

INSPECTION REPORT

STAG LANE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Kingsbury, London

LEA area: Brent

Unique reference number: 133660

Headteacher: Siobhan Crawley

Lead inspector: Hilary Gannaway

Dates of inspection: 13th - 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 259110

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11 –14
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	22, including 6 who are dual registered and full time in schools.
School address:	Library Buildings 364a Stag Lane Kingsbury London
Postcode:	NW9 9AG
Telephone number:	020 8937 3193
Fax number:	020 8937 3189
Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer:	Paul Roper
Date of previous inspection:	First inspection

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

The unit caters for up to 25 pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 who have been, or are at risk of being, permanently excluded from secondary schools. The unit aims to get pupils back into school quickly. Last year 42 pupils spent time in the unit and 136 were supported in schools. At any one time, a number of pupils who are in the unit will be spending time back in school. These pupils, and those at risk of exclusion from schools, are supported by unit staff who also work in all but one of the local education authority secondary schools. The unit has a diverse population with most pupils coming from areas of high deprivation. There are far more boys than girls. At the time of the inspection, there were no Year 7 pupils on roll. Fifty percent of pupils on roll are of Black Caribbean heritage with smaller numbers of Black African, White British and Pakistani heritage. A few are in the care of the local authority. All pupils have identified social, emotional and behavioural needs. One pupil who is full time in the unit has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Prior to the unit being set up in September 2002, many pupils had been out of school for long periods of time. All have gaps in their learning and attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age. The unit is part of the joint Excellence in City and Leading Edge initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21527	Hilary Gannaway	Lead inspector	Science Geography History Personal, social and health education
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	English Citizenship Design and technology Religious education Special Educational Needs
22178	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good unit. Its leaders and all staff have worked hard in a year to develop a unit where it is already possible to see significant developments. This is due to very good leadership by the headteacher who is supported by an effective management team. Pupils achieve well during their short time in the unit because there is good teaching by experienced staff. The personal development of pupils is often very good, equipping them to rapidly return to school. Staff successfully support a large number of pupils in a variety of ways in secondary schools. The unit provides good value for money.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership has ensured that the unit has made a successful start and is already an effective borough resource.
- The high level of care, provision for personal development and very effective relationships pupils have with staff, contribute very well to the development of the social skills needed to get pupils ready to learn.
- Good teaching by staff with high expectations and good subject knowledge enables pupils to achieve well and supports their return to school.
- The unit very successfully works with mainstream schools to support pupils at risk of exclusion.
- The unit has had a very comprehensive plan for setting up and starting the unit, however further formal long term development planning is now needed.
- Although the unit has systems for assessment in place, they are not yet fully developed
- Individual learning targets, for the few pupils with additional special needs, are not precise and staff do not always know all their learning needs.

This unit has not previously been inspected

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. This includes the few higher attaining girls and all pupils from minority ethnic groups. It is very good in personal, social and health education where good relationships give pupils the confidence to discuss pertinent issues. It is good in English, mathematics, science and art because the teachers are very knowledgeable and pupils are enthusiastic and keen to work. It is satisfactory in information and communication technology where it is not yet consistently used across the curriculum and pupils do not get many chances to use their skills. Although progress is sometimes good for the small group of pupils with additional special educational needs, their achievement is only satisfactory. This is because individual targets are not always specific enough and work is not always entirely suitable. However, as unit staff who know them support all pupils back into school, these pupils have an equal chance to return to school and succeed. Good achievement gives pupils the confidence to return to secondary schools, often within a term.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well provided for. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils are keen to improve their behaviour so they can return to school. Attendance, although below that for secondary schools, is

satisfactory because pupils make significant personal improvement. Punctuality for most pupils is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the unit is good. This is because **teaching is good** overall. It is good in mathematics, science, personal social and health education, art, and often in English. Pupils make a good start to their learning because most teachers are confident in what they teach, making sure it is relevant to pupils' needs. Consistent behaviour management means that, despite the occasional disruption, pupils concentrate on their tasks and begin to make up lost work. The best use is not always made of learning support assistants in helping pupils with their tasks. However, very good relationships mean pupils develop self-esteem and are not afraid to tackle new tasks that may be challenging.

The curriculum is good and supports the aim of returning pupils to school. There is effective individual support and guidance and the unit looks after pupils very well. Frequent contacts with parents are maintained. Links with the community are good, while extended links with, and support for, secondary schools are already very good and still developing.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the unit are good. In a short space of time, the headteacher and staff have developed their expertise so that the unit and outreach work is already run effectively with pupils' needs firmly in mind. The management committee and the local education authority have been involved throughout and have a good understanding of how well the unit is doing.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

Parents and pupils have positive views of the unit. Parents are particularly pleased with the high levels of contact and the willingness of staff to get pupils back in school as soon as possible.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further develop long term planning for all aspects of the work of the unit.
- Develop assessment so the unit has a thorough record of what pupils know, understand and can do.
- Make sure learning targets, particularly those for pupils with additional special needs, are specific, reflect needs and are consistently used to inform planning.
- Develop ways of ensuring all staff know pupils' specific learning targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below average due to pupils having gaps in their learning. Nevertheless, for all pupils, including the few girls, achievement is good against their prior attainment with the exception of some pupils with additional special needs where it is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve consistently well in English, mathematics, science and art.
- They achieve very well in personal, social and health education.
- Pupils' numeracy skills and the use of new technology to support their achievement across the curriculum are not yet regularly included in teachers' planning or practice.
- Listening and speaking skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- The high level of support for pupils within the unit, and when they return to school, means that most continue to progress, achieve well and succeed in their placement.
- Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs achieve well, but the few pupils with additional special needs, who do not have statements, do not always achieve as well as they could.

