the target language.
- Pupils systematically build on prior learning.
- There are few opportunities for written work except single words or very short phrases mainly on worksheets.

Commentary

36 Pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 have one lesson each week and work towards unit accreditation. They learn a range of phrases and vocabulary which relate to the particular topic they are currently studying, for example, Home Town and pupils know "Stadt", "Dorf", "Haus", "Bahnhof" etc and use "Ich wohne in"... When learning is associated with a game pupils enjoy the competitive element and are motivated and confident to show what they know. Older pupils are able to use prior learning when new topics are introduced, for example, finding the way around a town and giving directions, "links", "rechts", "geradeaus" and "die erste", "zweite" or "dritte". While pupils have sufficient opportunities for speaking and listening they are not required to do much written work except for completing worksheets.

37 Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory with some good elements especially when pupils are engaged and want to learn. Very secure subject knowledge means that the teacher can introduce new vocabulary and explain grammatical points as they arise and in a relevant framework. Pupils systematically build on their prior knowledge and understanding because of the way topics and lessons are planned. When most of the lesson is taught in German pupils' listening skills are improved and this helps them to remember words and phrases and puts questions in context. It also helps them achieve better when they are listening to tapes as they are more attuned to the pronunciation. Occasionally too much time is spent on managing behaviour and this wastes time and slows the pace of the lesson down so that little learning takes place.

38 The subject is well organised with opportunities for external accreditation. The subject leader is enthusiastic about her subject and has plans to develop it further. End of topic assessments allows her to see how much pupils have learned and all work is externally accredited by means of AQA units.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- The teacher has good subject knowledge and uses it well to motivate and interest pupils.
- There is no whole centre approach to check the use of numeracy across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Mathematics as a whole is supplemented well by additional short numeracy sessions.
- ICT is not used sufficiently regularly to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

39 Pupil's achievements in mathematics are good mainly as a result of the consistently good teaching and because of the positive relationships in the classroom, which improves pupils' self esteem. This gives them encouragement to learn. In Years 8 and 9 the current topic about probability interests pupils because a competitive element is introduced. The use of cards, coloured cubes, dice and racing games all make the lessons interesting. There was a sudden realization during a horse race when one pupil grasped why number one horse would never move when using two dice and the teacher was then able to introduce the concept of a certainty and an impossibility which was another important step in their learning. Older pupils continue their work about solids naming a range of 3D shapes and learn about vertices, faces and edges. They go on to recognise nets to match particular shapes and although they find this quite challenging they concentrate and work well. Other pupils are working routinely through exercises towards external accreditation but can occasionally lose concentration when waiting for help which limits their progress.

40 Teaching is consistently good and the teacher has good subject knowledge and a confident lively approach which motivates pupils to listen and maintain interest. Coupled with very good relationships between teacher and pupils the positive classroom ethos enables pupils to learn well and make good progress. Normally the pace of lessons is quite brisk and pupils respond to questions positively. When the level of challenge is realistic pupils are productive and extend their learning. Encouragement and feedback from the teacher helps pupils to know how well they are doing but little self assessment is in evidence.

41 The subject leader is new to the centre and is still finding pupils' strengths and weaknesses but she has a strong commitment to improve standards and tracks pupils' progress well. She has a positive attitude and realistic approach and is wisely not spending her budget until she knows pupils better and has assessed their needs. There was little evidence of ICT being used in mathematics and currently no way of assessing how numeracy is used in other subjects but maths lessons are supplemented by regular short numeracy sessions which concentrate on basic number concepts and calculations and this supports the good achievement of pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

42 Pupils have opportunities to improve their numeracy skills in design and technology, independent living skills, rural studies and ICT, which support their mathematical understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Work is well matched to the range of abilities.
- ICT is well used for research.
- Resources are of a good quality and support learning well.
- Pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work.

- Facilities for teaching science within the centre are limited.

Commentary

43 Pupils are currently investigating life processes and living things as part of their unit award scheme. Although standards generally are below those expected nationally, pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. This is because teaching is good overall and tasks and levels of support are well modified to meet the range of pupils' needs. A small number of higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are working towards GCSE accreditation and benefit from joint provision between the centre and college courses.

44 Between Years 7 and 9 pupils develop their knowledge of the skeletal and muscular systems and begin to understand the principles of antagonistic muscle pairs. They identify the main nutrients in a range of common foods and understand the importance of a balanced diet and taking exercise to promote a healthy life style. Lower attaining pupils in Years 10 also study these topics and can name and explain the functions of the major parts of the body. They begin to understand how dietary components are broken down by the digestive system. Pupils confidently use ICT to research their topics, as, for example, when one clarified the difference between saturated and unsaturated fat and identified foods, which contained 'the bad sort'.

45 Teaching is good overall and is never less than satisfactory. The teacher makes good use of questions and prompts to identify pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. Ongoing feedback during lessons provides them with clear guidance on how to improve their work, as do the constructive comments on their homework and other written tasks. Occasionally the pace of lessons slows, pupils lose focus and time is lost before their attention is regained.

