

INSPECTION REPORT

POOLE PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

Poole

LEA area: Poole

Unique reference number: 113657

Manager: Trish Copelin

Lead inspector: Mike Smith

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th March 2004

Inspection number: 259123

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

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INFORMATION

Type of school/Service:	Special
School category:	Pupil referral service
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	20
School address:	Learning Support Service Pupil and Parent Support Dolphin Centre Poole Dorset
Postcode:	BH15 1SA
Telephone number:	01202 262266
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer	Vicky Wales
Date of previous inspection:	Not previously inspected

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

The Pupil Referral Service (PRS) which is part of the local education authority's Learning Support Service (LSS) was officially registered in August 2003. There has been no previous Ofsted Inspection. The Service works with excluded students, those at risk of exclusion, and with sick, phobic and vulnerable students who are unable to access school. Provision is for students aged 11-16 years of age and there are 35 places available. Currently there are 20 students on roll, predominately aged 15 and 16 and of white origin and where English is the first language. Six students have a Statement of Special Education Need for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Currently there are no students in the care of the authority.

The PRS has a number of centres across the borough of Poole and staff and students move between some of these:-

1. The Gaff, Hamworthy joint use with the Youth Service
2. Broadstone Youth Centre joint use with the Youth Service
3. Ted Webster Centre joint use with social services
4. Hospital Unit/2 classes
5. Pine Cottage/Adolescent Mental Health Unit
6. Library within Poole Dolphin Centre

The attainment of those students who have been excluded from school or whose attendance has been poor is generally below what would be expected for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15303	Mike Smith	Lead inspector	Mathematics Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) currently offers a satisfactory level of support and has the capacity to improve. Teaching and learning are good. Academic achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good for those students who attend regularly. These students make good progress in their personal and social development and this helps many of them return successfully to school. The leadership of the manager is good, although currently monitoring and evaluation strategies are under developed. However, the local education authority and the service is aware of its weaknesses and a strategy for improvements in monitoring, accommodation and resources is being developed. The service goes a long way to ensure that the Mission Statement has some meaning for those students who attend regularly. "To enable all young people in our care to achieve their potential, academically, socially and personally and to be equipped to become valued and competent members of society". The service is currently giving satisfactory value for money. The service has not been inspected previously.

The main strengths and weaknesses of the PRS are:-

- Links with the community, schools and colleges are good.
- Provision in personal, social and health education is good.
- Provision for students at the hospital and mental health unit is good. Health and education support and work well together.
- The care, welfare, health and safety of students are good.
- The management committee clearly understands the strengths and weaknesses.
- Curriculum development and co-ordination is underdeveloped.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory overall.
- There is insufficient planning and delivery of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across other subjects. Students' achievement in information technology is unsatisfactory.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- The movement between sites mean that valuable student and staff time is wasted.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Students' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9 (only 1 student)	satisfactory	good
Year 11	satisfactory	good
Hospital & Mental Health Unit	satisfactory	good

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, design technology, good in personal, social and health education and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology. Those students who attend woodwork sessions achieve well. Students who have additional learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. The overall achievement of students is considerably effected by their levels of attendance. Those students whose attendance is poor cannot possibly achieve well.

Students' make good progress in improving their personal qualities, including their moral and social development. Students' attendance is unsatisfactory. Although every effort is made to encourage good attendance and punctuality, the timetabled movements between different centres does not help. Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. Many develop positive attitudes and show improvement in their behaviour and co-operate well with staff. Staff and most

students form trusting relationships and this is particularly evident at the hospital and the mental health unit. Emphasis is placed on getting students to think about their lives and the effects of their actions on others, although their spiritual and cultural awareness is unsatisfactory.

The quality of education provided by the PRS is satisfactory. Although teaching is variable across the service, it is often good and sometimes, it is very good. As a result many attending students learn well and make good progress in lessons. Accommodation within the Youth Centres is not totally conducive to an effective learning environment and teachers have to transport their teaching resources from base to base. Students with learning difficulties receive effective adult support and make satisfactory progress. Assessment is underdeveloped and does not effectively guide curriculum or lesson planning.

