

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BUZZ

Gorton, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 133945

Headteacher: Rose Harrison

Lead inspector: Alastair Younger

Dates of inspection: 13th –15th October 2003

Inspection number: 259114

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE BUZZ

Type of school:	Permanent exclusion
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	13
School address:	C/o The Peacock Centre Peacock Close Gorton Manchester
Postcode:	M18 8AX
Telephone number:	0161 223 1216
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer	Phil Hammerton
Date of previous inspection:	Not previously inspected

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUZZ

The Buzz is a small pupil referral unit for boys and girls of primary school age who have been permanently excluded from previous schools on account of their extreme behaviour. There are currently 13 pupils on roll, two of whom are girls. No pupils at present are in Years 1 or 2, most are in Years 5 and 6. Eight pupils are white and the rest are black. For no pupils is speaking English a barrier to learning; where parents experience difficulty help is given. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. Most pupils attend the Buzz full time but a few newer pupils are initially given part time placements which quickly build up to full time. No pupils are on the roll of other schools. Most pupils have unsettled family backgrounds and come from the more socially disadvantaged parts of Manchester. Nearly all pupils have been underachieving in their previous schools, more often because of their attitudes and behaviour than any significant degree of learning difficulty.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23587	Alastair Younger	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art, history, music, religious education.
9572	Katherine Anderson	Lay inspector	
19386	Dr G Trevor Watts	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, physical education, personal, social and health education, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective unit. Teaching and learning are good. Academic achievement is satisfactory, and pupils are making significant progress in improving their personal and social skills. This helps them to return successfully to mainstream schools. The provision is costly but finance is carefully managed. The Buzz is achieving its stated aims and is giving **satisfactory value for money**. This is the unit's first inspection.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The speed with which it brings about rapid improvement in pupils' personal and social development.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning, especially in English and mathematics, helps pupils to make good progress in these subjects
- Very close and effective links have been forged with parents
- Achievement overall is slowed because the unit day is short and not enough time is spent teaching subjects other than English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. Pupils do not make enough progress in science
- Links with mainstream primary schools are underdeveloped

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 6	Satisfactory	Very good

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in information and communication technology. It is unsatisfactory in science, mainly because too little time is spent teaching it. Individuals are set clear targets for improvement in English and mathematics and their progress towards these targets is carefully monitored. Pupils are regularly meeting their targets and often exceeding them. There are no specific groups that achieve either better or worse than others. There are pockets of good achievement in other subjects, most notably art and history, but not enough time is spent teaching other subjects for pupils to make sustained progress in them.

Pupils' make very good progress in improving their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance is very good and there is virtually no unauthorised absence. Attitudes are very good, pupils rapidly grow in confidence, they co-operate well with staff and increasingly well with each other. Behaviour is very good. It is very rare for bad behaviour to interfere with pupils' learning and when it occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Staff and pupils form strong and trusting relationships and there are no tensions between different groups of pupils. A strong and effective emphasis is placed on getting pupils to think about their lives and the effects of their actions on others. Pupils are helped to learn how to become more sociable and are given many opportunities to practice their social skills on outings and at times in the unit day when they meet as a single group to talk about their thoughts and feelings.

The quality of education provided by the Buzz is good. Teaching is good. Teachers make lessons interesting, manage their classrooms well and work particularly effectively with learning mentors. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress in most lessons. Teaching is strongest in English and mathematics. In these two subjects there is particularly good assessment of pupils' learning and as a result, teachers are setting work that is closely matched to pupils' individual ability. The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good focus on mathematics, English and

personal, social and health education but insufficient time is spent teaching other subjects. This is especially so in science. Nevertheless, pupils are given many, very good opportunities to broaden their interests and gain new experiences through a wide range of visits and a varied programme of visitors to the Buzz. The care and welfare of pupils is good. Pupils are carefully supervised at all times and staff show a very good awareness of pupils' problems and achievements. As a result pupils are given very good, advice and guidance. Pupils are also helped to express themselves more clearly and their views are listened to carefully. There is close, daily contact with nearly all parents and strong links have been formed. There are also many good links with organisations in the community. There are insufficient links with local mainstream schools and not enough is being done by Buzz staff to work with these schools to speed up return to school when pupils are ready.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good and management satisfactory. The headteacher has a strong commitment to the philosophy of the unit and is effective in getting all staff to work enthusiastically to translate these firm beliefs into action. However, not enough is being done to develop and widen the role of the Buzz through the management of work in local mainstream schools. The local education authority in its role as the appropriate authority has ensured that all statutory requirements have been met and is providing good support. The management committee is currently making insufficient contribution to the governance of the Buzz.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS

Parents are hugely complimentary about the Buzz. They feel that it is helping their children to behave better and to improve their reading, writing and number work. It comes as a great relief to many parents that their children enjoy attending the Buzz. Parents relish the daily contact they have with Buzz staff and welcome the help that they, as parents, receive as well as the help given to their children. Pupils share a belief that the Buzz is helping them well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the Buzz should do to improve are

- Increase the amount of time spent in the classroom to widen the range of subjects being taught on a regular basis
- Improve provision for science to raise achievement and speed up pupils' progress
- Develop closer links with mainstream schools to facilitate closer working and easier transfer of pupils

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics
- Progress in personal and social education is very good
- Pupils do not achieve enough in science
- Insufficient time is spent in the classroom for pupils to make sustained progress in many other subjects
- No group of pupils makes better, or worse, progress than any other

Commentary

1. Achievement is good in mathematics and English. These are two of the most important areas of learning and it is achievement here that schools often look to for signs of progress before readmitting pupils. Few pupils have learning difficulties but many have been significantly underachieving prior to their admission. The Buzz is helping them to achieve to their potential in these subjects by ensuring that teaching is good and that plenty of time is given to them. Some of the best progress is seen in the development of speaking and listening skills. These are often very low when pupils arrive but pupils quickly learn how to listen carefully and consider the impact of what they say. As well as helping them to develop better English skills this also has a very strong impact upon their personal development. In mathematics, pupils are achieving well in an atmosphere that encourages them to want to learn. Good teaching and a good range of learning experiences ensures that pupils enjoy learning about mathematics.

2. Very good achievement in personal, social and health education reflects the very high priority given to this part of pupils' education. More of the Buzz day is dedicated to this than any other subject. Targets for improvement are clear and pupils are given many opportunities to practice what they are learning in their many visits out of the Buzz and in communal periods during the Buzz day. In these situations they frequently demonstrate their greatly improving social skills. Progress made here is helping pupils to transfer successfully to mainstream school at the beginning of Year 7.

3. Achievement in science is not good enough. Little time is spent to its teaching and pupils show insufficient enthusiasm for learning about it. Compared with English and mathematics, science is a poor relation in the curriculum. Each class gets half an hour of teaching each week and this teaching is not infused with the same degree of planning or preparation found in English or mathematics. Pupils are not set targets and assessment of their work does not give guidance to future targets nor record what pupils have learned. The main problem is that lessons are boring. Pupils are learning facts but not conducting experiments and it is this latter factor that makes science interesting and exciting.

4. In most other subjects pupils achieve well in isolated topics, for instance in the current history topic on Tudor times or past work with visiting artists; but insufficient time is spent in the classroom for pupils to make sustained progress in many subjects. It is not that too much time is spent teaching English, mathematics and personal, social and health education but that the Buzz day is too short. In effect, the timetable runs from 9.30pm until 1.30pm. Valuable reinforcement of previous learning adds to this but it takes place on transport to and from pupils' homes and is conducted by learning mentors. The time for new learning, planned and organised by teachers is thus limited.

5. The Buzz makes good provision for all of its pupils. Few pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need but all are seen as having specific individual needs. A clear record of all pupils' development in different subjects, and in their behaviour and attitude is kept. Each pupil has a list of targets in personal and social skills, in English, and in mathematics. These are clearly stated but there are often too many of them to remember, manage, and keep track of. Teachers prioritise well but the proliferation of targets is unnecessary and represents inefficiency in the use of teachers' time. More effective is the weekly target set for each pupil's behaviour. These are focussed on very well, and are kept fresh in pupils' minds. As a result, this is where pupils are regularly meeting and often exceeding their targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

6. Pupils' attendance is **very good**. They develop **very positive attitudes** and show a **great improvement in their behaviour**. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils become willing learners, take part enthusiastically in activities and usually behave very well
- Attendance is very good, there is virtually no unauthorised absence
- Pupils learn a lot about themselves and others.

