

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KETTLEBROOK PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Tamworth

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 133583

Headteacher: Mrs Diane Mayfield

Lead inspector: Mr Tom Smith

Dates of inspection: 14-16 June 2004

Inspection number: 259084

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Emotional behavioural and social difficulties.  
School category: Pupil referral unit  
Age range of pupils: 11-16 years  
Gender of pupils: Boys and girls  
Number on roll: 36

School address: The Kettlebrook Centre  
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Tamworth  
Staffordshire  
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Appropriate authority: The local education authority  
Name of responsible officer: Julie Stevenson

Date of previous inspection: The PRU has not previously been inspected

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kettlebrook Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is part of the Staffordshire provision for pupils who have been excluded from school or who are at risk of exclusion. The unit provides for pupils of both genders who are in Years 7 to 11. The majority of these are currently in Years 7 to 9. The unit has places for 24 pupils but 36 actually attend at various times of the week because of part time placements or dual registration with secondary schools in the locality. Most pupils come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Pupils can be admitted to or leave the unit at any point in the school year. With the exception of one, all pupils are of white British heritage. There are no traveller children and none use English as an additional language. When pupils are admitted to the unit their attainment is low and there are many gaps in their learning. Eleven pupils have statements of special education need (SEN) and 25 are at the stage of the Code of Practice known as School Action Plus. While the majority have needs associated with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties two pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The unit is involved in initiatives for Peer Counselling and also Critical Skills and Leadership Networking. (These initiatives enable pupils to become more independent in managing their behaviour and providing them with skills necessary to learn more efficiently). The unit has close working links with six secondary schools in the Tamworth area. These are the schools from which it unit draws most of its pupils. Other pupils, who may not be on the roll of these schools, are referred by the local education authority (LEA). Once referred a date is identified for each

pupil to return to school. This pre-determined stay at the unit is approximately two terms, though older pupils in Years 10 and 11 may stay at the unit for the remainder of their school career. In addition to full time placements the unit also supports pupils in their own schools and provides a support service for pupils who are in the process of reintegration. This is the first inspection for Kettlebrook PRU.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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23300	Lily Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, modern foreign language, citizenship, music, art and design.
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English, geography, religious education, history.

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>11</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>17</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>37</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Kettlebrook Pupil Referral Unit provides a satisfactory education for its pupils.** Pupils achieve satisfactorily; this is irrespective of their individual attainment or ethnic background. The quality of teaching is overall satisfactory and generally pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Under its present leadership the unit has come a long way in a relatively short time and its effectiveness, whilst satisfactory, is increasing. This is most noticeable in its core purpose of reintegrating an increasing number of pupils to mainstream schools and igniting once more their interest in learning. The unit provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good leadership of the head teacher is instrumental in moving the unit forward but the managing body, whilst supportive of the unit, has yet to effectively challenge what it does.
- While teaching is satisfactory overall, the management of behaviour in a few lessons diminishes the quality of what some pupils learn.
- Assessment of pupils' learning is under-developed and teachers do not have secure evidence of what pupils learn or how they might adjust their teaching to make this learning more effective.
- The available teaching time is too little - though the unit provides a wide range of subjects.
- The proportion and number of pupils with statements of special education need (SEN) is too great for the number of teaching assistants who might support them.
- The unit has good working links with parents, the local community and other schools; these help reintegration of pupils.
- Based on good relationships the attendance of most pupils improves significantly over that shown at their previous school and this enables them to re-engage with learning.

*The unit has not been inspected before.*

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Achievement is satisfactory.** When the low starting point of all pupils is considered their achievement and progress over time are satisfactory; this is irrespective of gender or ethnic origin. Standards remain below those found in mainstream schools. Staff show considerable concern and patience towards pupils and they represent good role models to which many pupils respond. The teaching of English and information and communication technology (ICT) is good and achievement in these is consequently better than in other subjects. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science is satisfactory and reflects the general quality of this teaching. Pupils make satisfactory progress towards targets identified in their individual education plans.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory** – for some pupils this represents significant progress in personal development. Attendance at the unit is good overall and for the majority of pupils compares favourably with attendance at their last school. Staff at the unit monitor this very carefully and respond quickly to any drop in attendance. Inconsistent behaviour management in lessons and some unsatisfactory punctuality to lessons are barriers to learning for some pupils. Elsewhere in the unit or where pupils are given clear expectations about their behaviour the outcomes are better.



## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the unit is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.** Teaching of English and information and communication technology (ICT) was good and that for mathematics and science was satisfactory. Remaining subjects were taught satisfactorily. A few lessons were unsatisfactory. This prevents learning from being as good as it could be. The curriculum is satisfactory with good opportunities for enrichment. The impact of this is restricted because the time provided is too little; the unit mistakenly included breaks and lunchtimes in its overall count of time. Pupils are given good guidance and support and by the time they leave are prepared well for their next stage of learning. This was most noticeable in Year 11 pupils. The unit has satisfactory links with its local and wider community and uses these to extend pupils' experiences and learning. Positive links with parents increase the effectiveness of getting pupils back into mainstream school. A shortage of support staff limits the effectiveness of the work done by this group in support of pupils as well as the reintegration of Kettlebrook pupils to mainstream education – this is a barrier to raising standards.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the unit are satisfactory overall.** Leadership by the head teacher is good, showing vision and determination to raise standards; leadership by staff with other responsibilities is satisfactory. The support provided by the managing body is unsatisfactory though it is improving under the active chairmanship of a local head teacher. The LEA (the appropriate authority) has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the unit and has provided good support from the early, difficult days of its foundation. The unit also provides good support to pupils in their transition back to mainstream schools. The unit complies with statutory requirements.

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

Parents like the unit and feel it is doing well for their children. They support the efforts of staff to get their children back into mainstream education – though some have reservations about the longer term success of this. A majority feel welcome, supported and informed about events and progress of their child. The progress made in attendance is something which particularly pleases them though not all are convinced that the behaviour of their child improves sufficiently.

Most pupils think the unit is a good place to be at because they feel cared about. A majority do not think that behaviour in the unit is good enough and some of them feel unsettled by this. They feel teachers expect them to work hard and do their best but the homework they provide has little point or value.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve teaching and behaviour management to make it more consistently good and extend the time for teaching and learning to the recommended twenty-four hours;
- use assessment more effectively so that it influences teaching and provides information to pupils on how they might improve;
- actively involve the managing body in monitoring and challenging the unit's work; and

- increase the technical support for the computer network so that it more reliably supports pupils' learning.

The LEA, in its role as appropriate authority, should:

- change its practice of admitting a high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need (SEN) without increasing the numbers of staff to support them; and
- put in place a staffing structure which reflects the recommendations of DfES Circular 11/90 and which would lead to more effective support for pupils admitted to the unit.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards achieved by pupils remain below that expected of pupils of similar age. In view of the point from which they start they make satisfactory progress over time and their achievement overall is also satisfactory.

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

- Pupils achieve well in English and in ICT.
- A central purpose of the unit is to get pupils back into school and pick up the strands of their education – pupils achieve well in this regard.
- The admission to the unit of pupils with statements of SEN inhibits the progress they make because there are too few learning support assistants (LSAs) to meet their needs.
- By the time pupils leave, whether in Year 11 or earlier, they are prepared well to undertake their next stage of learning or training.