The curriculum is just satisfactory. There is an appropriate focus on English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education, although information and communication technology is not sufficiently developed. Many teachers make lessons interesting, manage their lessons well and work particularly effectively when teaching individual students. Planning to ensure skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are supported through other subjects is undeveloped. There are not enough resources for teaching and learning in some curriculum areas. The care and welfare of students are good. Students' independence is encouraged and adults show a good awareness of students' problems and achievements and give clear guidance. Every effort is made to retain close, regular contact with parents and strong links have been formed with many.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the manager is good and she has a strong commitment to the development and improvement of the service. Senior teachers and curriculum co-ordinators are developing their role and effectively contribute to the smooth running of the day, although aspects of curriculum development, monitoring and evaluating are unsatisfactory. The management committee consists of a wide range of multi-agency representatives and clearly demonstrates its intentions to be fully involved in the strategic development and monitoring of the service.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS

Parents welcome the help that they and their children receive. They feel that it is helping their children to make progress with their work and they appreciate the contact they have with staff. The low attendance rate of some students indicates that some parents are not meeting their statutory responsibility of ensuring their children attend. Most students share a belief that the PRS is effectively helping them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

It is important that other areas for improvement contained within the main text of the report are also considered for the Action plan.

The main areas for improvement are:-

- Ensure that the role of the senior management team and curriculum co-ordinators is fully developed and that the cross curriculum coverage for literacy, numeracy and information technology is fully planned and delivered
- Improve the attendance and punctuality of those students able to do so.
- Ensure that assessment procedures are fully developed and consistently used to inform curriculum planning and student learning.
- Improve students' achievement in information and communication technology.
- Increase the efficiency of staff and student movement between centres and pursue the plans of establishing a quality teaching base with all urgency.

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 gaps in students' learning. However, overall, students' achievements are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students whose attendance is poor cannot possibly achieve well.
- The achievement of some students who regularly attend is good.
- Students who receive one-to-one tuition or attend the hospital/ mental health unit achieve well.
- Achievements in personal, social and health education are good.
- Students' achievements in the arts project are very good.
- Some students continue to experience difficulties with literacy which limits their spoken and written work.

Commentary

1. In relation to their prior achievement those students who attend regularly are achieving well because they have overcome their reluctance to learning and take an interest in activities. A number of students still have difficulties with reading and writing as a result of their early educational experiences. These limit their ability to express themselves fluently in writing or to produce accurate work. The predicted grades for those students who continue their GCSE studies are satisfactory and represent good achievement considering previously missed schooling and other personal barriers to their learning.
2. The achievement of those students attending the hospital unit and mental health unit is good. In the hospital, after an initial assessment, their immediate and individual needs are met with appropriate levels of work. Likewise in the mental health unit individual programmes of work are planned and school work is utilised whenever possible to ensure progress continues.
3. Students' achievements in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory overall. Students are generally taught well, but there is a lack of focus on literacy skills across all subjects which limits the achievements of a number of students. Students successfully express their views to each other, but are less talkative and confident when discussing their work.
4. Students achieve well in art and design and make good progress in using a range of media. Although little artwork is displayed due to the limitations of the different centres, students are justifiably proud of their results. Students' achievement in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory as the subject is not easily accessed due to accommodation and resource difficulties.
5. The achievement of students in their personal and social development is good. Although they can still be argumentative and confrontational, for the most part they have learnt to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to work as a part of a group. They are supported well in this progress through the good relationships they have with staff who show a genuine interest in their well-being. Student achievement in their cultural and spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
6. Attendance is unsatisfactory and severely limits the achievements of irregular attendees. High levels of absence can also affect the achievement of other students because opportunities are not available for them to work in groups or pairs. For example one student who had prepared to present an activity to his class group as part of his ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) studies, had instead to work with two adults because no other students were present.

7. Students' greatest achievements are currently in the arts project where they have shown total commitment, dedication and maturity in creating, scripting, acting and filming a teenage horror story. The high quality work and the very good standards of behaviour, together with almost perfect attendance, illustrate what these students can achieve when they are highly motivated.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

8. While students' attendance is **unsatisfactory**, the service does all it can to encourage and improve better attendance. Student behaviour is **satisfactory**. Many students develop positive attitudes and show an improvement in their behaviour.