Commentary

7. That all pupils have previously been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools shows how poor their attitudes and behaviour have been before attending the Buzz. The unit's very positive approach is enabling pupils to get away from this situation. Many of the pupils currently attending have been on roll for only a few weeks but they are already paying close attention to staff and listening carefully to what other pupils have to say. They take turns, and are polite to adults and to each other. Occasionally pupils become restless, and there are moments when they refuse to cooperate. Records show that there are occasional serious incidents when pupils have lost their temper and resorted to swearing and damaging property but these moments are relatively few and there have been no recorded exclusions for the past year. Pupils' confidence increases rapidly as they achieve success and receive praise. Pupils behave particularly well outside the Buzz on visits, perhaps to a café, football ground or local park. They are polite to visitors, to staff and, most of the time, to each other. This results in a very pleasant and safe feeling around the Buzz in which pupils can be themselves, are positive about their own prospects, and can learn.

8. Many pupils have a past history of poor attendance in their previous schools so the success of the Buzz in getting most pupils to attend on a regular basis represents very good progress. The improvement is mainly brought about by staff spending considerable time at the beginning and end of each day transporting children to and from their homes. This daily contact with parents and carers ensures that staff immediately know reasons for pupils' absences. Parents make considerable effort to ensure that their children attend regularly. However, the long distances travelled by several pupils in the centre of the city means that lessons at the start of the day frequently start late and valuable learning time is lost

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8
National data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data	3
National data	N/A

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

9. The Buzz strongly promotes pupils personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aspect has a high priority in the unit's aims and provision. Many opportunities are created to raise pupils' self awareness, to get them to talk about themselves and to learn from their own experiences. Pupils are taught the importance of respecting other people and listening to their views. Pupils do not ridicule each other's ideas, and they are not afraid to voice their own views and have them discussed. The difference between right and wrong is emphasised at every opportunity. Staff plan role play situations in which pupils discuss and act out events that might happen to them, and in which they face choices about how to react, perhaps to do with bullying, or drugs. Staff act as good role models in showing pupils how to behave, and how they can improve their own situation. Many opportunities are created for pupils to exercise their social skills. During a football game, for instance, a goal was disallowed – not one pupil objected, or challenged it, or sulked. Staff have a very good understanding of the varied cultural backgrounds of pupils and use this understanding to get pupils to share their experiences. Visits out of the Buzz add greatly to pupils' understanding of the city in which they live and its popular and sporting culture.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

10. The quality of education is **good**

Teaching and learning

11. Teaching is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is good or better; pupils enjoy learning and achieve well in lessons
- Learning mentors are very effective
- Good assessment procedures in English and mathematics give staff a clear picture of how well pupils are progressing.
- Science teaching is dull

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	6	2	1	0	0

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

12. Most lessons are characterised by teaching that captures the imagination of pupils. Pupils know that teachers expectations are high and even those who have been recently admitted recognise this. When starting the week, pupils are gathered together for a PSHE lesson, which sets the tone for the week. A 'word of the week' is introduced ('trust' in the week of the inspection) and pupils discuss it and enthusiastically take part in games and quizzes that emphasise its importance. They listen to the individual targets they have been set and after discussion move on to other lessons with a clear view of expectations for the week. In a mathematics lesson, there was a delightful atmosphere. The mood was purposeful and there was no doubt that pupils had come to class to learn. Little time was spent settling pupils down because they had clearly come to class to learn. Expecting to do so, they paid attention, allowing the teacher to concentrate on teaching. This allowed the teacher the opportunity to present a good, wide, range of interesting learning experiences to pupils in which they worked as individuals, in groups and in pairs as they learned different ways of gathering information to be presented at a later date in graphs.