Commentary

1. Many pupils were out of school for long periods of time before the unit was set up. Others have made little progress because of irregular attendance and disruptive behaviour in their mainstream schools. The aim of this unit is to return these pupils to school as quickly as possible and ensure they stay there and progress. This in itself makes it difficult to gauge some aspects of achievement over time because pupils often stay at the unit for short periods. However, pupils settle quickly into the unit aided by very good levels of care, improved attendance and the knowledge that every effort will be made to return them to school. As a result, most pupils return to school within a term or move to other suitable provision.

2. All pupils are assessed on their basic skills when they enter the unit so that staff know their starting point. From this, staff are beginning to track pupils' levels against the National Curriculum in English and mathematics. They set targets to improve pupils' achievement appropriate to their year group, although at present these are often too general. The unit has a large proportion of minority ethnic pupils and collects data on a range of indicators such as personal development, attendance and rates of returning to school. This data is already assisting the unit to pinpoint further areas to support achievement such as emotional literacy work for boys, extension work for girls and support for a particular ethnic group where returning to school has been more problematical.

3. An increasing number of pupils maintain their place in a secondary school once they go back. This is because there is skilled and experienced teaching and carefully planned activities in most areas of the National Curriculum for pupils while in the unit. This is followed up by a careful individual return to school package so pupils continue to progress. A pupil back in school positively commented on how this was carefully accomplished. For those in Year 9, this gives them the ability and confidence to begin accreditation once they enter Year 10. Monitoring of the achievement of pupils at risk of exclusion, who are supported by unit teachers, show that last year ninety six per cent remained in school and continued to make progress.

4. There is a great emphasis on pupils' personal and social development and this is evident in the very good achievement in personal, social and health education. This is because lessons and activities across the day provide many, varied experiences for pupils to reinforce appropriate skills that they will need back in school. Pupils' achievement is good in English, mathematics, science

and art because the teachers are very knowledgeable in these subjects, teach them in a practical way and pupils are enthusiastic and keen to work.

5. Pupils' good achievement in English is effectively supported by the developing use of the national strategy. Because speaking and listening are well developed by all staff, pupils listen carefully, take part in discussions and are confident in giving their own opinions in subjects such as citizenship and personal, social and health education. Pupils are self-assured when reading aloud. Although they sometimes lack confidence in writing, the use of word processing gives them a pride in their finished work.

6. Teachers know what pupils' need to do to achieve well in mathematics. This is supported by assessments that are used to plan further work so they continue to move forward. Planning covers all areas of the curriculum ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to continue to progress on return to secondary school. However, the lack of systematic reinforcement for mathematics in other subjects restricts opportunities for pupils to consistently use the skills they have acquired. While the progress made by pupils in information and communication technology lessons is good, overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is because not all staff are yet using new technology consistently across the curriculum and pupils do not get to regularly practice these skills.

7. Achievement for pupils with additional special educational needs, which are mainly learning difficulties, is satisfactory. They generally attain in line with their abilities and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in most areas of the curriculum. The few pupils with statements of special educational needs usually achieve well in working towards the targets set at annual reviews. However, there is a lack of clarity in identifying the needs of some pupils. This means that they do not have specific learning targets, and work is not always sufficiently planned to meet these additional needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

8. Attitudes and, behaviour are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for and effectively contributes to pupils respecting others' values and traditions. Pupils' relationships with each other and adults are very good. Punctuality is satisfactory as is attendance. This is because the majority of pupils improve attendance significantly during their time at the unit.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes and improve their behaviour during their time in the unit.
- Relationships with adults are very good and adults are good role models for the pupils.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development contributes significantly to their social skills.
- The majority of pupils improve their attendance record significantly during their time at the unit, individual pupil attendance and punctuality is monitored very closely and the unit is quick to agree targets for improvement with pupils experiencing difficulties.

Commentary

9. The development of good attitudes to learning results in pupils being keen to improve their behaviour in order to return to a secondary school. Many pupils had had difficulties at their previous schools, but respond well to the encouragement provided by staff of the unit. Staff have successfully created a purposeful atmosphere where high expectations of behaviour, and respect for others, result in a high proportion of pupils returning to schools. Pupils appreciate the facilities at the unit and generally try to look after their environment. Those pupils who have returned to mainstream schools, or who are being supported in their schools by staff from the unit, are very positive about the help they receive.

10. Given the pupils' previous difficulties, behaviour is good both in lessons and at break times. Examples were seen of pupils concentrating well, and gaining in confidence as they completed tasks

which they had found difficult. Pupils have action plans and targets to which they work. These are tracked carefully on a lesson by lesson basis. Parents appreciate the weekly behaviour reports that are sent as a result. Through the code of conduct and work in different subjects such as personal and social education and citizenship, all become very aware of the responsibilities of being in a community. The encouragement they receive from staff helps them to transfer this to the ways in which they behave. Success is celebrated by the use of a reward system which most appreciate.

11. The very good relationships between pupils and adults has a positive influence on pupils' personal development and on the progress they make. Through the tutorial system, which pupils' value highly, as well as in lessons and at social times, staff work hard to establish relationships with pupils. During their time in the unit, pupils begin to turn to staff for support and advice, which helps them to develop both in social skills and in learning.

12. Pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development, is given a high priority in the unit. A range of activities supports this development. These include circle time and emotional literacy sessions, in which pupils are helped to consider issues such as how other people might be feeling and how they might deal with their own feelings when, for example, they are angry. Pupils go out of the unit for activities such as attending sports centres and the Tricycle theatre. The expectations of staff help them to develop appropriate social skills both at these venues and when travelling.

13. Each member of the community is valued and treated with respect. In turn, pupils show respect for others. Through religious education they learn about different faiths and the need to respect the beliefs of all groups. This is reinforced through discussions and reminders from staff. Spiritual and moral awareness are fostered through the thought for the day, which is drawn to pupils' attention at the start of each day, as well as being used as a focus for discussion with individuals. The introduction of citizenship has further enhanced personal development, through recent work on rights and responsibilities.

14. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have opportunities through art lessons and participation in the Tricycle theatre to develop some appreciation of the arts. Display in the unit contains many positive images to which pupils can relate, particularly of black and Asian people. However, there are fewer images to provide good role models for white pupils.

15. Most pupils arrive at the unit with very low levels of attendance and poor attitudes to education and learning. The majority respond very well to the individual approach at the unit and their attendance levels show significant improvement. A few particularly disaffected pupils do not respond to the encouragement provided and miss the educational opportunities available. In these cases the unit works hard to look for alternatives. On entry, the importance of attendance is made very clear and targets for improvement are agreed with pupils and parents. The unit monitors attendance very carefully and is quick to intervene where performance deteriorates.

16. Sensitive and flexible individual strategies and incentives are used to encourage attendance and raise enthusiasm for learning. These are respected and supported by the majority of pupils and parents. It is a major factor influencing the successful and speedy return of pupils to mainstream education. Last year there were 42 pupils in total through the unit, many of whom had not been in school for a long time and found routines difficult to manage, as a result there were a number of exclusions. However, exclusion is only used as a last resort and for short periods of time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
Unit data	11
National data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data	25
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

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African

No of pupils on roll
4
1
1
2
9
5

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
2	
1	
4	
2	

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIT

17. The quality of education is good. This is because teaching is effective and all activities are geared to providing pupils with the means to successfully re-enter school as quickly as possible. This includes the good curriculum, which ensures pupils continue to have access to most National Curriculum subjects. Time is also given to provide effective personal and academic support both within the unit and when back in school. Frequent contact with parents also supports this aim.

Teaching and learning

18. There is good teaching by staff experienced in working with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This ensures pupils mainly concentrate in lessons and that learning is good. Systems for assessing and recording achievement are satisfactory but still being developed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships underpin teachers' high expectations of pupils' attitudes and achievement.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Good subject knowledge by teachers contributes well to pupils' learning.
- Planning for use of learning support assistants does not always make best use of their time in supporting pupils.
- Some aspects of assessment are in need of further improvement.
- Teachers use their skills flexibly and effectively when supporting and teaching in secondary schools.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	7	4	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.

19. Good teaching in mathematics, science, personal social and health education, art, and often in English, ensure pupils make a good start to their learning when they enter the unit. This is because most teachers are specialists and confident in what they teach, making sure it is relevant to pupils' needs. This helps pupils feel positive when completing work, as they know they will get good subject advice if they need it. Teachers quickly establish very good relationships due to their previous experiences teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This assists staff in motivating pupils. The teachers' good management of behaviour enables even the most difficult pupils to quickly gain in confidence and self-esteem and feel comfortable when tackling new learning. On the few occasions pupils disrupt they are rapidly brought back on task and little time is lost.

20. Teachers are clear about what pupils will learn. They explain this at the beginning of the lesson so pupils know what is expected and can see their progress at the end. When this is linked to work at mainstream schools, as in science and literacy, pupils understand the relevance and settle to work well. A variety of activities and resources are used to keep them interested. For example, the use of the interactive whiteboard, digital images and a photo editing program kept pupils engrossed in the task in an information and communication technology lesson. In art, the work of artists such as Van Gogh widened their experiences and stimulated pupils to experiment with colour.

21. Planning is generally detailed such as that in mathematics for a lesson on probability and in science for an investigation on energy. However, in English, support for pupils' achievement would be more secure if all aspects of planning were unified rather than divided into English and literacy. In a few lessons planning is sketchy and pupils do not learn as much as they could. This is often because learning support assistants are not given specific tasks to do. Generally learning support assistants do work well with teachers to support learning, as in a history lesson where one pupil was well challenged by appropriate questioning. However, there are occasions where their contribution is not planned appropriately and opportunities are lost for pupils to extend their skills. Staff use individual questioning well to assess what pupils remember before and during the lesson, all the while making sure they appropriately involve the few girls. The relaxed but working atmosphere, created because of the high quality relationships, is such that pupils are happy to discuss feelings and sensitive issues in lessons such as personal, social and health education and emotional literacy. Homework is set so that pupils can reinforce and extend learning in preparation for returning to mainstream schools. However, parents report they have difficulties ensuring pupils complete it.

22. All teachers conscientiously support pupils in mainstream classes and offer advice on behaviour management. Most also teach groups, such as those for anger management and social skills. This they do well, quickly building up good relationships. As a result, schools appreciate their work and gain from their expertise. For example, in one school the unit teacher is modelling group social skills work so other school staff will also be able to take similar groups.

