

INSPECTION REPORT

SCARBOROUGH PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Scarborough

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 132027

Headteacher: Mr J. Bell

Lead inspector: Mrs C. Marsh

Dates of inspection: 19th – 21st January 2004

Inspection number: 259104

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Social, emotional, behavioural.
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	25
School address:	Valley Bridge Parade Scarborough North Yorkshire
Postcode:	YO11 2PG
Telephone number:	01723 368059
Fax number:	01723 501496
Appropriate authority:	North Yorkshire LEA
Name of responsible officer:	Mr G. McQueen
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

This pupil referral unit (PRU) has been open for just over four years. It was set up by the Local Education Authority (LEA), in consultation with secondary headteachers, as part of the authority's planned provision to prevent exclusion. The unit takes a maximum of 16 pupils in the unit at any one time, most of whom are in danger of being excluded. These pupils attend the unit for part of the week as part of a package whereby they attend their mainstream school for the remainder of the week. A few permanently excluded pupils attend the unit full time until they are ready to return to mainstream or special school. At the time of the inspection, there were 25 pupils on roll. A total of 40 pupils were being supported in schools by the outreach work of staff of the unit. There was one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Attainment on entry is well below average. Pupils have a range of special educational needs, predominantly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2113	Mrs C. Marsh	Lead inspector	Science, Art, Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education.
14070	Mrs J. Tasker	Lay inspector	
1204	Mr D. Bolton	Team inspector	English, Information and Communication Technology, Physical Education.
15764	Mrs E. Treacher	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, Mathematics, History, Geography.

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International

Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIT	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	16
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good unit with some very good features. It provides good value for money. It is particularly successful in changing pupils' attitudes to learning and keeping them in education – its key purpose. Pupils make very good progress in improving their attitudes to authority, their behaviour and their attendance. Teaching and learning are good overall, as is pupils' achievement in their work. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good. Leadership and management are very good, with a clear and successful focus on keeping pupils in education. Mainstream schools, parents and pupils value highly the work of the unit.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good improvements in pupils' attitudes, attendance and behaviour go hand in hand with very good progress in their personal development.
- Very good leadership and management have led to a culture of reflective practice and a constant drive for improvement.
- The unit's outreach work, in partnership with schools, is very effective in keeping pupils in education.
- Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good, leading to good achievement – but in some lessons, particularly in mathematics, both teaching and achievement are only satisfactory.
- Care, guidance and support for pupils are very good.
- Very good links with parents and the community help the unit to be successful.
- The LEA has not met the requirement for the performance management of the headteacher.

This new unit has not been inspected before.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, achievement is good. Given pupils previous history of disaffection, achievement is good overall, even though standards are below the national average. In English, science and information and communication technology (ICT) achievement is good because of good teaching. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), achievement is very good. In mathematics, achievement is only satisfactory and could be better, because the teaching is only satisfactory. All pupils make very good progress in achieving the targets that are set in their individual education plans (IEP's).

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good – pupils make very good progress in these respects while at the unit. They gain in self-confidence and self-esteem, get a new taste for learning and realise that they can succeed. Attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good, with pupils making marked improvements. This very significant improvement is due to the success of the consistent work of all the staff of the unit. This is the key purpose of the unit's work and it does it very well. Pupils leave the unit better able to survive in mainstream school. Punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the unit is good. Teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The head teacher and deputy head teacher teach to a very high

quality. Teaching of the core subjects of English, science and ICT is good overall. Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and this prevents achievement from being better than satisfactory.

The unit is successful in its main task of helping to keep pupils in education. It provides a good curriculum. Pupils and parents are very supportive of the work of the unit. Very effective outreach work with schools and strong links with parents, alongside very good levels of care, support and guidance, help pupils to remain in mainstream education and deal with the barriers which have previously hindered their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the unit are very good, enabling it to provide successfully for challenging pupils. The leadership of the head teacher, deputy head teacher and other key members of staff is very good. It has resulted in a strong team with a culture of reflection and action leading to ongoing improvement. The management of the unit is also very good. Governance by the LEA is satisfactory overall, but statutory requirements relating to the performance management of the headteacher have not been met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

Parents are very positive about the unit. They feel involved in what happens and believe they are well informed about their child's progress. They believe attitudes, behaviour and attendance improve as a result of their child's stay in the unit.

Pupils say they like the unit. They feel that their work and behaviour improve, and that they are valued as individuals.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- **Continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, to the high standard seen in the best lessons, in order to raise achievement further.**

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- **The LEA should ensure that performance management of the headteacher is put in place.**

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards of attainment are below average for pupils' ages. However, given their starting points, pupils make good progress in their learning and very good progress in their personal development during their stay in the unit. **Achievement overall is good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in their attitudes to learning and their willingness to take their work seriously.
- Most pupils successfully meet the challenging targets which are set for them.
- Reintegration is very successful; the unit achieves its aim of keeping pupils in education.
- Whilst achievement is good overall, and very good in some lessons, it could be raised in mathematics where it is only satisfactory.