13. The role of learning mentors is very effective in lessons and in checking what pupils have remembered at the start and end of each day. In lessons they demonstrate their skill by doing just

enough to help pupils without ever doing too much for them and thus encouraging laziness. In minibuses at the start and end of each day they demonstrate a very good understanding of pupils and what they have been taught as they quiz pupils about what they have learned and remembered. An invaluable part of learning mentors' work is their skill in observing pupils. In each class, at least one carefully watches pupils, rewarding them for little things that might well go unnoticed by teachers. This helps pupils realise that every little effort is recognised and rewarded and encourages them to try harder.

14. The Buzz has a very good system of assessing how well pupils are making progress. The best practice is in English and mathematics where pupils' achievements are carefully compared with nationally recognised levels. This is done regularly and accurately and the information gained is very well used by staff to guide how and what they will teach next. In English, for instance, pupils are set spelling and reading targets each week, sometimes each day, and these encourage pupils to try hard, as well as helping teachers to keep track of progress. In other subjects, pupils' progress is noted from time to time. This is satisfactory, although too often the notes are about what has been taught, rather than what has been learned.

15. Teachers show little enthusiasm for teaching science. They allocate insufficient time for teaching the subject and this is frequently eroded further by allowing previous lessons to overrun or by deciding that pupils are not in the right mind to learn. Much of pupils work is based on discussion or filling in worksheets and insufficient time is spent involving pupils in the activity that makes science exciting and memorable, namely planning and conducting experiments.

The curriculum

16. There is a **satisfactory** curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The time spent in minibuses at the start and end of each day is well used in reinforcing pupils' social and personal development, but significantly reduces the amount of time pupils spend in class learning about subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Very good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning and personal development.

Commentary

17. Good opportunities for pupils to learn about personal, health and social education, mathematics and English are well planned and are taught every day. Other subjects are covered adequately, providing pupils with a suitably broad range of experiences in most subjects of the national curriculum. However, shortage of time means that many subjects are taught only in alternate terms; for instance, history one term and geography the next, so pupils' progress is slowed in these subjects. In science, there is little time for pupil to investigate through experimentation and this is unsatisfactory. Other than through art, pupils have few opportunities to participate in activities of a practical nature; for instance there are few opportunities for them to learn about cookery or design and technology.

18. The Buzz day is short. Two hours each day are timetabled as travel time and half of this is justified as it is for personal and social development and for reinforcement of the major subjects. In this time, learning mentors talk to the pupils well, and quiz them about what they have been doing in positive ways, reminding them of their personal targets. These are valuable times for settling pupils down before they get home, or arrive at the unit in the mornings. They also make a significant contribution to the very strong links with parents and to the very good attendance of pupils. However, they are not planned with the same thoroughness as lessons and little new learning takes place in them. Yet more time, at lunch and break times, is counted as lesson time for personal and social development but, again, these sessions are not planned, are not taken by teachers, and they very often over-run into classroom time after each break. All of these sessions are valuable and well supervised by learning mentors, but could be in addition to classroom time, not instead of it.

19. Pupils' learning is very well enriched by many additional, valuable experiences. These include art lessons with visiting artists and sports lessons out of the Buzz, such as on visits to a local premiership football club, or the leisure centre. Staff show enthusiasm for taking pupils out to places of interest and they use the occasions very well to allow pupils to show how well they can behave and can be trusted. Recently, pupils have been shopping at a nearby supermarket, have toured a football club, visited a wildlife centre and a pancake restaurant, as well as several parks and playgrounds. People are also invited to the Buzz to broaden pupils' learning experiences. Recently visits have been made by bakery staff, football club staff, a group of stonemasons and a blind lady with her guide dog whose visit was very valuable in getting pupils to realise that others need help in different ways.

Care, guidance and support

20. The care, guidance and support of pupils is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are given very good advice and guidance
- Staff have good relationships with pupils and understand them well, the views of pupils are carefully listened to
- The Buzz is a place of safety, with good systems to ensure pupils are well cared for

Commentary

21. Pupils are very well supported. Very well managed and systematic assessment procedures help staff to carefully follow the educational and personal progress of each pupil. A system that matches understanding staff to individuals enables pupils to build up strong, trusting and supportive relationships within a very caring environment. These adults and pupils meet on a weekly basis to discuss progress and concerns. Pupils are constantly reminded of their targets and regularly assess how well they have achieved them. Every six weeks progress is formally reviewed with parents present. The result of the guidance pupils receive is seen in their improving social and personal skills.