#### **Commentary**

1. A common factor in all pupils, when they first arrive at the Kettlebrook Unit, is one of lower than average attainment and significant disaffection with education. Though attainment may vary between individuals the impact is one of under-achievement in most cases. This has been caused by significant disruption to their previous education as well as the social and emotional difficulties which many experience. Taking into account their starting point the achievement by the majority is at least satisfactory and standards improve, although they steadfastly remain below what might be expected from pupils of similar age. Staff at the unit treat all pupils with respect and do their best to inspire them to learn; the impact of this is that there is no difference in the achievement of boys or girls or between ethnic groups. A barrier to learning and achievement is the lack of support staff. Because they are too few, those pupils with more pronounced learning difficulties (viz. those pupils with statements of SEN) do not get the consistent and planned support they need.
2. Pupils achieve well in English and ICT. The good achievement in English and ICT is down to the good quality teaching and more secure knowledge shown by the teachers. In other subjects, including mathematics, pupils' achievement, though satisfactory, is not as good and this reflects the quality of teaching in these subjects.
3. It is made clear to pupils and their parents that a place at the unit is not an end in itself, but more an opportunity to pick up the threads of education and improve their chances in later life. The insistence on this by staff pervades everything the unit does and pupils are not allowed to get into the comfort zone of complacency. The rate of re-integration to school is good and represents a good joint achievement on the part of pupils and staff at the school. In the last year almost half of all pupils were re-admitted to mainstream school. Set against a background where some pupils are admitted to the unit too late in their school career or where others moved away from the area, this is no mean achievement and it reflects the determination of the head teacher to raise standards.

4. Pupils with SEN are admitted to the unit. This is generally contrary to the advice of DfES Circular 11/99, and the result is that these pupils do not make the progress they might in more specialist provision. Their achievement and progress is further compromised because the unit does not have the number of staff required to adequately support their learning. There are too few of these and teachers cannot be sure of when they might have the assistance of staff in this group; as a result much needed support cannot be planned as a provision within any lesson.
5. Pupils have individual education plans (IEP) which are regularly reviewed. These have realistic and challenging targets, particularly those relating to behaviour management. Pupils make satisfactory progress in these and as a result behaviour within the unit is at least satisfactory and represents an environment in which all pupils can safely learn. The regular attention to targets in the IEPs enables pupils to improve their work and improve their approach to it – consequently most pupils are overcoming their former negative attitudes to academic work. Achievement within lessons is most marked where teaching provides high quality challenges. The opposite is also true, where teaching does not measure up to this same high standard. This shows what could be achieved if the quality of teaching and behaviour management was of a uniformly high calibre.
6. In the last two years the unit has entered Year 9 pupils for the national SATs tests. Although the range of attainment has remained consistent at Level 3 to Level 5 the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 has increased. This is true of all three subjects tested. This means that most pupils attain below expectation but standards are rising. The most significant evidence of the achievement of pupils is found in Year 11. These pupils, although not transferred back to mainstream, have reversed their approach to learning. They have continued their studies in the unit and this year have taken part in an increased range of accreditation opportunities. This year all pupils in Year 11 have entered examinations such as GCSE English and mathematics as well as Entry Level geography, science and ICT. Discussions with individual pupils in this group indicate huge gratitude to the staff for the effort put in on their behalf. By the time they leave these pupils have clear ideas of what they want to do and are prepared well for their next stage of education or training.

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

The development of pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities is satisfactory. Attendance is good, and attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral social and cultural development are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attendance is good, and as a result their learning is more systematic.
- Because pupils enjoy unit life and the activities provided they re-engage with learning.
- The unit successfully encourages pupils to develop good relationships and take on the responsibilities of living in a community.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are good and this enables them to move successfully to their next school.
- All pupils are enabled to experience a positive and safe environment in which they can learn and achieve.
- Behaviour of a few pupils gets in the way of how they learn.

## **Commentary**

7. Attendance by pupils is good. Results of their questionnaire distributed before the inspection showed clearly that pupils enjoy being at the unit. They appreciate the attitudes of the staff and form good relationships with them. The unit takes pupils' attendance seriously, monitors it closely and can demonstrate a significant improvement in the attendance of nearly three quarters of those who are admitted. Very good and constructive relationships with parents and carers have resulted in the co-operation necessary to secure this good level of the improvement. Pupils generally show a good level of interest in lessons and the activities the unit has to offer; they show obvious enthusiasm for what is provided. However, some pupils show very challenging behaviour which gets in the way of their learning.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	10.0
National data (All EBD schools)	11.9

Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.0
National data (All EBD schools)	7.6

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

8. Improvement in pupils' behaviour is central to the work of the unit. Staff expect all pupils to behave well and show courtesy to others. The impact of this is that behaviour is generally satisfactory, despite the many challenging behaviours pupils exhibited at previous schools. Pupils are clearly aware of the unit's approach to managing their behaviour and by and large they fulfil its requirements. Their behaviour is focused through targets and the outcomes tracked through an award of points; these are recorded and put into graphs. Pupils can then very easily see the trends and outcomes in their own performance. Rules, rewards, contracts and sanctions are regularly reviewed as some pupils may struggle to reach standards of behaviour acceptable in mainstream schools. Individual behaviour plans are well focused and helpful. Pupils behave well in situations such as the dining room. Here, pupils served food to each other, cleared away their plates and chatted sociably. Behaviour at a football match against a mainstream school was excellent. Pupils delighted in their new, very striking football kit, played by the rules and won.
  
9. It is in some lessons where difficult behaviour by a few pupils becomes a barrier to learning. This is a result of behaviour management practice which is not always clear and consistent. The activities of those pupils who could not settle in lessons caused disruption. Exclusion from the unit is considered as a last resort. This has happened on only one occasion within the last year – under extenuating circumstances.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	36	1	1

10. The quality of personal responsibility and enterprise is satisfactory. It is usual for pupils to willingly take responsibility for tidying classrooms after lessons. One boy has successfully undertaken the simple business enterprise of printing posters and stationery for a local firm. There is little vandalism and no unwanted graffiti in the unit. It is obvious that pupils care about being there. Pupils responded well to the activities and challenges of a UNICEF day and helped in the sponsorship of the marathon run undertaken by a member of staff which resulted in the purchase of new kit for the unit's football team. Planning for the introduction of a unit council to further develop pupils' personal qualities is being actively considered but currently pupils do not feel they have much influence in what happens around the unit.
  
11. Individual pupils feel that occasional bullying occurs – although none of this was witnessed during the inspection. They also feel, however, that staff deal rapidly with such instances

and that generally the unit is a safe place in which to be. Staff deal with such issues consistently and with appropriate fairness which pupils identify; exclusion is considered only when the safety of other people is at risk. As a result, pupils experience good levels of concern by staff and they appreciate an atmosphere in which they can learn and achieve. The unit promotes the relationships between pupils well. Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) are satisfactory and these promote personal development. The staff are good rôle models and cultivate helpful relationships with pupils. Arguments are speedily diffused, sometimes involving pupils in “circle time” in order to achieve this. Positive relationships develop into firm friendships amongst some of the older pupils.