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the unit with complex emotional, behavioural and learning needs. Largely because of this, the attainment of pupils on entry is well below average for their ages. Many come with low levels of literacy and numeracy. However, pupils achieve well in their learning and very well in their personal development during their time in the unit. As a result of the unit's focus on maximum achievement for each individual pupil through appropriately challenging targets, and thanks to some good and some very good teaching, pupils learn well and achieve well in almost all the subjects they study. They make particularly good progress in some English lessons, as well as in lessons in history, geography and religious education. In mathematics, they make satisfactory progress. This is because, in this subject, teaching is only satisfactory, and in some of the work they do, pupils could be challenged more to achieve a higher level.

2. The PRU's balanced approach to achieving academic success, while at the same time improving behaviour, is successful. It is helped by the determination to ensure that units of work in every subject are accredited, and by the success – and encouragement – pupils have in gaining these nationally recognised awards. Alongside this, pupils' are learning to deal with the problems that have been inhibiting their learning. They are very successfully helped to take a more positive attitude to their work and come to realise that worthwhile achievement is, in fact, within their grasp. Important skills such as listening, concentrating, persevering, taking turns and working with others are learned. All staff, including the support assistant, are very good at teaching these skills during lessons, and at social times this teaching is further enhanced by the work of the administrative staff who join fully in the life of the unit.

3. The unit has set up very good systems, which have been formalised since the appointment of the new headteacher. These include good pupil records which include useful individual education plans (IEPs) for all pupils. The system of regular review is rigorous and ensures that improvement is maintained. Pupils do well in achieving the key targets set for them in their IEP's. These cover both academic achievement and personal development, taking proper account of the need to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour, so that they can cope full time in mainstream school, thus helping to prevent exclusion – the unit's core purpose.

4. All pupils in danger of exclusion attend their mainstream school as well as the PRU. In addition to working in the PRU, teachers are also involved in preventative and support work in schools, in support of the policy of inclusion. The close partnership between schools and the unit is founded in the clear intention that wherever possible pupils should remain fully integrated in

mainstream education. This preventative approach is proving successful and reintegration is effective for the great majority of pupils. This is a key aspect of what the unit achieves.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The improvements in pupils' attendance, behaviour, and attitudes, and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Successful behaviour management by staff results in marked improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Strategies for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance are very effective.
- The unit is good at nurturing and promoting pupils' self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils are helped to develop more positive attitudes to learning and to respect adults in authority.

5. During the inspection, behaviour in lessons was never less than satisfactory, sometimes good and frequently very good. Outside of formal lessons, in assemblies, at breaks and lunchtimes, and travelling to activities outside of the unit, most pupils generally behave as sensible, responsible young people. Records show that this represents very good improvement for these pupils who have come to the unit with a history of disruptive and disaffected behaviour. The key reason is that staff are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour. They maintain a calm approach, know well pupils' individual behaviour targets and consistently hold pupils to them. In the lessons inspected, pupils' behaviour was best when successful behaviour management strategies went hand in hand with a consistent focus on raising achievement. Staff have very clear expectations of how pupils should behave and consistently make them clear to pupils, even when some of them, particularly the group of permanently excluded pupils, find it difficult to settle. There is a strong emphasis on respecting each individual and on valuing their efforts and ideas – without ever compromising on the standards expected. Pupils respond positively to this, value the help they receive and are proud when they are successful and achieve their targets.

6. The improvement in pupils' attendance is very good. This is underpinned by the hard work of the unit in consistently following up any absences and maintaining very good communication with parents and carers – as well as by creating an environment in which pupils taste success and realise that they can and will achieve. Pupils arrive in good time for the start of the day. The welcoming and supportive ethos successfully encourages good attendance and punctuality and enables pupils to flourish.

7. The unit is particularly successful in fostering pupils' self-knowledge and in helping them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are regularly involved in setting and reviewing their targets for improvement, both in behaviour and achievement. At the end of individual lessons, too, pupils are required to be honest and open in evaluating and grading their achievements. Assemblies are very effective in helping pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and on their future, and to begin to recognise that they need to change their negative behaviour and concentrate on developing their strengths. Staff are good role models for pupils and help them to develop values, principles and beliefs which have a positive impact on their behaviour and are helping them to cope more successfully in their mainstream schools.