22. Pupils have many opportunities to express their views. Staff value their suggestions and are willing to adapt practice accordingly. An induction programme is thorough and well planned. Before being offered a place at the Buzz, parents and pupils are invited to the Buzz to look around and to find out what goes on there. A pattern of introduction is then sorted out. Most pupils start to attend full time very quickly, a few are offered a brief period when they attend part time until they have become accustomed to the Buzz. Most soon express the desire to attend full time and settle quickly into the unit's routines.

23. There are thorough systems for monitoring pupils who may be in need of protection. Recording of accidents and administration of first aid is well established. All staff are safety conscious and regularly check on potential risks both in the Buzz and on visits out. More detailed records of safety checks could formalise and strengthen this otherwise good practice. All staff are aware of the medical needs of pupils and clear procedures are in place for the administration of medicines. Outside agencies provide good advice.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

24. Links with parents are **very good**, with the community they are **good** and with local schools, **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have every faith that the Buzz is helping their children; there is regular and constructive communication between staff and parents
- Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved in their children's education and are given help to understand their children's difficulties
- There are good relationships with local organisations and the wider community
- Links with mainstream schools are satisfactory but outreach work is too limited

Commentary

25. Parents and carers think very highly of the Buzz. They particularly value the support that they, and their child receive. The daily contact between parents and staff, when the mini bus transports children to and from home, gives ample opportunity for information to be exchanged and concerns discussed. The Buzz is very effective in developing trusting relationships with parents. The very good attendance at review meetings enables parents and carers to discuss and contribute to their child's progress. Parents regularly turn to staff for support. Parents are consulted over every aspect of their child's development. Their concerns are valued and acted on.

26. The Buzz takes every opportunity to involve parents in their child's learning. Classes in parenting skills are planned, and staff encourage parents to take part in relevant courses. The homework which pupils are given offers opportunities for parents to help their child progress. Some parents also help in the Buzz and on out of school visits for example on the recent trip to the Tudor House. All parents are invited to the end of term celebration.

27. Productive links with the community have a significant impact on achievement. The Buzz makes very good use of facilities outside to widen pupil's experience and enhance the curriculum. Links with a new sports centre has enabled pupils to receive instruction in games such as tennis and football. Regular visits out and visiting speakers effectively extend pupil's awareness of the wider community. The Buzz offers its facilities as a resource for the community. In the evening the 'On The Streets' project meets here. Student Nursery Nurses and Social Workers benefit from their work experience within the Buzz. Staff and pupils are particularly proud of their involvement with the Gorton Monastery Project through which they have taken part in carving a stone seat for the playground.

28. Useful links have been established with mainstream schools. The heads of the Buzz and the receiving school plan each reintegration programme together and staff from the Buzz support the pupil for the first few weeks. As a result transfer is generally smooth. Every week, all pupils attend information technology lessons in another school. This facility is extremely valuable in developing pupil's computer skills. Schools in the area are working to share resources. A local primary school regularly makes use of the playroom. However, at present, there are limited opportunities for the headteachers of local schools to meet with Buzz staff and the unit does not actively seek to support pupils who are at risk of being excluded from primary schools in the area. This role is taken by the behaviour support service of the LEA but links between school, Buzz and behaviour support services are underdeveloped and result in Buzz staff playing an insufficient role in preventing the need for exclusion or returning pupils quickly to mainstream schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

29. Leadership is **good** and management **satisfactory**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision
- Not enough is done to develop the centre's outreach role

- The LEA provides good support but the management committee does not make sufficient contribution to the governance of the Buzz

Commentary

30. The headteacher has firm beliefs in the best way to help pupils. She ensures that every member of staff understands these beliefs and works in sympathy with them. Daily staff briefings are particularly informative and constructive and, as a result, a common sense of purpose is shared by all staff and morale is high. Staff feel confident because of the support of the headteacher. Pupils recognise that all staff understand and work well together and this has a hugely settling effect upon them. The headteacher also ensures that other departments of the LEA, such as educational psychologists are fully involved in helping pupils to move on successfully from the Buzz. The headteacher fully recognises where development is needed, such as in extending the curriculum, but does not show the same enthusiasm for this aspect as for promoting their personal development and this results in the difference between academic progress and personal development.