12. Pupils achieve good levels of confidence and self-esteem because of the quality of their relationships with staff as well as their achievement in lessons. All pupils are valued and know this to be the case. They thrive as a result. The majority of pupils become used to success in learning as well as behaving better. This was most noticeable among older pupils in Year 11. They have no hesitation in speaking out for themselves, at reviews, for example. Their confidence improves as they learn new skills, and this allows them to successfully reintegrate into mainstream education.
13. Although many pupils grow very attached to the unit, long-term stays are not generally considered an option. It is motivating pupils to return to their previous, or similar, schools and stimulating in them the desire to learn that the unit is most successful. In this, high expectations of conduct and well structured preparation for the all-important transition are key strengths.
14. Overall, pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory; community and social responsibility is the strongest of these. Although there are no unit assemblies, teachers bring up questions of faith in such lessons as religious education (RE), and pupils have good opportunities to talk to teachers about themselves and of their personal experiences. In RE, particularly, the teachers openly discuss others’ beliefs and pupils learn about festivals associated with other religions. With this knowledge, pupils improve their spiritual understanding and tolerance of others’ religions as they begin to realise that divinity is fundamental to some people’s way of life.
15. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of what is right and wrong, because the unit aims to leave them in no doubt as to the requirements for moral and ethical behaviour. The staff in the unit are principled and considerate and behave as they would like pupils to behave. Pupils have been fully involved in drawing up the rules of the unit, although they do not always choose to follow them. They are helped by staff to think about the consequences of any action they take, including its effect on others. This successfully modifies the behaviour of some pupils, and enables them to adapt well to living in a community. Pupils’ social skills and sense of community responsibility are further developed through use of facilities such as the local youth centre, visits away from the unit, fund-raising for charity and through restoration of a commemorative bench for a local child who had a fatal accident.
16. Pupils’ knowledge of their own and other cultures is satisfactory and they have an understanding of what it takes to live in a culturally diverse society. All study plays by Shakespeare and enjoy them. There were some good opportunities during the week of inspection for pupils to handle a range of religious artefacts used in religions across the world. Examples of art work seen during the inspection included work in a variety of styles,

such as European, African, Egyptian and aboriginal. Insufficient use is made of visits to other places and visitors to the unit which would further extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures.

17. Discussion with pupils shows they appreciate the work done on their behalf. Pupils in Year 11 said they were genuinely sorry to be leaving and that if it was not for the effort of staff in the unit they would have achieved little in their school life. Younger pupils enjoy being at the unit, particularly the range of activities and opportunities it offers; they have derived many positive relationships with staff on the back of these. Of those parents who expressed an opinion, all agreed that placement of their child at the unit has been beneficial to his or her personal development and they have noticed a growing maturity in their children.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the unit is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The unit provides a broad curriculum for its pupils and the number of subjects which staff teach compares most favourably with other similar units. In addition, there are numerous other opportunities for pupils to enrich their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. The quality of care provided for pupils is good and this is further enhanced by good guidance and advice. Parents appreciate the way the unit works to get their children back into school; this is something at which the unit is particularly good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment is generally unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost half of the lessons seen were good: teaching and learning were better where lessons were taught by staff with specialist knowledge or particular expertise.
- Weaknesses in behaviour management during a few lessons limited the effectiveness of both teaching and learning.
- Pupils learned best where high expectations and good behaviour management combined.
- Assessment practice lacks coherence and outcomes to this, through altering teaching and learning styles, are not used to benefit pupils' learning.
- There are too few support assistants and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	11	10	4	0	0

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

*Specific comments refer exclusively to teaching of Year 7 to Year 9 pupils. Examination and work experience commitments kept older pupils away from the unit. Nevertheless, the overall judgements on teaching and learning take other evidence such as study of pupils' work and discussions with pupils into account. This other evidence was a factor in inspectors judging teaching satisfactory despite seeing some unsatisfactory practice.*

18. The best lessons seen were provided by those teachers with specialist knowledge of the subject. Their ability to challenge pupils and make lessons interesting represented beacons of learning in the unit. Teaching in English was consistently good because the teacher was adventurous and demanding on what pupils should achieve. This enthusiasm demonstrated to pupils that they could succeed if they too were adventurous in their learning. The variety of methods, good pace and appropriately pitched activities ensured that poor behaviour never raised its head because pupils were engrossed in what they needed to do. Teaching in other subjects, such as French, RE, physical education (PE)

and history was also good. Good individual lessons were also seen in mathematics and science. What these lessons had in common was the teacher's ability to catch the imagination of pupils through an appropriate level of challenge to their learning. In the French lesson, for example, the English language was hardly ever used.

19. In contrast the few unsatisfactory lessons got off to a bad start because behaviour management was weak; invariably these lessons did not start punctually. Teachers did not use the behaviour management systems available to them. These situations got lessons off to a stuttering start and, even though some had been prepared well, lessons never really gained the momentum and pace they needed. In mathematics and science teaching and learning was mainly satisfactory rather than good, and this is why achievement overall is no better than satisfactory.
20. There are too few support assistants and this lack of skilled support inhibits pupils' learning and achievement. Currently there are 2.8 equivalent full time assistants – a figure below the minimum recommendation of DfES Circular 11/90. Pupils' learning is compromised further because with so few support staff the senior management has few options in their deployment. In the event that disturbances occur during lessons the attention of the teacher is inevitably diverted to manage this; the result is that learning stops and lessons become derailed. Presently teachers cannot know for sure when they will receive support from these staff and they therefore cannot plan this into the opportunities for pupils' learning. The situation is unsatisfactory.
21. Where staffing support was at an appropriate level pupils were much more ready to learn and concentrate on what they needed to do. The positive impact on the quality of learning was considerable. For example, in an ICT lesson the expertise of the two teachers confidently enabled them to demonstrate what was required. The impact of this, alongside their quiet management of behaviour, was that pupils concentrated for the whole of the lesson and made good gains in their learning.
22. It is to the credit of teachers that they provide such a wide range of subjects and opportunities in which pupils have opportunities to achieve. However, this represents a two-edged sword because teachers sometimes teach a subject in which they have little expertise. Despite this they plan these lessons well and gaps in their knowledge are being filled through the support of specialist advisers from the local authority. Other responses to this problem are sought in better links with mainstream schools who willingly share their expertise and resources.
23. Teachers give feedback to pupils about what they have learned, though not much of this is done at the same time as the learning. Work completed by pupils is marked regularly and the best forms of this included constructive comment which would enable pupils to understand what they needed to do in order to improve. The quality and impact of marking is too variable and at best it represents a record of what pupils have done rather than what they might have achieved. A common factor in the weakest lessons was the absence of any summary or plenary. Although teachers knew they had taught a topic they used no means of checking that pupils had learned or understood it. Longer term assessment practice does not offer secure profiles of pupils' achievement and progress; there is too little analysis of what the pupils are able to do. It does not provide information which can be evaluated in order to adjust pupils' future style or means of learning.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Within the constraints of pupils' home-school travel arrangements the unit provides good opportunities for extra-curricular sport. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The length of the taught week at 19 hours and 10 minutes is too short. Time allocated to English and mathematics is consequently low.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn a wide range of subjects and become accredited in these.
- Opportunities for enrichment are good, including sport and other activities.
- Equality of access and opportunity is good, including re-integration into mainstream schools and work experience opportunities.