23. Assessment is still being developed. Assessment for pupils in English, mathematics and social skills as they enter the unit is good. However, targets set from this assessment for basic academic skills are often general and it is difficult to measure progress against them. Despite this, learning is good because staff get to know pupils well and discuss progress with them. Staff are beginning to track individual pupils and assess their levels. For most pupils, learning to behave well so they can concentrate and begin to study is the outcome that will speed their return to school. Behaviour is comprehensively assessed after every lesson. However very little formal day to day

recording takes place of knowledge and skills pupils have acquired so that they can be taken into account when planning the next lesson.

The curriculum

24. Curriculum provision is good. It is effective and geared to the needs of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Activities to enrich the curriculum are good with pupils enjoying a good variety of creative and physical experiences and additional activities, which promote self-esteem, learning and personal development. Accommodation and resources are good and the accommodation has been specifically designed so pupils can gain similar experiences to those in school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on core subjects which follow the national guidelines and give good preparation for pupils returning to school.
- Innovative areas of curriculum are well matched to the needs of pupils.
- There is very effective provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, sex and drug education.
- Elements of provision for the few pupils with additional special needs are developing but this needs to be at a faster pace.

Commentary

25. The strength of the curriculum provision lies in the way staff plan a curriculum based on National Curriculum requirements. Staff maintain close liaison with pupils' secondary schools so that pupils continue to build on their skills, knowledge and understanding. There is good planning based on the numeracy and literacy strategies. The provision for science benefits from links with partner secondary schools. For example, the unit's science teacher uses her role as an outreach teacher to advantage and has recently arranged to utilise a technician for some lessons at the unit. As part of the *Leading Edge* initiative there are developing links for information and communication technology with two schools. Arrangements for subject teachers to join school faculty meetings effectively assists them in keeping up to date.

26. As a result of this carefully thought out provision, pupils are very well prepared and supported for their smooth return to mainstream education and the next stages of their education. Receiving schools are equally well prepared through detailed reports of academic achievement and attitudes and behaviour. This planned transition also includes input from *Connexions* who enable some pupils to access training courses at local centres.

27. All pupils who attend the unit benefit from a very good quality programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship. This makes a strong contribution to their personal development by systematically developing their independence skills and preparing them for life within the community. All pupils have access to all activities. As yet provision in the way of specific individual programmes for pupils who have additional learning needs is underdeveloped in some areas of the curriculum, although all pupils have literacy lessons.

28. Innovative additions to the curriculum, such as the provision for emotional literacy, where pupils learn about interpersonal relationships and managing emotions, are used as a basis for moving pupils forward in terms of their emotional and academic development. Other developments include a range of sporting provision. The unit makes good use of local sports and leisure facilities for outdoor activities where pupils have the opportunity to participate in activities such as water sports and archery. The curriculum is also enriched by visits to the Tricycle Theatre, where pupils explore a variety of themes relevant to themselves, expertly supported by staff at the theatre. For example, during the inspection pupils considered *how we make judgements about people without really knowing them*. Pupils' reactions at first were somewhat negative, but through challenging questions, sensitively handled by the teacher, pupils responded well.

29. The unit has been very well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Good displays support learning and enhance the environment. The unit is maintained to a high standard, encouraging pupils to take pride; as a result there is no graffiti and no vandalism within the building. Classrooms are large, bright, and airy and specialist rooms such as the provision for information and communication technology and science make a good contribution to learning opportunities for pupils. Resources support the curriculum well. The outside accommodation for relaxation and recreation between lessons is satisfactory and the unit has plans to develop this area.

Care, guidance and support

30. The procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very effective. Pupils' personal and educational development is a priority. The individual support and guidance provided is good, enables pupils to be fully involved in determining their targets, and contributes significantly to the progress that the majority of pupils make. The unit seeks pupils' views well. Pupils feel that they are valued at the unit and that their views are welcomed and listened to.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements for new pupils and parents are very good and ensure a smooth transition into the unit.
- The strong relationships developed between pupils and tutors ensure pupils feel free to approach staff with concerns and views on the unit.
- Sensitive and good quality support and guidance is effectively made available at individual pupil level and is a major factor in helping pupils to progress.
- Pupils are fully involved in determining their development targets, particularly those for behaviour.

Commentary

31. The procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare and safety are clear and conscientiously followed. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe at all times. In a short space of time they get to know pupils well and have their well being in mind at all times. Staff consistently apply standards which have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and personnel development. Procedures to deal with child protection issues are very good and meet fully statutory requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. Health and safety procedures are clear and the site provides a safe working environment. The collaboration with a range of support agencies, such as the Youth Offending Team and Connexions, as well as the school nurse effectively extends the quality of support and care available for pupils. Provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs is implemented appropriately.

32. During the very effective induction programme, pupils and parents are clearly introduced to the aims of the unit and fully involved in agreeing the targets against which progress and achievement can be measured. The unit works very supportively with parents to keep them involved in the programme and to discuss any issues. This liaison provides additional assistance to the care that staff take of pupils and to motivating pupils to stay in the unit.