- The service promotes good relationships including racial harmony.
- The service stimulates in students a desire to learn and improve their personal confidence.
- The service works hard to enable students to distinguish right from wrong and their moral and social development is satisfactory.
- Students' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
- The service has good strategies for promoting good attendance, although contributing circumstances are not always under their control and many students fail to attend or arrive late.
- There have been only five fixed term exclusions and no permanent exclusions over the past year.

Commentary

9. Students' attitudes, values and behaviour are variable across the various PRS aspects. Those students that attend regularly mostly enjoy coming and appreciate the learning opportunity that has been given to them. However, although it varies between the different centres and depends on students' needs, overall attendance is unsatisfactory.

10. Students with medical needs have the highest attendance, but these are still below expected levels due to the nature of their illnesses and the number of necessary authorised absences. Records show, however, that some individual students who have had a record of non-attendance have made significant improvement since the start of the academic year; a few achieving good attendance figures of around 90%. This is due, in part, to good and improving procedures for following up unexplained absences more quickly and for tracking students' individual attendance patterns more carefully.

11. Students' punctuality is unsatisfactory and is affected by the need to move between centres during the day. This means that they are often late at the start of sessions. Some students are selective about which sessions they attend, based simply on the ease of access to the centre. It has to be remembered that many of the students arrive with evidence of chronic non-attendance problems and/or school phobia. However, many parents or carers do not meet their statutory obligation to ensure their children attend school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	12.6	School data	23.9
National data	N/A	National data	N/A

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year. These figures do not include attendance figures for those youngsters attending the hospital or the mental health unit.

12. There is no evidence of bullying, racism or other forms of harassment. All adults are aware that students may, on occasion, because of their personal difficulties, act inappropriately towards others or make unacceptable remarks. Staff manage these circumstances well. Students report that they are confident they can approach staff if they have any concerns.

13. Relationships between students and staff are generally good. Incidents of disruptive behaviour and some students showing little interest in their work, inevitably places relationships under strain. At its best the very good relationships allows incidents to be calmed down quickly and teaching and learning to resume.

14. When the students receive good teaching they are usually motivated and are fully involved in their lessons. Many have low self-esteem but, nevertheless, in the best lessons they are willing to display and discuss their work. The overall behaviour of the students is satisfactory and many staff make great efforts to promote responsibility, respect and an understanding of right from wrong.

15. Student behaviour and staff management of student behaviour varies across the different aspects of the PRS. Some staff do not consistently challenge the inappropriate behaviour of students enough. Exceptions to this is the respect and regard seen at the hospital unit, the mental health unit and in individual sessions in the library where teachers do their best to ensure that students maintain their links with mainstream education including gaining accreditation.

16. Students know right from wrong and they are learning to co-operate and consider the consequences of their actions. Students' cultural and spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their sense of spirituality or to appreciate their own or others cultural traditions. Every effort is made to meet the emotional needs of the students and exclusions are only used as a last resort.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	20	5	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

17. The quality of education is satisfactory. The PRS is successful in its main task of helping to keep students in education. Teaching and learning are good overall. Recording and assessment procedures are not fully developed and do not adequately inform curriculum planning or students' learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, except for weaknesses in ICT and cultural and spiritual development. There are satisfactory links with parents. The good levels of care, together with satisfactory support and guidance, help many students to overcome the barriers which might otherwise exclude them from learning. The quality of education provided at the hospital and at the mental health unit is good.

Teaching and learning

18. Overall teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment is variable, but **unsatisfactory** overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much of the teaching is good or better, although there are variations.
- Teaching and learning at the hospital and mental health unit is good.
- Many of the students enjoy learning and achieve well in lessons.
- Assessment is underdeveloped at many levels and is inconsistently used.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9	9	6	0	0	0

19. Teaching is generally good and lessons are generally interesting and motivating for students. In the most successful lessons students are challenged to take an active part in work which is new and relevant to their lives. For example the seven pupils who took part in filming for their arts project were enthralled by the opportunity to express their opinions and act in their own production. Teamwork between the staff and students was very good and the students showed no signs of confrontation or animosity to each other.