31. Whilst ensuring that provision at the Buzz is good, staff do not work closely enough with mainstream schools to prevent exclusion nor to hasten pupils' return to them. Too much reliance is put upon another department of the LEA to perform this task and there is insufficient understanding of the different roles each party takes. This results in a situation where little preventative work is taken by Buzz staff and where the centre's first contact with pupils is often when they are referred following permanent exclusion. When pupils are returned to school they are supported by Buzz staff but not sufficiently to fully reassure mainstream schools to willingly accept returning pupils. This is slowing the rate at which pupils are being returned to mainstream schools other than at the end of Year 6 when they transfer to secondary schools.

32. The LEA, in its role as the appropriate authority provides good support. It ensures that the Buzz is generously funded and valued as an essential part of its provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Close attention has been paid to government guidelines when setting the context within which the Buzz operates. The Buzz has been provided with a curriculum policy which states what the LEA expects the Buzz to provide. It clearly states that placements are not expected to be long term and that it is not expected that pupils with statements of special educational need will not stay long. Its weakness is that it gives very little information to parents as to exactly what their children are entitled to be taught. The headteacher regularly reports accurately and fairly to the management committee as to what happens in the Buzz but other than this, the management committee has little idea of what goes on. Statutory duties reside with the LEA and these are satisfactorily met. Minutes of management committee meetings appear to suggest that members read them and say 'thank you', there is reference to 'discussion' but no mention of resolution to take specific action. Members of the committee do not play a sufficient role in monitoring the work of the Buzz.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

33. Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make rapid progress on admission, especially in their speaking and listening skills
- Teaching is good and pupils' abilities and progress are very well assessed.

Commentary

34. Pupils make good progress in English. Big advances are seen within weeks of admission. When they are first admitted many pupils are argumentative, do not accept instructions, and either shout a lot, or will not speak at all. Their reading is often at a very low standard, and they have a great dislike of writing. From this very low level pupils' progress is, firstly, in their confidence. Within weeks, they sit together, listen to each other and to staff, and take their turn to speak sensibly and politely. Their progress at this early stage in speaking and listening is very good. Later, as pupils become settled, they develop their reading skills well, becoming more confident and capable in reading story books. However, many remain reluctant to read about non-fiction subjects that are part of other lessons, such as when being asked to read about Tudor England in a history lesson. Pupils become more confident and willing to write short passages, sometimes only a line or two, in English lessons. It may be about what they have been doing over the previous weekend, a short poem, a short story or a letter. Spelling improves well, helped by precise targets set as the result of careful assessment, and pupils become more confident with grammar and punctuation. Handwriting develops only slowly, pupils write more willingly but many take little care and have untidy writing with many errors.

35. Pupils are taught well and their learning in lessons is good. Teachers quickly get to know their pupils, and usually plan their lessons carefully to meet the individual needs of pupils. Occasionally, however, all pupils in a class are given the same work to do and in these lessons learning slows, particularly for higher and lower achieving pupils. Nevertheless, teaching is well organised, with good reference to national guidelines about what should be taught, and how lessons should be structured. All staff work well to develop positive relationships with pupils, encouraging their work on an individual basis. Pupils all have a list of targets for their English development, but many are too long and ambitious, which limits their usefulness in helping pupils to understand what they can do to improve. Insufficient expectation is put upon pupils to take greater care with their handwriting. Computers are often used well in encouraging pupils to write, or to improve their spelling. The library has an adequate number and range of books, two computers, and plenty of working space, but it is not sufficiently used to help pupils develop their reading or research skills.