33. Good quality support and guidance is effectively tailored to match individual needs and ensures that the majority of pupils maintain their levels of development and are able to return to mainstream school as soon as possible. The unit ensures that every pupil has a strong and trusting relationship with at least one adult member of staff, who is usually their tutor, although the unit has recently also appointed a learning mentor. The constant monitoring and recording of performance against individual development targets informs the very regular review meetings at which tutors and pupils discuss progress and agree new targets. These meetings also mean that if there is a problem appropriate intervention can quickly be put in place. Pupils state that they enjoy tutorials and the chance it gives them to discuss issues and see how they are getting on.

34. Pupils say they feel free to approach members of staff with any problems and clearly have no inhibitions in expressing their feelings and opinions. They are encouraged to express their views on aspects of the organisation and day to day life at the unit. The decision to change lunch supplier came as a result of an opinion seeking exercise. The majority of pupils say they feel valued at the unit and are appreciative of the help and support they are getting. This extends to pupils who have returned to school who appreciate the time still given to them for as long as it is needed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

35. A good partnership exists with the majority of parents. The very frequent contact with home helps to secure strong and trusting relationships with most parents and carers. There are good links with the community which enrich the learning opportunities for pupils. The unit has developed very strong links with the local secondary schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an effective partnership with parents based on openness and a genuine will to involve parents in their children's education and development.
- From the point of referral and throughout a pupil's time at the unit details of progress and behaviour are effectively communicated on at least a weekly basis.
- Visitors from the community extend the learning experiences and visits to community facilities contribute positively to pupils' social and cultural development.
- The partnerships with the local secondary schools are very good and result in consistent high levels of care and support being offered to pupils moving between the unit and the schools.
- The formal provision of teaching and support in mainstream schools by unit staff is of high quality, well received and effective in helping pupils at risk of exclusion.

Commentary

36. The views and opinions expressed by parents and carers indicate a high level of satisfaction with the help and support provided for them and their children. Parents say they are very happy with the level and frequency of contact that is maintained in the short time pupils are in the unit. Staff are helpful, their children get lots of help and they feel comfortable discussing any issues with staff.

37. Communication with parents is very good and helps them to support their children's development. There are weekly updates for parents which they appreciate, but in practice many homes are contacted on an almost daily basis. There is immediate contact if pupils fail to attend or if they are experiencing difficulties. The unit makes a point of ringing home to share and celebrate good news. Some parents regularly ring to discuss aspects of home life and to seek guidance on how best to support their child's development. The unit provides parents with support and guidance on family problems where these are impacting on their children's learning and development.

38. There are good links with the local and wider community which are well used to reinforce learning, to broaden experiences and to contribute to pupils' social and cultural development. Community figures regularly visit the school, giving talks which enrich the citizenship and personal and social education curriculum. Pupils use the local sports and leisure centre for physical education and a close relationship with the local theatre is well used to enhance personal and social development.

39. The unit enjoys very good links with secondary schools because these schools have access to a unit teacher for one day a week. These teachers are an effective addition to schools. Schools report that there is already a good partnership which is benefiting pupils through observation, advice, support, tutorials and group work. In the short time that it has been open, teaching staff from the unit have established a very positive reputation for the effective work they do teaching and supporting those pupils in the secondary schools who are experiencing difficulties and considered to be at risk of exclusion. There is a quick response from the unit when problems occur and staff move promptly

to effect support. This early intervention is successfully maintaining pupils in school. These strong links mean that pupils are very often known to staff before being formally referred to the unit. Similarly, pupils returning to schools are aided through the support provided in the schools by unit staff. These links further ensure that pupils returning after a period at the unit continue to receive the personal support of teachers from the unit until the transition is complete.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

40. Leadership and management of the unit are good. The management committee has a good understanding of the unit and how far it has come. The very good leadership of the headteacher has meant that this provision is already effective in its work within the unit and in secondary schools. Leadership of other key staff is good and improving rapidly as the unit establishes itself. Management, including that of outreach work, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A clear vision by all involved in setting up the unit has led to a very good start for the provision.
- Comprehensive initial planning to get the unit started now needs to be followed up by formal longer term plans.
- The headteacher has high aspirations and a clear sense of purpose in providing a wide range of support for pupils within mainstream schools, in the unit and for those returning to school.
- All staff are very committed to the aims of the unit and work well as a team.
- The unit is already setting targets, reviewing them and collecting data as part of monitoring and evaluation.
- The management committee and the local education authority monitor and support the unit well.

Commentary

41. Although the unit has only been open a year, it is already effective. This is due to high aspirations for pupils' education by all involved in its development. There is a strong commitment by the local education authority to provide a high quality resource with a focus on continuing to educate as many pupils as possible who have been excluded, or are at risk of, exclusion. To this end the unit was set up with the financial flexibility to quickly move staff and resources to where they are needed most. This has proved to be a significant aid to the unit's rapid development and to pupils' achievement. The management committee is supportive and knowledgeable, ensuring that statutory requirements are met. They, and the local education authority, have been very closely involved in the setting up and monitoring of the progress made as the unit began to develop its role. Regular meetings between the headteacher and the local authority officer, as well as support from advisors, has assisted the unit and helped in evaluating developments. Finances are closely monitored to ensure that money is spent wisely for relevant resources and to see that best value is obtained.

42. There is a very good understanding by the headteacher of the role of the unit within the range of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the borough and this has contributed to an effective start. Very good relations have already been forged with schools. As a result, the unit is already successfully returning a good number of pupils to school. This is because the headteacher is pro-active in seeking school views and providing what is needed. She is ably assisted in this by the deputy headteacher and by a highly committed, skilled team of teachers. Schools already highly value their work and data shows they are having a significant effect in preventing exclusions. This has considerably aided learning.