20. Good lessons had lively deliveries and a range of methods were used to engage students' interest and participation. There is ample evidence that the very best teaching reaps the very best rewards from students in terms of concentration, focus and an enthusiastic desire to learn more. Where teaching assistants or youth workers were present they made a good contribution to the effectiveness of teaching and the successes in students' learning by ensuring tasks were clearly understood.

21. Teaching and learning in the hospital is good. Appropriate work is taught after an initial assessment and there is a good range of resources to support individual progress in an area of learning. If the student stays for more than 3 days the school is contacted and the student's work is discussed and planned. Likewise in the mental health unit individual programmes of work are planned and school work is utilised whenever possible.

22. Subject programmes for teachers to plan from are not yet fully in place and student progress is not systematically recorded over a period of time. For those students who attend regularly their progress is steered by the requirements of national accreditation and teachers focus and plan for success in examinations. Occasionally, lesson content is based on unplanned activities such as word or number games which do not include sufficient rigour to effectively support their learning and ensure their progress. Teaching at the hospital and at the mental health unit is very focused on the immediate and specific needs of the young people. At the hospital, after an initial assessment of ability, appropriate work is provided and taught well. Learning is effectively supported by the volunteer assistants, who are often retired teachers. At the mental health unit education provision and good teaching supports and complements the young persons' health plan.

23. Assessment is unsatisfactory and teachers are unable to provide clear evidence of students' improvement over time. Targets in the students' individual educational plans are often vague and written in terms of doing 'more' or 'better' so that neither teacher nor student is clear about precisely what they should be aiming to achieve or how to achieve. Where assessment is built into lesson content, such as in ASDAN courses, students are able to identify precisely what they have learnt. In some lessons teachers do not always emphasise, or recap, what students have learned so that their awareness of their achievements is limited.

The curriculum

24. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enriching the curriculum are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is generally relevant to student needs
- There are well managed opportunities to support personal development and the provision for PSHCE is good.
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, or employment.
- There is no overall planning, overview and monitoring of the curriculum.
- There is a lack of planning for numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- There is a range of quality activities which enriches the curriculum.
- There is a lack of specialist accommodation.

Commentary

25. The service has had a short time to deliver the widest possible curriculum, but has made good progress in developing a range of subjects to meet the very individual needs of students.

26. Teachers are beginning to plan a series of experiences that cater for the interests and aptitudes of the students. This ensures that they do not fall behind in their work and are able to complete examination courses begun in mainstream schools. It also means that students have opportunities to make progress in practical subjects such as art and design technology.

27. Curriculum planning in Years 10 and 11 is being designed to ensure that all students receive similar experiences, have opportunities to continue studying their accredited courses and also, to meet students' individual needs. As a result, achievement in most subjects is satisfactory. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted well enough in other subjects which means important skills are not appropriately reinforced. In addition, problems with the set up of computers across the different centres have contributed to the lack of use made of them to support learning in other subjects.

28. Students in Years 10 and 11 benefit from a range of learning opportunities, which enables them to achieve various levels of accreditation for their work. Although, overall, service developments are at a very early stage of development, the curriculum is currently sufficient to allow access to GCSE in mathematics, English and science as well as at entry level and courses in ASDAN. The use of ASDAN is being well organised to develop some early work in a range of subjects.

29. Personal, social and health education provides students with good experiences to enable them to increase their awareness of this very important part of their education. Programmes include drugs and substance abuse awareness and sex education. The service provides opportunities for students to prepare for leaving, through good work experience opportunities locally. Preparation for students' next stage of education is good and an appropriate careers and vocational programme is in place. Students study work-related activities, undertake work experience and gain accreditations in school which will be of use to them in the future.

30. The organisation of off-site activities is good. Students gain many skills in outdoor pursuits, team building projects and personal development activities. Involvement in art projects and anger management programmes all add relevance and depth to the curriculum on offer.

31. Staff provide many opportunities for learning by the effective links with the local libraries where students are able to work individually or in small groups. These activities help to reinforce learning in a range of subjects, for example, in science and food technology. Homework is included in lesson planning and some students chose to complete their work in the library after lessons and in their break time.