### Commentary

24. The curriculum is unsatisfactory in respect of the length of the taught week; at just over 19 hours of taught time this represents almost a full day each week of lost opportunity. This impacts adversely on the available time for the study of English and mathematics. One result is that currently there is too little curriculum time to develop aspects of the English such as speaking and listening through drama, and to provide a broader curriculum for English literature for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, the teaching in English is strong and pupils achieve particularly well in the aspects of the subject they cover. A similar impact is experienced in mathematics where the full range of the curriculum cannot be provided; because teaching in mathematics is not as strong as English the achievement of pupils is lower.
25. There is a good breadth of subjects throughout the school and good arrangements in place to ensure specialist teaching of particular programmes such as drugs and sex education. Where subjects are not taught fully, focus days are used well to extend pupils' experiences, such as music and art workshops in graffiti art and rap music. There is imaginative use of LSAs using their individual skills to extend the range of learning opportunities, such as food technology, art and design and French. RE is provided weekly but there is no regular collective worship. In Years 10 and 11 there is an increasing though still limited range of externally accredited courses such as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), entry level English, mathematics and science, and GCSE English and mathematics. Good work experience opportunities are provided to all pupils and there is good preparation of pupils for their next stage of education through individual advisers from the Connexions service. The work experience programme is well managed and because of this pupils are provided with opportunities appropriate to their aptitudes and interests. The provision is regarded as so successful that it is being used as a model for other establishments.
26. The unit makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs even though there are too many of these on its roll. There is an appropriate emphasis on improvement of behaviour and in this the unit is largely successful. This is achieved through a structured programme known as STEP (**S**tay in lesson, **C**omplete **T**ask, **B**ring and use **E**quipment correctly and be **P**olite). The award of points associated with improved behaviour enables pupils to be closely monitored both within the unit and the school to which they reintegrate. Statistical results from these show the majority of pupils

improve their behaviour over time. Pupils who need particular help with reading and writing also have good support from 'Education Otherwise' teachers, resident in another part of the building though not formally part of the school. Plans exist to merge the work these two services which should further improve pupils' access to the curriculum.

27. Part of the PE programme is taught at the local boxing club. Because of the success of this link some pupils attend the club in their own time. A similar link with the youth centre brings the same results. There are regular football matches with local schools and other pupil referral units. Special arts days are popular with pupils as visitors come into the unit to conduct music and art workshops. Pupils have gained some insights into the life of soldiers and sailors through day and weekend visits to the local regiment of Green Jackets and to the Royal Navy in Portsmouth. Staff are imaginative in using their contacts to widen the experiences offered to pupils.
28. Planned programmes of reintegration to mainstream schools are well tailored and sensitive to individual needs. This leads to almost half of all pupils achieving successful re-integration. Named teachers at these schools have oversight of pupils when they arrive. The success of the placements is made more effective by very skilled support from LSAs from the unit. Pupils initially attend only those lessons in which they are confident or are placed in sets where the pace of learning is appropriate for their needs. There is good flexibility in matching these needs to combinations of work experience and college courses supported well by Connexions.

### **Care, guidance and support**

There are good arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The unit provides its pupils with good support, advice and guidance and there are sound arrangements to involve them through seeking and acting upon their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good relationships between staff and the young people, ensuring that each pupil has a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the unit. Teachers and other staff know the pupils well as individuals.
- The unit provides pupils with good transition programmes to help them back into mainstream education if appropriate.
- The unit is developing its provision to assist pupils to benefit from work placements. This is managed well and being considered as a model for the wider PRU service.
- There are good induction procedures to ensure that pupils quickly settle in and feel part of the unit.
- There is no pupil council which could more readily involve pupils in the work of the unit.

### **Commentary**

29. The unit is aware that it can only be successful if it enlists the trust and commitment of its pupils. Hence, prior to their admission, virtually all pupils are visited at home. They then have an opportunity to visit the unit. Following this, they then have to ask to join Kettlebrook; pupils are admitted with a clear commitment from both parties to make it work. All staff are briefed on a new pupil's background and provided with any pointers on approaches that might work for that individual.

30. There are good relationships between staff and pupils at all levels and these form an important part of the unit's provision. Staff get to know well and understand the pupils as individuals and this helps to work with them in ways that help their progress. Much of this involves staff being prepared to see behind some very challenging and aggressive behaviour in order to find the real pupil and put into context the reasons for their behaviour. The formal monitoring of pupils' behaviour and attitudes as used in the unit's STEP programme means that teachers monitor progress well and provide additional support where necessary. Their impact of their ability to monitor pupils' academic progress is hindered by the limitations of the unit's present assessment systems.
31. Pupils have a growing awareness of the commitment staff make to them and despite their occasional outbursts are usually appreciative of it. There is a good rapport and mutual respect between the pupils and staff. This attitude is fostered, for example, by staff sitting with pupils at lunchtimes or joining in football games with them during break times. Through such informal contacts teachers' knowledge of their pupils extends beyond formal procedures. The good way in which teachers and teaching assistants work together is to the considerable benefit of pupils. Visiting professionals contribute well; in particular, counselling is proving successful in supporting a number of pupils through personal crises. The professional approach of management and staff means that the unit's aim for an informal atmosphere combined with a challenging learning environment is generally achieved. Pupils' all round development could be further improved if they were to be more involved in making decisions about those issues which directly affect them. Parents believe that the staff encourage pupils to become mature and independent and that there is a positive atmosphere that characterises the unit.
32. The unit's detailed and well-structured IEPs provide highly relevant information about the pupils' individual needs and targets. However, the information on these is used inconsistently. This means that only a few staff use IEPs to tailor activities to individual needs. Each pupil has a set of educational and personal aims, involving parents, teaching assistants, unit management and any specialists supporting the individual. The targets for pupils are relevant and enable staff to provide the well-informed support the pupils need if they are to reintegrate into mainstream education within a couple of terms.
33. Staff at the unit are very conscious that pupils should not spend overlong with them. They regard the unit as a short transition to somewhere else. Hence advice and guidance on the next stages are a crucial part of the unit's provision. There is good support from the Connexions service to help pupils obtain information and impartial advice to lead them towards a productive future. Pupils are aware that continued attendance at the unit in the long term is not an option – it is made clear from day one that reintegration is the central target. Once pupils accept this they are then keen to consider the paths open to them. The help provided by the unit's transition coordinator in advising pupils and liaising with the mainstream schools is a crucial factor in the success of this. In particular, transferring a pupil to a different high school requires a high level of support for both the pupil and the receiving unit if it is to work.
34. Similarly, the development of the unit's work experience programme by the coordinator and the support the unit provides for the pupils involved make a positive contribution to improving their self-confidence and behaviour, as well as opening up their ambitions. For example, one pupil on extended work experience at a golf course now wants to take a green-keeping qualification, whilst another has found his niche as a vehicle fitter and is considering placement at college in order to gain relevant qualifications. For another

pupil, support from the unit and Connexions service has been instrumental in encouraging him to take English and maths GCSEs in order to attend a fisheries course next year.