8. Pupils are confident in approaching adults about any difficulty they may have, whether it is of a personal nature or about their school work. The trust they have in staff, based on the confidence that they will be helped, is helping them to become more positive in their attitude to learning, as well as to develop a respect for adults in position of authority. In the most effective lessons inspected, pupils listened to each other, showed respect for other people's beliefs, were keen to take part orally and took good care with the content and presentation of their work. Pupils think that they work and

behave better in their mainstream schools because of the support they receive and the progress they are making in the unit.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9
National data	n/a

Unauthorised absence	
School data	5
National data	n/a

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll
25

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
3	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIT

The quality of education provided by the unit is good. The unit is successful in its main task of helping to keep pupils in education. Teaching and learning are good overall and there is a good deal of high quality teaching. The recording and use of assessment are good. The unit provides a good curriculum. Pupils and parents are very supportive of the unit. Very good links with parents and with the community enhance pupils’ learning. Very effective outreach work with mainstream schools, together with very good levels of care, support and guidance, help pupils to overcome the barriers that might otherwise lead to their exclusion.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall, and consequently learning is **good**. Assessment of pupils’ work is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very successful at interesting, encouraging and helping pupils take their work seriously.
- Planning and assessment are thorough, and help teachers to meet individual pupils’ identified needs.
- Consistent management of challenging and disruptive behaviour ensures that pupils are able to learn.
- The support assistant makes a significant contribution to learning.
- Whilst the level of challenge in lessons is good overall, in some aspects of pupils’ work, particularly in mathematics, more could be expected.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3)	9 (30)	13 (44)	7 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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

9. Pupils in the PRU are well taught overall. As a result, they learn well, achieve well and make good progress. In the best lessons seen (in English, history, religious education and PSHE), teaching was very good (and, on occasion, excellent) and pupils' learning was very good. During the inspection, the best teaching was by senior members of staff who were particularly good at capturing pupils' interest and imagination, so that they took part willingly and achieved well. Pupils were proud of their achievements in all subjects.

10. A strength of the teaching is that teachers make learning interesting and successfully get their pupils to take their education seriously again. Expectations are made very clear – both explicitly, and in the climate that is set. Pupils are clear that they are expected to work hard. During their time in the unit, they quickly come to realise that the work is worthwhile and that they can and will succeed. Positive work habits and values – such as respect for others, working productively together as well as individually – are successfully taught through work in all subjects. Classroom rules, routines and expectations are consistently reinforced. Teachers are very good at managing pupils' challenging behaviour. In this, they emphasise the importance of pupils learning to manage their own behaviour and to believe that every lesson is a fresh start. Pupils are given strategies to deal with their frustrations and anger. Teachers and support assistant alike are controlled and patient. They are skilled at diffusing difficult situations and at bringing out the best in pupils. Teachers use a wide range of resources, ideas and activities, providing a good variety of alternative routes to ensure that learning objectives are met for all pupils. This helps adults to cater for the unpredictable behaviour and reactions of some pupils, as well as to meet the different learning needs of individual pupils. Adults are good at modifying and adapting work to overcome any problems. The quality of team work among adults – teachers and support assistant – is very good indeed and underlies the smooth running of lessons and the consistent focus on learning. The support assistant works seamlessly alongside teachers, helping pupils both with their work and in managing their behaviour, as well as helping produce good quality learning materials.

11. The new headteacher has, with the support of staff, introduced a rigorous approach to curriculum planning that covers all subjects. This is paying dividends and helps explain why teaching is as good as it is. The planning takes good account of the national curriculum and the national strategy for teaching pupils of this age. Learning objectives and pupils' individual targets are clearly identified, together with the methods used to achieve these. Success in meeting the objectives is evaluated at the end of lessons. In general, this information is used well to help with future planning. To back this up, assessment and tracking of academic progress and personal development are handled well. Indeed, some assessment records are exemplary in their specificity and clarity. Progress is regularly reviewed against individual plans in a well-organised, six-weekly cycle involving parents and partner schools. A very good range of assessment data is collected and collated on entry and this helps teachers plan their work effectively.

12. Individual teachers' plans, pupils' work, their achievement in nationally recognised awards schemes, and the systematic monitoring of teaching by the unit and the LEA, all confirm that teaching is usually good. In some lessons (particularly in mathematics), where teaching and learning were satisfactory rather than good, pupils made satisfactory progress, but the rate of work, concentration and involvement could have been higher and the lessons were not as productive as many of the others; more could have been achieved. This is an area for further improvement.

The curriculum

The unit provides a **good** curriculum that takes good account of pupils' needs. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The unit has struck a good balance between attention to personal development and raising academic achievement.
- Very good curriculum planning and a willingness to review, modify and innovate provide the basis for good quality learning experiences.
- Good attention is paid to making sure that what happens at the unit fits in with what happens in mainstream school.
- Accommodation and resources are of good quality – but limited space prevents the unit from doing more than is currently possible.