43. The management of outreach work is good with both the headteacher of the unit and the school having a clear understanding of work to be undertaken. Data is collected which is used to monitor the performance of pupils at risk of exclusion and those returning to mainstream schools. Staff have a line manager in school with whom they regularly liaise and with whom they discuss and monitor their work. Schools appreciate this as it is a means of regular feedback. All work to be completed is documented, monitored and evaluated with both the school and unit having a copy. The

unit also sends out a school survey so they can ascertain how the school feels about the provision and further areas that could be developed. This consultation, combined with using statistics on the number of pupils supported and returned to school, help the unit to check that it is being effective.

44. The headteacher is aware that the one significant barrier to learning is the fleeting time they see the pupils and particularly parents. They aim to minimise this by working closely with schools.

45. Last year the unit had in place a comprehensive development plan which included objectives for setting up the unit. This supported the unit well, providing clear targets needed to ensure there were systems in place to support developments and has helped to establish it as an effective provision. This plan has now been reviewed. It has been extended appropriately and further targets set so that everyone can consolidate and develop practice, both in schools and in areas of the unit where improvements are still needed. However, while the headteacher and management committee have a very clear vision of how they would like to see the unit develop over the longer term, this has not yet been formalised.

46. All teachers work within the unit and schools. As the unit is new, the past year has been one in which they have had to learn new skills quickly and be very adaptable, teaching pupils in the unit, supporting pupils returning to school and those at risk of exclusion and teaching small groups of secondary pupils various social skills and behaviour management. Their flexibility and increased leadership skills mean that schools already highly value their skills and hard work. Teachers are subject specialists, rather than co-ordinators, and, as such, generally manage their subjects well. Their professional management of subjects within the unit has ensured that a suitable curriculum is available. In this staff have been supported by links with school faculties as well as good staff development linked to both their needs and those of the unit. Staff meet regularly to discuss issues. Performance management is underway for teachers and appraisal for support staff. This gives staff time to reflect on their needs.

47. Monitoring of teaching is effective and is undertaken with the local education authority advisors. The unit sets ambitious targets for pupil achievement last year. While all were not met, it has given the unit a clear benchmark for setting new realistic, but challenging, ones this year. The unit is already collecting data on a range of indicators and is interpreting these to ascertain whether all groups of pupils are achieving as well as they should. This has already led to further curriculum developments. There is an appropriate policy and understanding of race equality issues which has led to a range of activities where pupils are given opportunities to understand others beliefs, values and culture.

Financial information for the year April 2002 March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		
1	Total income	508000
	Total expenditure	381982
	Expenditure per pupil	3

Balances (£)		
	Balance from previous year	N/A
	Balance carried forward to the next	11,000
	2	

1 The unit did not open until September 2002 and within this sum are the estimated start up costs.

2 This is a small percentage of the total carry forward, the rest is retained by the LEA.

3 This is not applicable as the unit receives a budget which includes outreach. This is not differentiated so the unit can move staff around between the unit and schools according to need.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGE 3

ENGLISH

48. Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well, given their behavioural difficulties and gaps in learning.
- A wide range of opportunities for discussion means that achievement in speaking and listening is good.
- Pupils concentrate on their learning due to generally good teaching. .
- Use of the national strategy for pupils in Key Stage 3 is being well developed, however, is not presently linked to other aspects of the English curriculum
- The good baseline assessment, which is completed when pupils enter the unit, is not effectively used to set literacy targets where pupils have learning difficulties.

Commentary

49. Pupils' achievements in English in relation to their previous attainment are good. Because of the priority given to speaking and listening in different contexts, these aspects develop well, and this has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and social skills. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and attentively to adults and to their peers. They answer questions, showing that they have listened carefully to explanations. They take part in discussions, listening to others and giving their own opinions. Teachers are careful to develop pupils' vocabulary so that they are able to extend their responses.

50. Pupils continue to develop their reading skills well and to increase the range of strategies they have to work out unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils read with some fluency, showing that they understand what they are reading. Lower attaining pupils use phonic strategies for words that they do not know, but are sometimes hindered by poor levels of comprehension. Most are able to read different types of literature such as stories, guide books and set texts such as Macbeth, although with different levels of fluency and understanding.

51. Many pupils lack confidence in writing and need a lot of encouragement to tackle written tasks. However, during their time in the unit, they do continue to develop their writing skills and make satisfactory progress, although the handwriting of most is still underdeveloped. Most can write sentences and short paragraphs independently, spelling common words correctly and using basic punctuation. They begin to learn about different types of word, for example, using adjectives to make writing more interesting. They write for a variety of reasons such as making notes and writing letters. They make some use of opportunities to present their work using word processing.

52. Pupils who have additional learning needs make satisfactory progress with reading and writing. This is because staff in the unit have yet to effectively use the assessment on entry to identify these needs and to set appropriate literacy targets and to devise individual programmes where they are needed and record results. This is an area for further development.

53. While teaching observed was satisfactory with good features, planning and pupil work indicate that teaching is good overall. Teachers are particularly good at managing the behaviour of pupils so that they are able to concentrate on their learning. Good questioning allows teachers to involve all pupils and to assess what they are learning. Teachers use a variety of activities in lessons, which both develop pupils' knowledge and sustain their attention. Planning for lessons is good but, where teaching is less successful, teachers do not follow the plans so that pupils do not

achieve what they should in the lesson. The use of learning support assistants is variable and, sometimes, the best use is not made of their time to support pupils with their learning and behaviour.