35. The success of the unit's support can be gauged from the following table showing the destinations of leavers:

Moved from area (mainly pupils in public care)	30%
Transition back to their original school	15%
Managed move to a different unit or school	15%
College	15%
Employment	11%
Young offender project or similar	11%
Not known	4%

36. The unit has made a good start in ensuring that pupils are able to move on into constructive pathways. Staff work hard to confront the negative views which many pupils have of education and learning and they are generally successful in persuading them that qualifications and academic and social achievement are the key to a worthwhile and fulfilling career.
37. The unit provides a safe environment. A full health and safety audit was carried out last year by the LEA and the few areas identified for improvement have been addressed. The unit has a comprehensive range of risk assessments in place covering the buildings, although detailed risk assessments for school trips need to be completed, rather than relying on the generic version currently in use. The managing group maintain an appropriate overview of health and safety issues. Child protection procedures are fully in place; staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and there is appropriate liaison with local social services departments.

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

There are good links with parents and satisfactory partnerships with the local community. There are very good partnerships with other schools and colleges. The unit provides a good transition programme for pupils returning to mainstream school; this is managed well.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships with the high schools in the Tamworth area; these increase the opportunities for pupils to be accepted back into mainstream schools.
- The unit places considerable emphasis on its partnership with parents and makes a real effort to involve them in their child's education.
- There are good opportunities to provide more extended services and professional support to other educational establishments, based on the expertise of unit staff.
- Parents are very satisfied and supportive of the unit and believe the flow of information to them is effective.

## Commentary

38. The very nature of the unit means that relationships with the mainstream high schools in the Tamworth area are of prime importance; pupils are referred to the unit by these schools and many pupils will at some stage be reintegrated into one or other of them. A panel of the head teachers reviews and approves all referrals to the unit; in a very real sense they are customers for the service it provides and close liaison is vital. Similarly, a successful transition for a pupil back into a high school clearly depends on the unit working very closely with its staff. These transition programmes are so successful because pupils are prepared well and each move is skilfully managed. Each high school has a nominated teacher with whom the Kettlebrook transition coordinator works in order to plan each reintegration programme. LSAs from the unit accompany each pupil and provide support for a period of weeks within each mainstream school; this forms part of the phased transfer. This sharing of staff is accompanied by an increasingly useful exchange of information to help mainstream school staff deal effectively with each pupil. In addition to the mainstream schools, the unit also has very close liaison with the adjoining provision for Education Otherwise staff. This further benefits pupils' access to education through the partnership of both organisations, for example home tuition.
39. Because pupils spend a relatively short time at the unit it is difficult for staff to build secure working relationships with parents. Nevertheless, parents believe that the unit does make strong efforts to involve them. In particular, they appreciate the unit's policy of regular contact, often by telephone, to share their child's successes and problems with them. For many, it is a first time in which their child has succeeded or been rewarded and they are very grateful for these contacts. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the unit and the quality of care and education their children are receiving. They consider staff to be approachable, friendly and supportive. There are very regular written reports on progress and parents are closely involved in decisions affecting their child. Parents believe their views are valued by staff at the unit and taken into account. An under-developed opportunity is the unit website, which has a promising structure but has not yet been completed.
40. The unit has involved staff from other local units in specialist training sessions; these have been well attended. Inevitably, whilst setting up a new establishment, the first priority has to be to ensure that it can fulfil its primary functions. There are clearly considerable opportunities to build on the positive relationships already established with mainstream schools for unit staff to use their specialist expertise to provide more extended services and support programmes for them.

41. The unit has only been in its current building for only a couple of years but has made significant strides in building productive contacts with local residents. Many of these same residents were opposed to the location of the unit in their area. The unit now has good cooperation with the neighbourhood's street wardens, who have regular dealings with some of the pupils and find the unit staff approachable and cooperative. The support of local employers is also crucial to the success of the unit's work experience programme.



## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership by the headteacher is good; leadership by other staff with responsibilities is satisfactory. Governance of the unit is unsatisfactory, though the support provided by officers in the local authority is good. The unit complies with statutory requirements.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The head teacher has a clear vision for the development of the unit and has provided good direction to its work. Her skill and determination have brought about improvement from a low base.
- The unit has been open for a relatively short time and some planned improvements have yet to take effect.
- The LEA has provided good quality support to the work of the unit and this has enabled staff to raise standards of provision.
- The managing body has yet to fully identify the ways in which it can best support and challenge the work of the unit; even so the chair of this group is a very active supporter.
- The leadership and management are committed to the reintegration of pupils to mainstream schools and have gained considerable success.
- The admission of such a high number of pupils with statements of special education need is contrary to recommendations.

### **Commentary**

42. The unit was set up by the local authority just over two years ago in response to a need identified by the head teachers of six local mainstream schools. Records show that it got off to an uncertain and chaotic start, with a change of leadership, unstable staffing and LEA concerns about the quality of provision. It was thought at the time that the provision was so ineffective that closure was considered as an option. It is because of this uncertain beginning that the unit does not yet function at the level it would like but it has, nevertheless, done all that could be reasonably expected within the time available. Because of good leadership the unit is now a place in which pupils learn and thrive.
43. Progress, in a relatively short time, has been considerable and due mostly to the determination and vision of the head teacher who clearly understands the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. She has put in place a systematic programme which has confronted and remedied the weaknesses while at the same time developing and using the strengths of the staff. The local authority and members of the managing body, most notably the chairman, have assisted her work through their challenge and support. The strategic planning for the unit is sound. The impact of this has been to halt the evidenced decline. Staff have responded positively to the leadership of the head teacher and provide good role models to pupils by upholding the values and philosophy of the unit. They work very hard in support of these. All of those parents who chose to respond to the pre-inspection questionnaire believe the unit is well run.

### ***Leadership and management***

44. The head teacher provides good leadership and her vision and determination are instrumental in raising standards. She has put in place procedures and responses which

enable the unit to function effectively on a day-to-day basis. As a 'hands on' head teacher she constantly works alongside staff and pupils. To enable her to do this she has delegated much of the administration to efficient office staff. She acts as a good role model and inspires staff to do their best on behalf of pupils. She also has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the work done in the unit and has confronted the latter by increasing the staff training and constructing clear procedures through which they can do their work effectively. She regularly monitors teaching and provides good pointers to how practice might be improved. The unit is well ordered and generally calm. Pupils state they feel safe when at the unit and enjoy what it has to offer. Staff respond well to the leadership shown by the head teacher; they are supportive of the pupils and continue to positively manage their behaviour.

45. The staff group is small in number. The head teacher's leadership has ensured they are a cohesive and mutually supportive group. She is very aware of their strengths and competences and has used these to benefit pupils. Performance management procedures are secure and needs identified from these are included in the unit's development plan in the form of additional training or revised procedures. The outcomes to observation of lessons could be made additionally effective by more rigorous identification of areas for development.
46. Policies are all in place though not all have yet been formally ratified by the managing body. In the time available to it the leadership has made satisfactory progress in this regard. Those policies essential to the smooth running of the unit and which support its stated aims are all in place and have been ratified by the managing body; these include policies such as those for assessment, recording and reporting, performance management and complaints procedures.
47. The head teacher carries out monitoring of the curriculum. This is satisfactory. She has ensured that planning of the required curriculum for pupil referral units (English, mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE) is in place and that pupils have opportunities to make progress. Subject leaders have accepted well their tasks to constantly update this planning, even where they have little expertise in the subject for which they find themselves responsible. Each teacher is responsible for more than one subject and they carry out their management of these satisfactorily.
48. The strategic planning for the development of the unit is satisfactory. Issues are decided corporately and tested against the overall aims of the unit. The outcomes are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness. Even so the impact of some initiatives, such as the behaviour management policy and practice, is not yet fully effective because its implementation is inconsistent.