Commentary

13. The work the unit does to help pupils improve their attitudes and behaviour and cope better in mainstream school is not at the expense of moving pupils forward in their work. The curriculum is designed to meet both these important needs, and staff have a shared understanding that the first is to be achieved through the second. This works well. Even for pupils who attend the unit for only two days a week (with the rest of the week at their mainstream school), the unit provides a suitably broad range of subjects, with due weight given to the core subjects. In all work, there is strong emphasis on helping pupils grasp key ideas and skills that will allow them to get to grips with the subject concerned and to taste success. At the same time, there is a focus on teaching the positive attitudes, work habits and acceptable classroom behaviour many so badly need. This is backed up by a strong programme of personal and social education – both in taught lessons (including for example, training in anger management) and in structured social times. It is also helped by the good range of opportunities for learning beyond normal classroom lessons – including, for example, well planned visits and field trips and the enterprising rolling programme of outdoor education. All of this is helping to turn pupils round and get them back on track.

14. The unit's rigorous approach to curriculum planning is based on very clearly expressed expectations and guidance, and is well monitored by senior managers. It results in learning experiences that are of good quality and in work that is, for the most part, suitably challenging and keeps pupils in step with the demands of the mainstream curriculum. Shared planning and close team work among teachers mean that links are made between subjects, so that work done in one subject reinforces or extends that done in another. Regular review and a willingness to be self-critical have led to a climate in which opportunities for improving the curriculum are spotted and new initiatives are introduced, to the benefit of pupils. For example, to increase opportunities for practical and creative work, a new subject – independent living skills (incorporating food preparation) – was introduced. Again, an audit undertaken by staff is leading to a more systematic, co-ordinated approach to ICT.

15. In deciding which days would be most beneficial for pupils to attend the unit, the needs and circumstances of individuals are carefully considered, so that the overall curriculum package (of mainstream school and PRU) fits together as well as constraints allow. This is achieved thanks to the unit's very good partnership with mainstream schools and is helping keep pupils in education.

16. Overall, the unit is well resourced and the accommodation is of good quality, well suited to what is currently offered. Pupils and parents are rightly impressed by the attractive, well-equipped working environment that has been created. Pupils respond by treating it with great respect. However, limited space prevents the unit from doing more – for example, further extending facilities for independent living skills or for art and design, or accommodating more pupils at any one time. Similarly, there is no outside play area, and although steps are taken to make up for this in other ways at breaks and lunchtimes (which are particularly well used), this remains a restriction.

Care, guidance and support

What the unit does to ensure pupils' care, well-being and safety is **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice and guidance from the staff as well as from other adults who visit the unit. Involvement of pupils is **very good**.

- The very good relationships staff have with pupils underpin the high level of care provided.
- Pupils have very good access to a broad range of support and guidance that meets their needs, thanks to effective partnership working with support agencies.
- Tracking pupils' progress works well because it is shared with partner mainstream schools.
- Pupils are encouraged to take real responsibility for their own progress – and this works.

17. Staff make it their business to know pupils well and to develop very good relationships with them and their parents or carers. The knowledge gained is put to very good use in the pastoral care system. Detailed attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are well cared for, particularly when it comes to matters of safety, health, medication and personal well-being. Very good use is made of the morning tutorial sessions to discuss, identify and deal with any problems at an early stage in the day. Lunchtime and break-time activities, which are shared with staff, successfully promote good social habits, with staff acting as very good role models. Very good risk assessment is in place for activities, whether in the classroom or visits outside the unit, enabling pupils to take responsibility for their actions and use equipment safely.

18. The active and concerted efforts of the staff to work with partners have led to support agencies bringing services into the unit, thus providing an integrated approach, centred on the needs of each pupil. This is particularly successful with the educational psychology and *Connexions* services, whose representatives act as part of an extended team within the unit. They are able to share their expertise with staff in the unit to benefit pupils. One effect is that pupils are confident about raising issues and concerns with a wider number of adults, and the resulting action is based on the shared expertise and knowledge of all concerned. Relationships with some other partners, such as the Youth Offending Team, although good, are still in development and have yet to mature into this model of close partnership working.

19. The very good links with mainstream schools, based on the unit's link teacher system, helps to build a bank of personal and academic information on individual pupils that is regularly shared with mainstream schools. Staff are diligent in ensuring that assessment information differentiates between the needs of groups of pupils, particularly pupils in public care, those with special needs, pupils of different ages, and girls as against boys. The unit implements very good systems for daily collection of information on behaviour and attendance and makes effective use of tutorials for target-setting with pupils on their personal and their academic progress. Challenging targets for learning and personal development are set and mostly well met. The "good day" letters and awards assemblies are well received by pupils and parents. Parents say the letters provide real motivation for their child to do better.

20. Pupils know why they are at the unit and how they are progressing. They express mature views and make honest contributions when setting targets for themselves in tutorials with staff. They are articulate in their praise for the unit and the support they receive from staff. Pupils fully understand the aim is to help them get back into mainstream education and, for most, this is what they want.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good** and the unit also has **very good** links with the community. The unit's outreach work is **very effective**, based on **very good** links with local mainstream schools, helping keep pupils in education.