32. The service has not yet ensured that teachers include opportunities for students to enhance their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects of the curriculum. Opportunities are often lost

to reinforce the spellings, meaning, or use of words to ensure that students enhance their language and see specific subject vocabulary written down, for example terms such as 'decimal' fraction' 'multiplication' in mathematics. The lack of use of computers as aids to learning is in part, due to restrictions of the accommodation and resources, but also because ICT is not planned across the curriculum. The omission of these elements in lessons limits to an extent the students' preparation for the next stages of their lives

33. There is no coherent co-ordination of the curriculum and subject co-ordinators have yet to ensure that planning enables clear progression in students' learning. All subject programmes are not in place and this makes tracking of students' learning difficult. In addition, there are gaps in design technology, for instance, that arise through a lack of specialist teachers, accommodation and resources. The balance is a weakness, but it is made reasonable by the relevance of the rest of the subjects available. Staff are hampered by a lack of resources, but many have clear ideas about the way forward.

34. The absence of specialist rooms for science means that students need to have completed practical work before joining the service. A lack of appropriate storage space and display areas for art work also inhibits viewing progression in the subject and does not allow students the pleasure of seeing their work displayed for others to see. The storage of resources is a major issue. For example, in food technology, staff are obliged to carry utensils in their cars between centres. During lunchtimes, youth centre and mainstream school activities mean that the centres cannot be utilised by PRS students at these times and inhibits the continuity of their provision and is very inconvenient for both staff and students.

Care, guidance and support

35. Provision for students' care, welfare, health and safety across all aspects of the service is **good**. Students are provided with **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The service cares well for the different needs of all its students.
- There are good links with outside agencies, carers and health professionals.
- Communication with parents about the care of their children is good.
- Good relationships between adults and students mean that students have confidence to air their views.
- Health, safety and welfare procedures are satisfactory, although more needs to be done to ensure consistent practice across the service; they are good at the hospital and mental health unit.

Commentary

36. The service cares well for all its students. Although many policies have yet to be formalised, staff have a very good awareness of the different needs and difficulties experienced by the students. Links with a wide range of outside agencies and health care professionals who work with the students and their carers are good. There is good understanding of child protection procedures and those associated with students in public care. All adults involved in students' welfare work effectively together as multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that students' needs are being met. For example, work with students on anger management by the educational psychologist and staff helps students to improve their behaviour and minimise the risk of further exclusion.

37. Through the key worker, communication with parents and carers is good. As a result, parents feel that their children are treated well and that it is easy to approach staff if they have any concerns about their well-being. Most students have good relationships with staff which gives them confidence to speak to them about their difficulties and to air their views. The role of the key worker

is being appropriately developed so that students have greater access to pastoral and academic tutoring.

38. The service is very sensitive to the individual needs of all its students and staff work hard to ensure that they are fully met. All students have individual targets in appropriate areas of development that help support their overall achievement. Students are well supported and prepared for the future whether it is in further education or employment. The service provides relevant guidance to help them make informed decisions on their future.

39. The management of the service's procedures for health and safety is difficult because of the diverse nature and ownership of the different centres. The overall health and safety policy is in draft and does not yet fully reflect the different working practices of each centre or the different needs of the students across the service. Staff ensure that students' health and safety is well provided for on a daily basis. There are good induction procedures which assess any potential risks, including those associated with students' challenging behaviour. Senior managers are aware of the risks associated with students moving between centres during the day and continue to seek ways to minimise these difficulties.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

40. Links between the school and parents are **satisfactory**. The links with other schools and the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools and colleges are good.
- Links with other support services are good and enrich opportunities for students to prepare for leaving.
- The specialist provision at the hospital and the mental health unit is good.

Commentary

41. Recent feedback from parents indicates that they are happy with the service overall. Staff are aware of the need to maintain contact and to share information readily, although as yet, they have not established a consistent pattern across all of the service.

42. Good links are in place with other schools and colleges. The service provides good advice and support to schools to help them keep students from exclusion if at all possible. They provide support on anger management, self-esteem and social skills. The service works with its own students to build the skills needed for them to return to school whenever possible.

43. Students' successes and plans for further improvement are considerably improved through input from educational psychologists. Other support is extremely valuable and effective. The Youth Service co-operation over the joint use accommodation is valued. The expertise and positive encouragement from child and mental health service (CAMHS) staff enables service staff to establish skills in meeting the needs of their students.