### **Governance**

49. Governance of the unit is unsatisfactory. The managing body has been in place a relatively short time. Its composition and role is still evolving. Through its active and supportive chairman it recognises its responsibilities and has made a good start in responding to these. As yet it does not challenge the work of the unit sufficiently well or in ways which would cause a rise in standards. Formal monitoring of practices has yet to be put fully in place. Visits to view the work of the unit are made by some members of the group but these are insufficiently rigorous or focused. Despite this the managing body is appreciated by staff and recognised as a good support to the unit.

50. The managing group, though not yet fully constituted, is forming working parties to monitor the work of the unit, but currently most of its fact finding is dependent on reports received from the head teacher. An issue which the managing body needs to confront is the amount of time pupils have available for learning. This is below the current guidelines in DfES Circular 7/90. Closer monitoring of the unit would have identified this.
51. Through its representation on the managing body the LEA has provided good support for the unit. In the early days of upheaval they chose to confront issues rather than close the provision and their consistent support has been an effective contribution in arresting the decline in standards and to place the unit on a firmer footing. The authority's link adviser has made frequent visits to the unit and the perceptive reports which resulted from these as well as the actions which followed have contributed to the stability and development of the unit.
52. The decision by the local authority to admit 11 pupils with statements of special educational need is contrary to the recommendations of Circular 11/99. The needs of these pupils cannot wholly be met within the unit and they represent too high a proportion of the pupil roll.
53. The managing body has sanctioned and budgeted for building work designed to address some of the issues relating to the accommodation. Immediately after the conclusion of the inspection work was to begin constructing science accommodation and improving classroom space to enable more effective teaching and learning.
54. The cohesion and common vision of the leadership, managing body and local authority shows a determination to raise standards in the unit and provide the best possible support to local mainstream schools and their pupils. The unit is largely successful in its central aim of enabling pupils to move successfully forward in their lives. It provides satisfactory value for money because it provides a range of services and support to local schools who value its contribution, It enables a high proportion of its pupils to reintegrate to mainstream school, improves pupils' attendance, self esteem and attitudes to learning and involves their parents in this learning. It does this at a cost per head lower than many schools for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties. A significant barrier to further progress and the capability to improve services is the lack of staff. Currently this lack of support staff curtails what the unit can offer both to local schools and more particularly to its own pupils. Within the unit learning and achievement of pupils is especially affected by this.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	310,760
Total expenditure	310,760
Expenditure per pupil	8,632

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to the next	0

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

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

#### **ENGLISH**

The provision in English is **good**.

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

- The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has put in place appropriate schemes of work that provide good opportunities for pupils to consolidate their progress.
- Good teaching and learning result in good achievement.
- All pupils have the opportunity to take the GCSE examination.
- There is too little curriculum time to develop drama.
- Assessment procedures do not securely identify pupils' progress and require further development.

#### **Commentary**

*Lessons were observed in years 7, 8 and 9 only. Written work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 was analysed.*

55. Leadership and management are good. The subject has been well established and schemes of work and provision for the external examinations are now secure. Informal monitoring of teaching has been introduced. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of next steps and is working well to achieve them. This year there has been an increased number of entrants to the GCSE examination.
56. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The teachers are knowledgeable and authoritative. Relationships are very good, and pupils are at their ease. They therefore respond positively to the lessons, and show themselves capable of extended periods of concentration. Behaviour management is secure and consistent, so that all pupils are enabled to do their best without misbehaviour getting in the way of learning. Lessons move at a brisk pace, so that much ground is covered and interest levels are maintained. Resources and activities are both highly suitable and motivating.
57. By the end of Year 9 pupils speak confidently. They converse sensibly and put forward their own point of view. Discussions with Year 11 pupils show that this skill develops well and these pupils discuss their futures and reflect on their past in very mature fashion. All pupils are capable of careful listening when a lesson catches their interest and imagination; for some younger pupils this skill is under-developed. Pupils have few opportunities to address an audience other than the rest of their class. For example, they are not called upon to make points to a whole school gathering. Many pupils read texts with good understanding although they usually show a polite interest in books rather than enjoyment of them. Pupils write short pieces of continuous prose but many of these contain major errors in spelling, punctuation grammar. By the end of Year 11, the best work is written to good length and after re-drafting is substantially correct. Essays in English literature are, however, largely descriptive and show few skills of analysis. Pupils make good use of ICT to present their work in striking and effective ways.

58. Pupils achieve well overall; most of this is from a low starting point. They gain confidence in speaking and listening as they answer questions in class and engage in productive dialogue with the teacher. Some pupils read confidently and expressively but this ability is not common. The majority however achieve well in reading – showing this by reading texts such as “Kes”, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone”, and “Of Mice and Men”. By the end of Year 9 all have tackled at least one play by Shakespeare with some measure of success. Reading lessons are demanding as pupils are given good opportunities for annotation and begin to discuss characterisation. Pupils achieve well in writing because their work is very carefully marked, and they are supplied with prompts and word frames of good quality. They are given constructive advice on how to redraft their work which shows them how to improve it further.
59. There is currently too little curriculum time to develop aspects of the subject such as drama, and to provide a broader curriculum for English literature for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is because the more general timetable is too short to enable more than four lessons each week for Years 10 and 11 and only three lessons each week for all other pupils. Target setting has been recently introduced in the subject, but this requires further review. Current assessment procedures sometimes give inaccurate results because the unit lacks a portfolio of comparable work or other similar devices which would help in the accuracy of National Curriculum assessments. The unit is currently considering the use of nationally produced units of work to further raise the attainment of some of the younger pupils. Further development of resources for reading, including the library, is now rightly seen by the unit to be a priority.

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

60. Provision is satisfactory. The effect of a recently written policy has yet to have an impact and the outcomes have not been evaluated. Pupils are confident speakers and are given this opportunity in most lessons. Younger pupils particularly do not always listen well and this adversely affects the quality of their responses. Almost all read simple reading materials used during lessons. In subjects such as science, for example, pupils read lists of clues they need to work out their approach to forensic tests and determine possible suspects in their ‘whodunnit’. In food technology lessons they follow simple recipe cards and accurately translate these by using correct amounts of ingredients. Pupils usually have to be persuaded to read for information or pleasure, and do not readily take to books. The library is not accessible to pupils and this may account in part for a lack of interest and familiarity with books. Competence in writing includes note taking and simple essays as well as completion of worksheets. Pupils’ literacy and communication targets have not yet been developed sufficiently to provide all teachers with the information to enable them to provide additional support and challenge in all lessons. The stock of library books is currently inadequate to fully meet the requirements of the curriculum or pupils’ leisure reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Short, well-focused tasks engage pupils’ attention.

- Additional support in lessons helps pupils concentrate and stay on task.
- ICT is planned well into lessons but its impact is hampered by failures of the system.
- Assessment does not always provide the quality of information which leads to a better match between pupils' attainment and what they need to learn.