- The unit gains the trust of parents and the belief that their child can succeed.
- The unit's outreach work, in partnership with mainstream schools, is at the heart of its effectiveness in keeping pupils in education.
- Staff are good advocates for the unit, helping those outside to gain a better understanding of what it achieves.

21. The very good links fostered with parents succeed in involving them with their child's learning and personal progress. Induction for pupils is very good and parents praise the way the unit involves them at admission and explains and shares information on their child's progress throughout the placement. Some parents say it is the first time they have had the opportunity to be able fully to understand their child's problems and discuss what can be done to put things right. They say the placement at the unit reassures them that their child can and will achieve. The unit makes a good job of ensuring that parents continue to be fully informed through daily contact, six-weekly meetings and written reports on progress. Parents place great value on this contact and feel they can discuss any concerns freely with staff. Parental representation on the management committee ensures that their voice is listened to when it comes to planning how the unit will develop.

22. The unit operates on the basis of a very strong and effective partnership with local mainstream schools. Its key remit of preventative work with pupils aged 11-14 who are at risk of exclusion is clearly understood by all parties and responds to the priority identified by the mainstream schools. It is seen by headteachers as "an essential part of the area's inclusion strategy". The outreach work is very well managed, with clear protocols, and its effectiveness is kept under regular review, in the light of the written evaluations sought from the mainstream schools. The link teacher system, whereby teachers from the unit spend a minimum of half a day each week in a designated secondary school, is central to the way the unit and the mainstream schools are able to work as one in meeting the needs of the pupils concerned. The link teacher works closely with key staff from each mainstream school in identifying and supporting pupils, planning the joint provision by school and PRU, ensuring a very effective flow of information, and organising joint reviews in which pupils, parents, school and the unit are seen as genuine partners. The role of the advanced skills teacher is further enhancing the links with mainstream schools. Mainstream schools speak highly of the work of the unit, the reliability of the service provided, the speed and flexibility of response – and, above all, of the big difference it makes. The success of this partnership in keeping pupils in education and reducing the rate of exclusion is borne out by the figures available from the rigorous analysis of its impact. In the words of senior managers in one school: "It gives hopeless cases hope. We work as one. I don't know what we would do without it."

23. Staff work hard to build links with the local community, encouraging representatives of a wide range of organisations to participate in the life of the unit in a variety of ways. The unit provides a welcoming environment and hosts regular visitors. Not only does the unit make good use of facilities in the community to extend curriculum opportunities for pupils, providing cultural and social experiences, including, for example, visits to mosques and temples, it is also very good at promoting its work in the media, at taking part in community events, and at hosting events that attract a good number of representatives of the local community. This "showcasing" has the effect of promoting very positive images of the unit and its work and enables pupils to demonstrate their personal and academic achievements. Events such as open days and the Christmas lunch prepared by pupils successfully provide such opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the unit are **very good** enabling it to provide successfully for challenging pupils. The leadership of the headteacher and other key members of staff is **very good**. The management of the unit is also **very good**. Governance by the LEA is **satisfactory** overall, but statutory requirements relating to the performance management of the headteacher have not been met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Rigorous self-evaluation leads to change and underpins the constant drive for improvement.
- Effective strategic planning helps to raise achievement and provide a better deal for the pupils.
- There is a very positive ethos which promotes a learning community.
- There is very good attention to staff development.

- The LEA provides good support and has a good knowledge of the unit's strengths and weaknesses, but has failed to implement the statutory requirements for the performance management of the headteacher.

24. Leadership of the unit is uncompromisingly focused on improving achievement. It is reflective, self-critical and provides a clear educational direction for the unit's work. Self-evaluation is central and is carried out at all levels – and, in particular, through annual performance reviews with the link adviser, through regular evaluation of the unit's success in meeting its planned objectives, and through focused, systematic observation of teaching. Leaders know well the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The results of evaluation are translated into appropriate actions and procedures that help the unit to achieve its objectives. Records show that these actions have been particularly effective in raising the quality of teaching, in improving the tracking and assessment of pupils, and in improving curriculum planning. Taken together, these improvements have boosted pupils' achievements. The unit's process of self-evaluation is open, honest, perceptive and properly shared with all staff.

25. The appointment of the new headteacher provided an opportunity for the unit to take stock and to take a more objective and strategic overview. There is a clear, strategic plan for the development of the unit which is properly focused on raising pupils' achievement, on improving their attitudes and behaviour, and on supporting them in successfully re-joining full-time education in mainstream schools. The shared understanding and sense of purpose, and the commitment to continual improvement are what drives the unit forward.

26. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide excellent role models for staff and pupils – they live out daily the values and goals of the unit. Together, they have fostered a team approach with common values and practices, where individuals – pupils, parents, staff and other partners – are valued, and where relationships are based on openness and honesty.