46 The lack of a specialist area for science slows pupils' progress in developing experimental techniques. However, resources are good for the aspects covered and are well used to motivate pupils and inject practical activities involving apparatus such as a microscope and simple electrical circuits. The temporary coordinator is managing the subject well during the interval between her predecessor leaving recently and the arrival of a permanent coordinator next term. The subject policy has been reviewed and rewritten and priorities for future development have been identified.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make very good progress.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- ICT is used to support learning in some other curriculum areas.
- Resources are of a very high quality.
- ICT is used well by staff in monitoring and reporting pupils' achievement and progress.
- The subject leader requires further training to develop a web site for the centre.

Commentary

47 When they enter the centre many pupils have limited skills and little confidence in using ICT. However, because they are very well taught, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and those between Years 7 and 9 achieve good standards of work. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, who are usually in the centre for longer, achieve very well. Pupils word-process text, change the type face and size of print to create specific effects, and save documents to give easy access when returning to them. In Years 7 to 9 pupils learn to download and manipulate an image from a digital camera when they design a leaflet. Year 10 and 11 pupils begin to design and make a scrolling Power Point presentation with a commercial focus.

This and other units of study enable them to gain a computer literacy and ICT award (CLAIT). During their college courses pupils can also work towards NVQ Level 2.

48 Teaching is very good overall and, occasionally, excellent. Lessons are very well planned and briskly paced. Learning objectives are explained clearly so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Questions and tasks are adapted to meet pupils' individual abilities and interests and the teacher repeatedly checks their understanding. Subject vocabulary is used very well so that pupils begin to use it as they discuss their work. Expectations for effort and achievement are very high. Pupils are encouraged to attempt tasks before asking for help and this effectively promotes their independent learning.

49 The very good resources in the recently installed ICT suite are used extremely well to support learning. Pupils are particularly intrigued by the teacher's use of the interactive whiteboard for examples and demonstrations. Additionally, each classroom has at least one computer, which enables pupils to access the Internet for information in all subject areas, and to use information technology to present and clarify their work. This is not used to the same extent in all subject areas. Coordination throughout the school is very good. A particular strength is the use of ICT by all staff in the monitoring and reporting of pupils' achievement and progress. The centre has recently been fully networked and the coordinator has identified a need for further staff training in order to develop a web site.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

50 ICT is not used consistently in all subject areas, although the centre is very well resourced in this respect and every classroom has at least one computer. In English pupils word process their work in order to present it as well as they can. A digital camera and a computerised sewing machine are used well to record and enhance pupils' work in design and technology and it is occasionally used in German to present aspects of work. In many aspects of art and design, ICT is extremely well used both for research purposes and to extend the range and creativity of pupils' work. However, in mathematics many opportunities for using ICT are missed, particularly in relation to reinforcing basic ideas and skills and in work on tables and graphs.

HUMANITIES

51 History, geography and religious education are taught on a half termly modular basis. Whilst no lessons were observed during the inspection and little written evidence was available, subject documentation shows that topics selected from the appropriate programmes of study are relevant to the ages and abilities of the pupils and planned well to enable pupils to gain some form of external accreditation. As such no reliable judgements can be made about standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

TECHNOLOGY

Provision in technology is **good** overall.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because they are very well taught.
- Resources are of a good quality and are used well.
- An appropriate emphasis is given to health and safety issues.
- ICT are well used to support learning.
- Currently insufficient attention is given to work with resistant materials.
- Space for food technology is limited.

Commentary

52 Provision for food technology and textiles is good and pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good, and often very good progress in these aspects of design and technology because they are taught well. The centre is aware of the need to develop the provision for resistant materials and subject planning indicates that this is to be introduced in the near future. The centre makes good use of the limited space available for food technology. Pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of good hygiene procedures in relation to the preparation, cooking and serving of food. Because the teacher gives clear guidance and provides good demonstrations they learn the skills of weighing, grating, kneading and mixing ingredients to a required consistency. Pupils are aware that processes have inputs such as the ingredients (inputs) to make a pizza (output). A strong focus on using the correct vocabulary enables them to describe and evaluate their work, and they make good use of a digital camera to record their achievement.

53 Pupils begin to gain an understanding of pattern making and design skills including modifying and adapting a design to fit given criteria. They improve their skills in cutting with sharp scissors and in hand and machine sewing, and follow written or diagrammatic instructions with care. They begin to recognise the importance of textiles in industry and by Year 10 are extending their work with applique and other fabric enhancement, including embroidery using a computerised machine. In all the lessons observed an appropriate emphasis on health and safety issues was a strong feature.

54 The quality of teaching is very good. Very good use of questions and prompts both assesses what pupils understand and guides their future learning. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and good relationships with pupils, together with well-focused support from a classroom assistant, result in pupils remaining interested and working hard during the lessons.