## Commentary

61. Attainment on entry is well below that nationally expected for these pupils because their attitudes and behaviour have led to significant underachievement in their previous schools. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve satisfactorily and those who reintegrate to mainstream school achieve well. This is accomplished with initial one-to-one support in their respective class; this support is supplied by skilled LSAs from the pupil referral unit. Years 10 and 11 were not in school during the inspection. Scrutiny of their work suggests that standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 11 but they make satisfactory progress overall. These pupils sit for entry level accreditation in the GCSE.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Where teaching was good this encouraged pupils to settle quickly and provided them with short well focused tasks which developed their knowledge and understanding. This was made more effective because of the additional help available during the lesson. The numeracy strategy was applied well with work pitched at the appropriate level and what pupils needed to learn was made clear to them. The impact of the lesson on pupils' learning was made better because it was reviewed at the end. Thus, pupils had the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned. In all lessons short investigative tasks were aimed to catch the interest of the pupils and to achieve a result before moving to the next stage. This was effective for Years 7 and 8 who investigated the relationship between wing length and time of flight. Pupils worked cooperatively as pairs supported well by a LSA. Less successful features of lessons occurred where there was no formal start to the lesson, no learning support for pupils and where work which was planned to use ICT could not go ahead because of network failure. No alternative activities were planned.
63. The mathematics coordinator, in post since September, has correctly identified the need to further update his skills in teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy, set up assessment procedures for pupils on entry, and update the scheme of work. There is now good attention to key learning objectives for each year group but pupils do not have individual targets. The use of assessment to plan and level work and meet needs of both higher and lower attainers is another area for development. There is also a need to focus on key words for mathematics, although pupils use their reading and writing skills satisfactorily to write up the results of investigative work.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

64. The application of numeracy skills is satisfactory in food technology, science and history. In these subjects pupils are required to add simple sums. In food technology, for example, pupils use the skill of estimating weight. In science, pupils collect data and present this in the form of graphs. Overall, there is satisfactory support for the development of numeracy across the curriculum.

## SCIENCE

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards remain below those of similar aged pupils in mainstream schools but represent satisfactory achievement for these pupils.
- Teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress over time.
- The unit has no science facility and no specialist science teacher.
- Assessment practice needs further development

## Commentary

65. Achievement in science is satisfactory overall, although pupils generally do not reach levels expected of similar aged pupils in mainstream schools. During their relatively short time at the unit pupils make satisfactory progress. Because teaching is meticulous and planned well pupils become familiar with and understand a body of scientific knowledge and also become conversant with a good range of scientific terminology. Considerable effort is made by the teacher to motivate pupils through choice of interesting topics, such as forensic science and detective work, but pupils find it very difficult to work collaboratively. The quality of recording and interrogation of outcomes from experiments and investigations is limited. This is further restricted by the unsatisfactory literacy skill of some pupils which inhibits their capacity to record or put into words what they see. Frustration among pupils, especially younger pupils, was a common factor in many lessons. When pupils could be encouraged to take part in discussion it was evident they were using knowledge gained in previous lessons to add to and enhance their present learning. Where lessons were practical the impact on pupils' learning was better; even so, some pupils failed to understand that in order to gain secure results the methods they used in experiments had to follow scientific principles.
66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the outcomes are constrained by the fact the teacher is not a science specialist. Lessons are well constructed and provide opportunities for pupils to learn. They are meticulously prepared and appropriately resourced. The unit on forensic science, for example, set good challenges for pupils to detect the perpetrator of a 'crime' using simple chemical forensic tests. The potentially good learning which could have come from this was restricted by the teacher failing to engage the pupils in good quality analytical discussion and this led to poor behaviour which further devalued their learning and understanding. There were several occasions where the teacher did not do enough to challenge the pupils to think for themselves – answers were often provided before the pupils had time to respond. Despite this, where pupils' learning was good they took more control of this and at its best pupils developed their knowledge along their own line of investigation.
67. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum follows the programmes of study for the National Curriculum but the planning has one eye on the fact that not all pupils remain at the unit for long periods. Topics are chosen to inspire pupils and to re-engage their interest as well as develop scientific thinking and knowledge. Assessment of learning is unsatisfactory because it does not enable objective analysis of what pupils have learned. Not enough use is made of ICT in science. Literacy development is satisfactory though more is needed in order to encourage pupils' skills of speaking and listening, particularly listening. Numeracy skills are used in order to summarise statistical information and pupils devise graphs to show this. The subject is adequately resourced in terms of books and consumable materials but the range of what

can be offered is severely compromised by the lack of appropriate accommodation. This latter fact has been recognised by the unit management and previously planned structural improvements would follow the end of the inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision in ICT is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good; because of this pupils make good gains in their learning.
- All pupils have had experience of a wide variety of software and this enables them to become confident computer users.
- The present network is unreliable and cannot adequately support teaching and learning.
- Assessment is under-developed and does not enable teachers to focus pupils' learning in the most appropriate way.

### **Commentary**

*Only one lesson was seen in Year 9. Pupils work from other years was analysed and evaluated in a range of other subjects and topics.*

68. Pupils have made good progress in response to good teaching. In lessons the majority achieve well. For example, in the lesson which was observed pupils successfully combined text, graphics and a spreadsheet table into one document. This exercise was based on a practical demonstration of model helicopter flight. The lesson was well planned to take account the different attainment of pupils. Well produced writing frames and prompts supported every stage of the activity. Explanations were clear, and both teacher and support teacher confidently demonstrated what had to be done. Pupils were well motivated in this lesson and were prepared to concentrate and cooperate; the result was they made good gains in learning. Both teachers offered good quality support to pupils, giving each the benefit of their expertise and challenging pupils to achieve more. They cooperated in their management of behaviour, although little overt intervention was needed. The high level attention allowed one higher attaining pupil to extend his learning as he analysed his graph in order to draw conclusions from it. Others worked more slowly but all, with help, inserted the spreadsheet and a graph into a specific programme. They all saved their work to hard drive. All were familiar with vocabulary such as "spreadsheet," "graph", "document" and "integrated".
69. Pupils generally achieve well. By the end of Year 9, they have had experience of a variety of software. They have used spreadsheets to record data. They have keyed in and printed personal timetables, using a variety of fonts and a range of striking colours. In their use of "Logo" they have produced computer-generated squares, pentagons and hexagons and analysed the procedures by which they are constructed. The production of graphic information across a range of subjects is a colourful feature of the computer room and indicates their growing confidence in the use of computers.
70. Leadership is good and the subject has been established well. Management of the subject is good. The coordinator has a clear vision of what is required. New software has been identified and ordered to resource the new scheme of work which is currently being developed. Centralised storage of pupils' work is now being addressed. The co-ordinator



is aware that assessment needs further development before the information derived from it can be used to plan the next stage of learning for pupils. The unit's computer network is unsuitable to support teaching and learning. The available technical assistance is inadequate to deal with frequent technical problems. The unit is addressing these deficiencies as a matter of great urgency.

### **ICT across the curriculum.**

71. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory across the curriculum because the unit's computer system is inadequate. The unit's management has recognised the weaknesses in the physical provision and planning for renewal of the network is at an advanced stage. Meanwhile, pupils' work must be saved to floppy disks rather than on the network. Very often pupils have to work on the identical computer they used in a previous lesson and this sometimes causes tension among them. It is not possible to access the Internet from all classrooms. Monitoring of ICT use across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
72. Some subjects use ICT well. In English, for example, pupils present their work in striking and interesting ways. In mathematics ICT is used well because it is well planned into the learning, and data handling, graphs and charts are strong features of pupils' attainment. In science, ICT is well used by the teacher for display purposes but use by pupils could be further developed. Some work in science is word processed and use is made of spreadsheets to compile graphs. In science pupils are able to access the Internet from the classroom but this facility was not used during the course of the inspection. CD-ROMs are used in a variety of subjects to give pupils information and extend the information they find in textbooks.