27. There is a strong and successful emphasis on promoting the development of staff and providing a wide range of training opportunities. This has brought about measurable improvements, for example in the number of accredited units achieved by pupils. Performance management is used as an effective tool for identifying strengths and weakness in teaching and for setting targets for improvement. Teaching and management responsibilities are clear and leadership responsibilities are successfully delegated.

28. The management committee provides enthusiastic support for the work of the unit. The LEA has a good knowledge of the quality of the unit's provision, knowing well its strengths and weaknesses. The link adviser provides effective challenge through regular monitoring and evaluation of the unit's effectiveness. However, the LEA has failed to implement statutory requirements relating to the performance management of the headteacher. Although this has not adversely affected the quality of provision within the unit or the achievement of the pupils, because of the healthy climate of ongoing evaluation and challenge, it is nevertheless a significant shortcoming.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- At present pupils make best progress in improving their reading, listening and speaking; for some pupils, sustained writing does not get enough attention.
- Thoughtful curriculum planning is providing a platform for effective teaching.
- In spite of difficulties appointing a permanent English specialist, suitable steps have been taken to ensure effective leadership and co-ordination of the subject.

Commentary

29. Although standards are below average – some pupils come with very low levels of literacy – achievement is good overall. Pupils gain confidence, taste success and start to overcome deep-seated problems, for example in their reading. They make good progress in learning to read between the lines and in understanding how language is used to create particular effects. They show interest in the books they have read. They make good progress in speaking and listening, learning to develop their ideas and to express them more precisely, and to take part in discussion, taking turns, listening properly to what others have to say and building on their contributions – all of which represents real achievement for many of them. Their writing improves. Thanks to structured teaching, pupils build up the skills they need in order to write more accurately and interestingly. However, recently pupils in some groups have had too little practice in sustained writing in their English work.

30. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are never less than satisfactory and some teaching is very good. A key reason is that lessons are based on detailed curriculum planning that ensures that all teachers, specialist and non-specialist, know where they are going and what is expected of them. Clear learning objectives line up with the national framework for teaching English and provide suitable challenge. The very good teaching seen was characterised by confident subject expertise, high expectations, a brisk rate of work keeping all pupils actively involved, very interesting, imaginative subject matter and varied, resourceful methods for challenging pupils to develop their thinking and express themselves more precisely and effectively. Pupils really forged ahead and surprised even themselves with how much they achieved. Some teaching was satisfactory rather than good. The work was well prepared and kept pupils working, but some opportunities were missed to take things further or to inject the extra pace and challenge that would have pushed pupils' language development forward at a better than satisfactory rate.

31. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The unit is seeking to appoint a permanent English specialist. As an interim arrangement, the headteacher has taken on the leadership of the subject. He works closely with the temporary teacher and further support is provided by the experienced English co-ordinator from the LEA's other PRU. This teamwork, together with the very good written guidance and curriculum planning, means that the quality of provision is maintained – although the current staffing situation inevitably places some constraints on developments.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

32. Provision for teaching language and literacy across the curriculum is good overall, with some very good features. Teachers in all subjects include in their planning aspects of literacy that they aim to cover – for example, teaching key words, encouraging pupils' reading, or helping them express themselves orally and in writing, in ways that are consistent across the unit. There is some very good practice in the humanities, where teachers go out of their way to show pupils exactly what features of language will improve the construction of written answers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge of numeracy and their skills in working out numerical problems.
- Some mathematical activities used in parts of lessons are not as challenging as they could be.
- Successful support enables pupils to feel confident about their ability in mathematics.
- Too much teacher help in parts of lessons is preventing pupils from achieving the level of independent learning that they could.

Commentary

33. Pupils' standards are low compared with the standards expected nationally, but their achievement overall is satisfactory. The sensible emphasis on number work, with an appropriately wide range of practical activities, is making a real difference in enabling pupils to acquire knowledge and feel confident about basic number skills, including the four rules of number, handling money and other number problems. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of multiples, factors and place value, catching up on lost ground. This, coupled with strong emphasis on individual support, is helping pupils to develop their self-esteem, enabling them to develop a more positive attitude to the subject, and increasing their competence and confidence in numeracy. However, their progress in other areas of mathematics, although satisfactory, is less good.

34. Pupils have a basic knowledge about some of the properties of triangles and quadrilaterals and can attempt very simple probability questions. While the activities provided are helping pupils to consolidate their prior learning, sometimes their achievements are held back because the activities do not sufficiently challenge their thinking or take their learning on to the next level.

35. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good, with particular success in managing challenging behaviour and helping pupils to maintain a positive attitude to their work. Relationships with pupils are consistently positive and encouraging and show a genuine respect for pupils and a valuing of their work and efforts. This is making a real difference to how pupils view mathematics and their own ability in the subject. However, where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, too much time was spent on introductory activities and games which did not do enough to extend pupils' learning, and not enough time on the key learning points planned for the lesson. This is preventing pupils from making as much progress as they could in extending and developing their knowledge and skills in mathematics. The over-emphasis on responding to pupils' every request for help (and even sometimes doing the work for pupils) is not helping them to develop the independent learning skills that are necessary for them to be successful in a much larger group in a mainstream school.

36. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work is appropriate and there is good communication between the teachers who teach the subject. Baseline assessment is successfully established and ongoing assessment is developing well, in line with the unit's assessment framework. It is providing a good basis for tracking pupils' achievements.

Mathematics across the curriculum

37. There is good support for the development of numeracy across the curriculum. It is carefully identified in the schemes of work of other subjects. When pupils are encouraged to use mathematics in other subjects, teachers are at pains to reinforce the same methods and language that pupils are taught in mathematics lessons. During the inspection, this happened, for example, in history, where pupils calculated time differences, and in science, where they recorded data and presented it graphically.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The teacher has developed good subject knowledge and expertise.
- Teaching is good.
- The curriculum is well planned.

Commentary

38. Pupils' achievement is good and pupils of all ages have made good progress in their enjoyment and understanding of science. Standards are below, and sometimes well below, the national average for most pupils. However, last year, the number of unit awards achieved by pupils doubled and this represents good achievement.

39. The good quality of teaching is an important factor in the good progress made by pupils. In the lessons inspected, teaching was consistently good. These lessons featured carefully structured work, including reinforcement of previous learning, the introduction of new information and skills, and careful discussion or summary at the end. Teaching frequently relates scientific topics and concepts to everyday life, thereby making them more relevant and understandable.

40. Thanks to this good teaching, the progress of all pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs, and the few girls, is good. The emphasis on practical approaches to learning successfully motivates pupils to want to learn and they show an increased knowledge and understanding across all areas of science. Lessons are carefully planned with precise learning objectives, which are based on what each pupil can do and on what they need to work on. Resources are interesting and appropriate for pupils and pupils are expected to participate actively, which they do.

41. Pupils become more familiar with technical terms and scientific principles, the quality of diagrams improves and results are recorded as graphs and tables with increasing accuracy. Pupils' confidence and enthusiasm grows and shows in the energetic way they carry out investigations, for example on heart rates and respiration rates. Many still have difficulty working together but are learning the skills to do this through a carefully planned approach, for example paired work on pulse rates. With support from the teacher, who adapts her questioning and vocabulary in the light of her knowledge about each pupil, most willingly join in discussions, drawing upon their previous experience. The teacher manages pupils' challenging behaviour well. Her non-confrontational but firm, clear expectations mean that pupils are learning to behave appropriately and they are generally courteous. The support assistant is very effective in helping pupils learn.

42. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation, supported by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the LEA's science consultant, have brought about considerable improvement and, with hard work from the teacher, have ensured that the subject is well led. There is a well thought through development plan, and assessment and recording are done well. The further developments identified, namely in terms of developing pupils' abilities to think through problems and draw conclusions, are entirely appropriate. The curriculum is appropriate, with material being used in a flexible way to meet individual pupils' needs. Good use is made of ICT to support learning, both by

pupils and teachers. The support for pupils' development of numeracy skills is good. The support for the written aspects of literacy is limited in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is widely used and plays a key role in helping pupils learn in subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils cover a good range of uses of ICT, improving their skills and competence in the subject.
- The recent introduction of ICT as a separate subject for full-time pupils has been a good development – but this is still at an early stage.
- Until now, assessment and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress in ICT have been weak – but things are changing.

Commentary

43. Although pupils' attainment in ICT is below average for their ages, they make good progress while at the unit and their achievement is good. In lessons in all subjects, pupils make widespread use of ICT as an essential part of their work. This not only helps them with their work in the subjects concerned, but also extends their grasp of ICT and teaches them new skills. They make extensive use of ICT to exchange and share information – a strong point – improving their skills in word-processing, desk-top publishing and *Powerpoint* presentations, with increasing attention to the intended purpose and audience. They achieve some good quality products, as a result of effective planning, drafting, reviewing and refining their work, using a range of ICT tools and combining text, graphics and digital images from different sources. They clearly take a pride in their work and gain satisfaction from the sense of worthwhile achievement. They improve their ability to use spreadsheets to record and then analyse data (for example, in mathematics, science, geography and history), representing the information in graphs and charts, exploring the patterns and relationships that emerge.

44. Teaching and learning are good overall, but vary according to the effectiveness of the teaching of the subject in which ICT is being used. ICT is used as a tool for learning, but, at the same time, teachers make sure that pupils build their ICT skills, knowledge and understanding and do not simply recycle what they already know. In a very effective history lesson investigating the causes of the First World War, for example, the use of a spreadsheet to investigate the comparative population and resources of the alliances not only got pupils actively involved, leading to an accessible, graphic portrayal of the issues; it was also used to teach pupils how to use spreadsheets and to interrogate information. The unit's support assistant makes a significant contribution to the teaching of ICT – not only through the support he provides for pupils in class, but also in helping to devise and prepare ICT-based resources.