MATHEMATICS

36. Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well in a wide range of mathematical processes
- The subject is well taught and assessment is very thorough

Commentary

37. Pupils are quickly improving their number skills. Records show that pupils' mathematics ages vary between less than seven up to just over nine. For most, this is about two years below their actual ages. By the end of Year 6 most are confidently calculating addition and subtraction sums involving tens and units and several work with numbers up to 1000. Pupils are also learning times tables. Here they are achieving their personal targets well. Younger or lower attaining pupils have recently learned their two and three times table whilst a few, more able pupils quickly come up with correct answers to six times tables sums in mental arithmetic exercises. Division skills are being successfully nurtured at the same time, with pupils recognising what fractions are and correctly identifying halves, thirds and quarters of shapes and numbers. Work on graphs shows pupils tallying data, for instance the number of drinks consumed on each day of the week at the Buzz or the colours of cars in the car park. Pupils work with money, calculating the change they will get, for example when they spend 12p and offer the shopkeeper 20p. With shape, pupils draw and measure with increasing accuracy and identify the properties of simple shapes by counting the number of sides and corners.

38. Teachers plan lessons very thoroughly. They state clear objectives for each pupil, linking these well to individual targets which accurately reflect the abilities of pupils. Close attention is paid to guidance offered through the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are carefully structured to check what pupils have remembered from previous lessons, to give pupils opportunities to improve their mental arithmetic skills and to work individually or in small groups to learn new facts. Work is well marked and very precise records of learning are kept, for instance 'knew $\frac{1}{2}$ by name and $\frac{1}{2}$ of a shape'. Each achievement is linked to a precise 'next step'; in the above example, for instance, planning shows that the pupil has to practice calculating $\frac{1}{2}$ of a number next lesson. Lessons are interesting and pupils are given sufficient support to stop them getting frustrated without over supporting them and allowing them to be lazy. There is little opportunity for pupils to misbehave because activities keep changing and the pace of lessons is good. Pupils respond well to this by working hard. In discussion, many pupils say they enjoy mathematics and think they are doing well in it.

SCIENCE

39. Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils complete only a small amount of work and much of it is undemanding. The curriculum is limited and undemanding, only half an hour is spent teaching the subject each week

Commentary

40. There is little to excite pupils in science lessons and they do not learn enough. Records give very little indication of what pupils have learned or the progress they are making. For instance, comments such as 'a good session, some silly answers but kept it together' and 'completed worksheet well and some new answers' give no indication of what pupils have learned. Work in pupils' files is the same for all pupils irrespective of their individual ability. In one class, all pupils' work is on photocopied worksheets, the sheets are the same for each pupil and the lack of interest shown by pupils is evident in the lack of care they exercise when filling them in. Many are incomplete and little of pupils' work is marked. This term's work has been linked closely to pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils have identified major organs of the human body and discussed what function each serves. They have learned a little about how blood circulates around the body and how the skeleton supports the body. During the inspection, pupils discussed the effects of drugs on the body. Pupils showed an extensive existing knowledge but in one lesson there was no significant new science learning. Further weaknesses in teaching were evident in the lack of scientific understanding. Questions such as 'what part of the body do tablets affect?' or 'what part of the body does beer affect' reflect lack of thought by teachers and pupils' answers were inconclusive. There is

no evidence of pupils developing experimental or investigative skills in science, they are picking up snippets of scientific knowledge but they are not learning how to predict, how to design conduct tests or how to record results scientifically.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

41. Only one lesson was seen but examples of pupils' work and discussion with pupils and staff point towards satisfactory provision in information and communication technology. Pupils gain basic skills in using the keyboard and mouse to use a limited range of programs. Lower-achieving pupils need a lot of individual assistance and confidence-building prompts when using computers. More advanced pupils enter text independently, with few errors. Within the Buzz, pupils are not taught computer skills in separate lessons, but they use computers as part of lessons in other subjects, such as English and mathematics. Separate lessons are taught at a nearby school where there are enough computers for pupils to have one each. One lesson that involved creating a poster was seen here. It was good, with a clear plan for what was to be learned. With help, most pupils were able to enter text; change the colour, size and style of the lettering; and add a picture and a border. Support staff worked very well with the teacher in giving individual help to pupils, who clearly gained confidence and skills during the session. The teaching was brisk, and all of the pupils were eager, and well-behaved. Barriers to learning are a few pupils' low level of reading skills, lack of Internet access in the Buzz and an absence of computers in one of the two classrooms.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