55 The newly appointed coordinator has made a very good start to managing the subject. She has a clear view of priorities for future development. Effective links are made with other curricular areas including personal, social, health and citizenship education and art and design.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- A wide range of media and techniques is introduced.
- ICT is well used to extend creativity.
- Pupils have good accreditation opportunities.
- Lack of space limits the production of large-scale pieces.

Commentary

56 As a result of negative experiences in mainstream schools many pupils are initially reluctant to become involved in art and design projects. However, once they overcome this they make very good progress and many achieve high standards in their work. They investigate and use a wide variety of media and techniques to produce varied and individual work. Displays around the centre and pupils' stored work show that they use watercolours, acrylic paints, pastels, collage, charcoal and plaster. Pupils work both from direct observation as seen in their striking graphite portraits, and from imagination, for instance when they make fish faces from papier mache. They learn about the work of other artists and craftsmen, both those in the European tradition, such as Picasso and Archimboldo, and those from other cultures including Aboriginal and African art. There are very good

opportunities for pupils to gain nationally recognised accreditation such as the AQA unit awards, and higher attainers gain good results at GCSE level. However, limitations in the space available restrict pupils' opportunities for producing large scale works.

57 The quality of teaching is very good overall and is occasionally excellent. The centre benefits from the coordinator's excellent subject knowledge and her enthusiasm. Lessons are exciting, varied and challenging. Pupils are given very clear demonstrations and instructions and a strong focus is given to the correct use of subject vocabulary. They are taught the skills they need to achieve the desired results, so that they can be proud of their work. Particularly good use is made of ICT, for instance, to enable pupils to experiment and to create Warhol style designs by manipulating digital images and using these to decorate T-shirts. The excellent displays of work around the centre show pupils that their efforts are highly valued.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader is new to the centre but has very good subject knowledge.
- Achievement is satisfactory but there is potential for good improvement as the subject becomes established.
- Pupils are interested and generally concentrate well.
- There are few opportunities as yet to perform together.

Commentary

58 Pupils have one lesson each week which always includes a strong practical element to focus their attention. Currently pupils use keyboards and an electric piano to pick out tunes with different rhythms and they enjoy this albeit with earphones. They discuss different types of film music and the mood it evokes identifying pieces of music relating to comedy, horror, sci-fi, adventure or fairy tale recognising some pieces and picking out some individual instruments they hear. Older pupils are beginning rehearsals for a pantomime and have to learn to perform together in harmony because currently they play "silently" using earphones which tends to slow the pace of lesson as the teacher gives individual attention to pupils.

59 Teaching is satisfactory with some good elements and a good balance of activities. Some time is spent refocusing pupils on the task when they become silly but generally pupils know what is expected of them and get on with the activity. However in the short time the teacher has been at the centre she has established a good rapport with the pupils and they generally respond positively. Her enthusiastic approach stems from her very good subject knowledge and as pupils are more involved in playing, listening and composing their expertise will improve.

60 The subject leader is new to the centre but has very secure subject knowledge and is giving pupils a good range of experiences and opportunities to build up skills. She wants pupils to enjoy music and sees the need to engage pupils in age-appropriate activities. She has a budget but is assessing pupils' interests as well as their talents before purchasing equipment.

Physical education

61 No lessons were observed during the inspection but subject documentation and visual evidence around the centre would suggest that there is a well thought out programme of activities organised away from the centre. Local facilities are also used for bowling and orienteering and the centre is part of a local high schools' bid for Sports College status. All pupils have the opportunity to join in a residential experience and this supports their personal and social development. Pupils experience canoeing, climbing, abseiling and caving all of which helps them to work as a team and

support each other. The centre has a good range of equipment, including mountain bikes and a small fitness room is available under supervision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning is very systematic.
- Topics interest and motivate the pupils.
- Independent living skills are taught well.
- Pupils are required to analyse their own behaviour but there are missed opportunities to do this with younger pupils because their behaviour is not always well managed.
- Older pupils become aware of the importance of taking responsibility for their actions.

Commentary

62 In Key Stage 3 teaching focuses on topics that are relevant to the pupils and encourages pupils to review and improve their own behaviour. Teachers present pupils with activities that require pupils to make choices, express opinions and be able to explain their reasons. These activities are well planned and result in lively discussions. However the teachers' management of the pupils' behaviour is not always strong and results in missed opportunities to encourage pupils to reflect on their views and own behaviour.

63 In Key Stage 4 pupils have good opportunities to develop their independent living skills and they benefit from this in the good preparation for the next stage of their education. They consider important matters of health, hygiene and personal care. They confront the important issues of rights and responsibilities and review their own behaviour and actions in the light of what they learn. Pupils become more aware of their own behaviour, its impact on others and how to change for the better. This results in pupils growing in maturity and self-control and improves their ability to interact with other people in a sensible and proper manner.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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