45. In the unit, most ICT is taught through other subjects and not as a separate subject in its own right. Most pupils in the unit are dual-registered, attending their mainstream school for part of the week, and the ICT work done in the unit usefully backs up the teaching of the subject in pupils' mainstream schools. For the minority of pupils who attend the unit full-time, separate ICT lessons have recently been introduced, based on detailed planning and a suitable scheme of work. This has been a wise move, to make sure that the subject is covered in a systematic way.

46. In the past, there have been weaknesses in the co-ordination and leadership of ICT, but leadership and management are now good. A rigorous audit across the curriculum revealed what was being taught and where, and enabled teachers to target areas for development. The need for discrete lessons in ICT for full-time pupils was recognised and acted upon. Until now, there has been no systematic assessment and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress in ICT – but steps have rightly been taken to change that.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

47. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is good – and, indeed, is the main thrust of the work, as outlined above. On the unit's computer network, sites have been set up for each subject taught, containing resources for use by pupils and teachers. Pupils themselves have a "virtual folder" for each subject. A climate has been established in which ICT is a part and parcel of everyday learning – and its use is proving an effective motivator for pupils, helping them pay attention to detail, take things through to a satisfying conclusion, and improve their literacy.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

48. Work was sampled in other subjects: personal, social and health education (PSHE), art and design, independent living skills (cooking), humanities and physical education (PE). There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards and achievement overall.

49. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in **art and design** lessons. The work on display shows that pupils have benefited from the teaching of a range of skills. They have been encouraged to extend their design skills, are learning to work with a range of materials, and are improving a number of practical skills, including how to paint and draw.

50. The planning, preparation and teaching of **cooking (independent living skills)** in the lessons seen was good. The two lessons were well planned and the resources well organised. The teachers' own obvious enjoyment of the subject is infectious and clearly enthuses pupils. Pupils made good progress in the preparation and handling of equipment, as was seen, for example, when they were learning to prepare apples for fruit crumble. They are learning how to combine ingredients successfully to ensure a good end product, such as scones, and for older pupils, complete meals. The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' personal development.

51. **Humanities** subjects (**history, geography and religious education**) play a strong part in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Thanks to very good teaching in the lessons seen, pupils achieved very well, making very good progress in acquiring knowledge and developing understanding in each subject. Teachers' appropriately high expectations of pupils' achievements, their consistent focus on supporting pupils' understanding and promoting learning, and the effectiveness of their assessment of pupils' work underpinned very good achievement in these lessons. Work was planned to match what is expected in mainstream schools and pupils were given clear guidance on how they could improve the standard of their work. Challenging behaviour was skilfully managed, pupils' interest was successfully gained and held and pupils were encouraged to develop independent learning skills. Pupils' views and efforts were consistently respected and valued, and they clearly flourished in this positive climate. Work proceeded at a good pace and pupils benefited from a wide range of interesting learning activities.

52. In the **PSHE** lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. There was no compromise in the way pupils were required to face up to their own attitudes and behaviours, and to think about their responsibilities to themselves and to others. The success of lessons, for example on managing stress and anger, was down to the skilful way teachers handled even the most reluctant and challenging pupils. Teachers make a point of tackling the sort of habits and behaviour pupils need in order to cope better in the classroom. For example, pupils were taught to take turns, when using an ICT careers program, to listen to others when feeding back about the occupation they had researched, and to respect other points of view – none of which came easily to them. Behaviour management was insistent and resourceful, with clear expectations made explicit. Relationships were good humoured yet firm.

53. For most pupils – those who spend part of the week at the unit and the remainder at mainstream school – **physical education** and sport are taught during their days at school. In contrast, pupils who attend the unit full-time have regular PE sessions, covering a good balance of net games, gymnastics, athletics and fitness. Curriculum planning for the subject is good and, in the

one lesson seen, teaching and learning were good and pupils achieved well. Good use is made of facilities in the local community, so that pupils are not disadvantaged by the unit's own lack of PE and sports accommodation. In addition, all pupils who attend the unit have access, on a rolling programme, to enterprising **outdoor education** activities – which develop physical and practical skills, present pupils with challenges, and give them valuable wider experiences. This programme is designed to make an important contribution to pupils' personal and social development, helping raise self-confidence and self-esteem and promoting team work and a sense of responsibility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the unit	3
How inclusive the unit is	2
How the unit's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the unit	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the unit	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
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 unit seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the unit's links with parents	2
The quality of the unit's links with the community	2
The unit's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the unit	2
The governance of the unit	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).