54. At present, one teacher takes responsibility for leading and developing the national strategy, and another for other aspects of the curriculum, particularly the literature, which pupils need to study for their national test. While management of both aspects of English are satisfactory, if the plans for these areas were joined into one overall scheme it would make a more unified curriculum and ensure a consistent balanced provision. Whilst initial assessment is used to provide a National Curriculum level for pupils, progress is only tracked informally at present.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. This is developed well across the curriculum because most teachers use the Key Stage 3 strategy and plan to include literacy. A number of examples were seen of pupils improving their literacy in other subjects. For example, reading from texts in subjects such as citizenship, and learning key words in science and religious education. Most subjects contribute well to the development of speaking and listening.

MATHEMATICS

56. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good subject knowledge and teaching leads to good achievement for pupils.
- Good planning focuses on needs of pupils in lessons and is securely based on the numeracy strategy.
- Subject management is good and pupils are taught all aspects of the subject.
- Using and applying mathematical skills across the curriculum are not yet planned systematically.

Commentary

57. In mathematics pupils make good progress. Effective baseline assessments are carried out when they enter the unit and teaching is generally well focused. Teaching shows a good understanding of pupil needs and subsequent assessments show that pupils make good progress against prior attainment. Planning covers all areas ensuring that pupils are not disadvantaged on return to mainstream school. They develop good knowledge of number and space, shape and measurement. They also carry out investigative work on topics such as travelling to the unit and are beginning to use computers to enter data on spreadsheets and compile graphs.

58. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics are good. Good knowledge of the numeracy strategy is evident in work planned, which identifies clear learning objectives for pupils and fits in well with longer term planning. This ensures that a good balance is maintained in all aspects of the subject. Activities are imaginative and help pupils to make good progress. For instance, at the end of one lesson where the teaching was very good, pupils were able to express probability in percentage or decimal terms when calculating the chances of selecting three different sweets from a total of 25 made up of 5 different colours. Pupils are happy to be in lessons and relationships are a positive feature.

59. The subject is developing well due to effective and enthusiastic management and leadership which has resulted in a comprehensive curriculum offer.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Although this is satisfactory, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they have learnt in mathematics within other subjects. Some mathematical skills are used incidentally within subjects such as design and technology to measure and in information and communication technology when completing spreadsheets. In science pupils measure graphs and temperature accurately. However, such opportunities are not planned systematically, to ensure that all pupils practise, consolidate and improve their mathematical skills

SCIENCE

61. Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good because they concentrate well and enjoy practical work.
- Good subject knowledge is used to challenge pupils to work hard.
- Effective subject management has ensured a good start has been made to developing science.
- Improvements are needed in the way achievements are recorded.

Commentary

62. Pupils achieve well because lessons are comprehensively planned to meet their needs. Their achievement is further supported by the use of similar work to that in local secondary schools and frequent references during lessons to what they will need to know when they return to school. This ensures they understand the relevance of the work. Pupils reinforce their literacy skills well in science through the use of key words such as *thermal, chemical and kinetic*, which they remember from the previous lesson when learning about energy. They behave well when concentrating on an investigation about hot and cold. They measure temperature accurately and make appropriate predictions about energy levels, taking a pride in their work.

63. Individual questioning is successfully used to find out what pupils know before taking them on to the next activity. Teaching is good because there is confident subject knowledge which is utilised to challenge pupils. Very good relationships lead to pupils enjoying their practical work, co-operating and communicating their findings so effective learning takes place. This is helpful as when pupils occasionally become restless the teacher very quickly gets them back to work and little time is lost. Care is taken to make sure resources are relevant to pupils' needs and support their learning. For example, pupils learned a lot about how energy is transmitted through having access to a wide range of small electrical equipment. Work is marked consistently so pupils know how well they have done. Homework is set so pupils can reflect on work completed.

64. The subject is well managed and follows the Key Stage 3 strategy. From a secure base good leadership has ensured it has developed rapidly since the unit was set up, helped by access to a suitable science room. Pupils' work is levelled, however evaluation has only just begun to take place at the end of lessons to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding and plans are in place to develop this further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

65. Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning shows good sequential development of skills.
- Information and communication technology is currently inconsistently used across the curriculum and this limits the progress that pupils make.
- Resources and accommodation are very good and support the planned development within the subject and across the curriculum

Commentary

66. Although teaching within information and communication technology lessons is good the achievement of pupils is satisfactory. This is because although the progress pupils make in these lessons is good, the application of the skills learnt within other subject areas is less well developed. Pupils develop suitable word processing skills and are becoming familiar with programs they can use to present their work, building up their skills step by step.

67. The present good teaching is the result of very effective support by the local education adviser for information and communication technology. This is having a positive effect on subject knowledge, confidence and the ability to ensure pupils learn. The use of a new information and communication technology room and a wide range of software keeps the pupils interested and keen to learn. In the one lesson seen pupils progressed well in acquiring skills when use a photo-editing program. The level of challenge was high and the interactive whiteboard was used well to explain and motivate.