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

*Work was sampled in art and design, design and technology, French, humanities, RE and PE. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards and achievement overall.*

73. One lesson of **PE** was seen. This took place at a local boxing gymnasium with the purpose of enabling pupils to take part in non-contact boxing routines and to increase their general levels of fitness. Pupils showed admirable skills and self-discipline and wholeheartedly took a full part in the lesson. Discussion with the boxing coach further evidenced good attitudes on the part of pupils and records he maintains showed a good increase in the levels of fitness of each pupil. Pupils achieved well in this lesson and the positive attitudes they brought to this raised the levels of their performance. The unit also provides other opportunities for pupils to extend their physical skills. There are regular opportunities for them to take part in competitive games against other schools and PRUs; a notable success was achieved in the Extra Cup Final played against a team from a local PRU. In a football match against a local team played during the inspection, behaviour and sportsmanship was impeccable. Pupils took considerable pride in turning out in their new football kit; such concerned provision by staff enhances pupils' self esteem.
74. One lesson of **art and design** was seen in which pupils were required to create a logo which they would put on a T-shirt. This lesson was conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and it was evident from the approach of pupils they were absorbed by the task. They worked diligently at what they had to do although all took a dogmatic line on what they wanted and

were impervious to suggestions of development offered by the teacher. Despite this all pupils achieved satisfactorily and they were pleased with their end product. Other evidence of art skills exhibited around the school suggests pupils are gaining satisfactory skills in a variety of media such as scraper board, marbling and use of pastels. Displays of pupils' work shows a good range of work in different mediums showing pupils have a good understanding of the work of famous artists such as Kandinsky and Picasso. Multicultural art is represented in patterns, drawings, masks. There is a special arts focus day on graffiti art and a striking piece of this is seen on an external wall. There is no formal scheme of work and this inhibits pupils' achievement.

75. One **design and technology** lesson was seen. This comprised a carousel of activities which included gardening, food technology and use of construction kits. It is clear that pupils enjoy the practical nature of this subject and they achieve well because of this. Their level of concentration and application was good. In assembling a technical model pupils showed good understanding of the need to follow instructions carefully. This skill was also noted in food technology. Pupils needed to follow the recipe with care and use skills of weighing and measuring out ingredients. The outcome, in the form of scones, smelt very good. Pupils are taught skills of gardening – the first of these, that the plot needs to be carefully weeded. This they did with diligence and achieved an end result of the vegetable plot looking tidy and cared for. Support staff took prominent roles in this lesson and provided good support to all pupils. The good relationships they have with pupils are instrumental in raising pupils' achievement.
76. In **humanities** two lessons of **history** were seen alongside two lessons of **geography**. Pupils in Year 9 were studying a topic related to the Second World War. Because the teacher used real artefacts of the period the imagination of the pupils was caught and led to extended discussion and questioning. From this they understood the difference between primary and secondary sources of historical evidence. Generally they achieved well in this lesson because they went on to describe how they might have felt had they been alive during that period. The lesson for Year 7 and 8 pupils drew on the National Curriculum programme of the Medieval Realms. This lesson was a good mix of information giving and practical activity as pupils played a board game designed to show how the men of that time moved to the towns in search of fame and fortune. The geography lesson for Year 7 and 8 pupils introduced them to the reasons why people move from one place to another. By the end of the lesson most pupils had understood that such migration was not a random event but the result of certain 'push' or 'pull' factors. Generally pupils make satisfactory progress in humanities but this is hampered by their occasionally difficult behaviour which affects the pace and challenge of lessons.
77. One lesson of **French** was seen. This lesson was taught by a teaching assistant who is a fluent speaker of French. Pupils were required to identify the French names for a variety of foodstuffs and this enabled them to increase their range of vocabulary. This was further consolidated by simple games such as musical chairs which asked the pupils to identify the foodstuffs. The pace and variety of activities was good and this encouraged pupils to concentrate on learning. Other strengths of the lesson were that it was conducted wholly in French with only an occasional lapse into English and also the range of resources fully and effectively challenged and supported learning.
78. One lesson of **citizenship** was seen on the topic of the environment. The purpose was to introduce the pupils to the idea of renewable energy sources, particularly solar power. The lesson began unsatisfactorily and deteriorated from that point. Pupils achieved very little

during the course of the lesson and management of their poor behaviour became a central issue.

79. One lesson of **RE** was seen. This was one of a series which introduced pupils to the major religions of the world. This particular lesson concerned Judaism. The lesson was taught well and had a profound impact on pupils who realised the existence of such a major world religion. They were challenged well and the use of artefacts interested them as they learnt names such as The Torah and The Ark among others. The use of these artefacts along with well chosen texts and video stimulated the interest of pupils and in the end they were reluctant to finish the lesson at the end of the allotted time. Within this lesson their achievement was good because the teaching was precise, demanding, well informed and supported by a good range of short and appropriate activities. The good support provided by the LSA was also instrumental in enhancing pupils' achievement.
80. Where a subject such as **music** is not formally taught at the unit the management makes satisfactory provision for pupils to gain musical experience. This raises their awareness of and interest in music. The services of professional musicians are used to extend this experience and recent workshops have included rap music. Additional support for the subject is being provided through the award of a grant.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)**

Provision in PSHE is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff act as good role models for pupils; these are something to which pupils aspire.
- There is a caring and supportive ethos in the unit which makes pupils feel valued and increases their self-esteem.
- Where necessary the unit arranges for individual advice and support to be provided to pupils.
- Pupils need to be more actively involved in their learning so they get the full benefit of the opportunities made available to them.

81. The development of pupils' personal and social skills benefits from the commitment of staff. They have created an environment designed to nurture and value the pupils in their care. When they are admitted to the unit many pupils have severe and individual problems in managing their behaviour. Despite the relative shortness of their stay at the unit the staff effect a change in pupils' behaviour so that by the time they leave or are in Year 11 they are better equipped to move on to their next placement. Once re-admitted to mainstream school very few pupils have the need to return to the unit.
  
82. The head teacher has created a caring and supportive ethos within the unit. She has put secure provisions in place which have given structure to the care provided to pupils. More consistent use of these would increase their effectiveness; however, the feeling among pupils is that staff in the unit care about them and care for them. This increases their self-esteem and confidence to learn.
  
83. Where necessary staff arrange for individual sessions of counselling for pupils. These are valuable for and appreciated by pupils who use these opportunities to break out of negative behaviours. The unit is also developing a provision of aromatherapy in order to alleviate the anxiety and stress experienced by some pupils. The staff room is the least used room in the unit because staff spend the whole time with pupils when they are in session. Staff view the time spent with pupils, either in the dining room or playing games on the playground as a valuable contribution to the good relationships they have with pupils. The effect of this is borne out in the pupils' questionnaire as well as from discussions held with them. Pupils feel that staff have a genuine interest in them as individuals and if they get into difficulty they know there is someone who would listen to them.
  
84. Formal teaching of the provision is satisfactory but could be further improved. This needs further detailed planning and more active involvement of pupils in lessons if the full impact is to be achieved.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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