42. *Several other subjects were sampled during the inspection. No physical education, geography, design and technology or art was taught during the inspection but samples of pupils' past work, photographs and records were looked at an inspectors asked pupils about what they had learned. One history lesson was observed and four sessions of personal, social and health education. Music and religious education are not included in the curriculum.*

43. In **geography**, pupils learn some basic map skills whilst studying the local area. These skills are extended and developed as they consider an area that is different to the home area (Llandudno and Manchester). Depending how long pupils are in the Buzz, they also increase their knowledge of other topics in geography, such as rivers, mountains and volcanoes, and towns and villages. The main factor that slows learning is that geography is only taught in alternate half-terms.

44. In **history**, pupils are learning about life in Tudor times. They have produced stimulating and informative wall displays which show a growing understanding of how and where to look for information about past times. Pupils use a good range of books to help gather information, they have visited a Tudor building in the locality and their drawings of it show a good observation of the main features that identify it as Tudor, such as the dark timber. Pupils have compared life in those times with life today referencing, for instance, the differences between how rich and poor people live and lived.

45. In **physical education**, pupils participate in a suitable range of activities including fell walking and cycling. They learn to take part in team games with good co-operative spirit, playing competitively but fairly. Pupils' physical skills, such as co-ordination, ball skills, fitness and stamina, are often very low when they first come to the Buzz. Physical education is only taught in alternate half-terms. Plans and discussions indicate, however, that most pupils willingly take part in football, tennis and hockey, as well as indoor ball games. Pupils also enjoy gymnastics and athletics at different times of the year. In the playground at break times, they are active and keen when playing football and other organised games. This contributes very effectively to pupils' social skills as they learn to control their behaviour very well under competitive and challenging circumstances. Good use is made of facilities away from the Buzz, including a sports centre.

46. **Practical activities** alternate with art on a half termly basis but many activities successfully combine elements of both. Photographs show pupils making gingerbread people with staff from a

local bakery. After mixing the ingredients and baking them, pupils have piped icing on to them to create detail. This has been a good link with the community, giving pupils access to facilities not available in the Buzz. In another good link, pupils have worked with visitors from Gorton Monastery to create a carved stone bench for the playground. This has captured the imagination of pupils and photographs show them working with chisels and mallets whilst wearing appropriate protective clothing. Working with textiles, pupils have designed imaginative motifs for T-shirts. In **art**, pupils have produced good work on this term's theme of leaves. This includes good quality collages, leaf prints and mobiles. A visually striking model of a butterfly has been created in work with visiting artists. Pupils' artwork is good but there is not much of it.

47. **The provision for pupils' personal and social education is very good.** Pupils have fresh behaviour targets each week, and these are often referred to during lessons. Pupils are given many good opportunities to show how well they can behave in public, on trips and visits out of the Buzz. Separate lessons are aimed very well at improving pupils' social, moral and personal skills and awareness. Teaching and learning are very good. In most lessons, teachers and learning mentors frequently mention pupils' individual targets to them, or signal to pupils with a gesture or a look to remind them of their target – such as putting a hand up for permission to speak, sitting up straight, controlling their temper, or not leaving the room without permission. As a result, pupils make very good progress in their personal and social skills. A few pupils still have difficulty in staying committed to their targets, and may be restless or quietly defiant in lessons. On such occasions, teachers are generally firm, and the learning mentors give good additional help to the pupils in bringing their behaviour and attitude back to what is expected. In lessons, pupils are helped to develop skills such as avoiding getting angry, and dealing with situations which make them frustrated. In these lessons, staff use well-tried techniques such as “circle time” discussions, and also new ideas such as PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills). Both types of teaching involve everyone sitting in a circle and talking openly about a personal topic that is of particular concern. These are mainly successful in getting pupils to think about what they are doing, and how to manage themselves. During the inspection all the pupils visited a nearby premiership football club. They very much enjoyed the occasion; behaved beautifully; were polite, interested and attentive; and shared good-natured jokes with the staff at the club despite most pupils supporting the city's other main club.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