68. The teacher is new to this subject but leadership and management are satisfactory. This is because support from the local education authority consultant is ensuring that planning is detailed and pupils are beginning to experience a good variety of information and communication technology skills. The resources in the information and communication technology suite mean that all pupils have the opportunity to use up to date technology and this has a positive effect on their self-esteem. Little use is presently made of formal assessment.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. In the short time the unit has been open, staff have received training in the use of new technology. While the use of new technology is satisfactory, it is not always consistently planned in to lessons. As teachers develop their subject roles and gain in confidence they are integrating it more into their work. For example, they use spreadsheets in mathematics and a software program which supports all areas of mathematics. In history and geography clip art is used to produce title pages. In religious education some use has been made of the Internet for research and in design and technology a drawing program has been utilised to design a CD rack, while a digital camera has been used to produce images for clock faces and a power point presentation. Word processing is widely used for pupils to produce good copies in English, personal, social and health and health education and science.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

HUMANITIES

70. Pupils study **history, geography and religious education** as part of humanities. Only one lesson was seen in history. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. However, work is planned using the National Curriculum and recent work includes communications, map work and rich and developing countries in geography. Evidence from pupils' files shows that in

religious education, pupils have been introduced to key features of the world's main religions. In history, the life of Martin Luther King and the Holocaust are studied.

71. The present theme is a historical one on the black people of the Americas. Although there is not enough evidence to make a judgement on teaching and learning, in the one lesson seen, pupils progressed satisfactorily in their understanding of conditions under which slaves lived. They showed empathy while studying source materials on individual peoples' lives, discussing the issues sensitively with staff. Themes such as crime and the local community support work in Citizenship and contribute well to moral and social development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN

72. Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject and make good progress.
- Subject knowledge and teaching are good and pupils are motivated to work hard and achieve well.

73. Pupils' achievements in art are good. Work on display in the unit demonstrates the good quality of work achieved by pupils. Pupils make use of a wide variety of materials and processes, for instance they make three-dimensional structures using twigs and tissue paper and masks from recycled materials. Overall the subject offers a good range of activities planned to meet the needs of the pupils. Careful step by step planning is used very well to reinforce skills and give pupils the confidence to experiment, for example in their use of colour.

74. Teaching and learning in art is good because there is very experienced teaching. The subject is managed well and this already motivates pupils to produce work of which they are proud. Lessons are carefully planned and expectations are high. Skilful management of behaviour is evident in the way the teacher motivates difficult pupils to participate and progress in lessons. As a result pupils are drawn into effective learning. Typically, after initial reluctance, pupils work hard and become engrossed in their work. For example, in a lesson on observational drawing of fruit, pupils concentrated for long periods of time on their light and shading. Pupils know where they stand with the teacher because they get praise when they deserve it and they know that they will lose credits if they misbehave.

75. No lessons were seen in **design and technology** and **physical education**. It is therefore not possible to make a firm judgement on provision. Planning and work were scrutinised in design and technology. A visit was made to one of the sport venues for physical education and pupils spoken to about their attitudes to sport and what they had learnt.

76. In design and technology pupils have the opportunity to use various materials when they design make and evaluate a mini light, a coaster using mosaic and a CD rack using a computer design program. Most pupils have just completed making good quality working clocks.

77. Physical education provides pupils with a good range of opportunities to participate in games such as football, table tennis and basketball. This takes place one afternoon a week at a local sports centre and is led by a coach. Sometimes this is supplemented by ice-skating and ten-pin bowling. During these lessons, pupils become more confident in social skills while progressing in their understanding of rules of the game and fair play. They are enthusiastic, keen and join in well showing a good attitude to adults. Further opportunities to participate in activities such as water sports, canoeing and archery reinforce these skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. Provision in personal, social and health education is very **good** and for citizenship it is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a range of very relevant activities within lessons and throughout the day to support work in personal, social and health education.
- Recent innovations, such as emotional literacy and citizenship are further enhancing the development of pupils' social and moral skills.

79. Pupils often achieve very well in this subject because activities are relevant, providing them with the skills they need to succeed when they go back to school and for life as young adults. Topics such as personal safety, underage drinking and bullying are discussed in a mature way. At the Tricycle theatre, pupils work on tasks about stereotyping and making judgements before meeting people. In emotional literacy lessons questions such as *what does it feel like to be*, for example, disabled, encourage sensitive and empathetic discussion in which pupils turn take, share ideas and develop speaking and listening skills well. Pupils' role-play strategies for managing behaviour and activities are planned so they will enhance self-esteem and be followed through on reintegration.

80. While teaching is good, learning and achievement are better because of all the varied opportunities provided throughout the day, not just in lessons. For example, there is a lunch and break curriculum which focuses on developing appropriate behaviours and social skills while eating and outside while playing. A range of appropriate visitors, such as the school nurse, also contributes well to this area.

81. Personal, social and health education is managed well and there is a very good understanding of the important role this plays in a pupil referral unit and in equipping pupils for return to school and life as a young adult.

82. **Citizenship** has recently been introduced into the curriculum and is providing good opportunities for pupils to learn about, and to discuss, a variety of relevant topics. Other elements of citizenship are taught through subjects such as PSE, religious education and geography. An audit to identify the different strands of the subject would ensure that all aspects are covered.

83. Because of its recent introduction, it is not possible to make a judgement about teaching and learning in citizenship. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, the teaching was good and pupils contributed enthusiastically to a discussion about rights and responsibilities, and became familiar with some of the key features of the United Nations declaration on the rights of the child. The discussion which took place made a very good contribution to pupils' personal, including moral, development.

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 school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	N/A
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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