44. Students are encouraged to develop their independence skills and travel by public transport between sites. Although the education department is committed to providing a 'joined up partnership', particularly with the Youth Service, it is aware of the difficulties joint provision presents. There are plans to rationalise the education accommodation to ensure there will be less travel for staff and students and to establish a feeling of real ownership. The input from the Connexions team is also highly valued by both staff and students and learning mentors ensure that students maximise opportunities presented to them. Health and education staff work very well together to provide good support to students who have to attend the hospital and mental health unit.

45. Links with work experience placements are good. These include work in a large plumbing supply company, various hotels and chain restaurants. The service and students feel that these links are valuable in enhancing the students' education, preparing them for life after leaving the service, especially in personal and social skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

46. Leadership is **satisfactory** as are management and governance overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the manager is good and she has a clear vision for improvement.
- There is effective, overall co-ordination of the contributing services such as health and social services.
- The management committee takes an active role in strategic management.
- The day to day management at the hospital and mental health unit is good.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is not fully developed.
- There is little self-evaluation and analysis of data in bringing about improvement.
- Resources are not clearly linked to service development.

Commentary

47. The manager has a strong commitment to the development and improvement of the PRS. The PRS is at an early stage of development and there is still a number of vital issues that require development to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the service improves. The manager, together with senior officers is aware of the necessary improvements that need to be made and particularly looks to improve the efficiency of the service and the effectiveness of the curriculum. The manager and the senior teachers have been successful in establishing an ethos of learning across the service and, as a result, a common sense of purpose is developing with all staff and morale is generally high. Staff feel increasingly confident because of the support, leadership and development plans for the service as conveyed by the manager and the senior officers within the LEA.

48. The manager manages the various contributory aspects of the PRS well to ensure they support and complement each other to meet the differing needs of students. In the hospital and mental health unit, this has resulted in education and health staff working and supporting each other well to the benefit of the students. The attached educational psychologist for the service is fully involved in helping staff and supporting students to improve their achievement and personal confidence.

49. The manager fully recognises where improvement is needed, such as developing the curriculum and the role of the subject leaders, to ensure its effective and consistent co-ordination. Performance management is established for all staff, but has yet to fully impact on the development and improvement of the service and student achievement. There is a service action plan that has been developed in response to a previous LEA review that already includes many of the development areas mentioned in this report.

50. The manager has good working links with secondary headteachers in developing and managing the service to effectively deal with excluded students and their return to school whenever possible, or to support those students who are at risk of exclusion.

51. The LEA, in its role as the appropriate authority provides strategic support for the management of the PRS and initially ensured that the PRS was adequately funded to fulfil its various functions. A review of finances is now necessary to ensure that the new PRS improvement plan, building on the current action plan, can be fully and successfully resourced.

52. The day-to-day administration, management and routines at the different sites are carried out effectively and ensure that student learning can take place.

53. The manager regularly reports to the management committee as to what has been happening in the PRS, and there are occasional visits by some members of the committee. Although the management committee is relatively new, it comprises of an impressive mix of multi-agency representatives and is effectively and efficiently chaired. They have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the PRS and are fully involved in the strategic development of the service as well as being confident to challenge suggested proposals. They have their own action plan to support service improvements and intend to form smaller sub-groups to look at particular areas of development.

54. Financial arrangements to support service developments and curriculum improvements are not clearly linked and are unsatisfactory. This will need to be rectified to ensure the future success of the subsequent action plan for improvements.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH

55. The provision for English is **satisfactory** overall, but has significant areas for development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and students are good and teaching assistants support learning well.
- Teachers are consistent in their expectations that students will work during lessons.
- There is too little emphasis on literacy across the curriculum
- There is too little challenge in some lessons.
- Assessment procedures are emerging gradually, but self-assessment is not yet in place.

Commentary

56. Standards for the majority of students are below national expectations. Many students have previously missed considerable amounts of schooling and they are in a situation of 'catch-up'. However, the achievement of those students who attend is satisfactory overall and for some, particularly those who receive individual tuition, it is often good. One year 11 student who had previously missed a great deal of schooling demonstrated his understanding and appreciation of the differences between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers and could review, analyse and comment on the features of the text. A younger student attending the mental health unit worked at an appropriate level for his age in terms of his writing, spelling, speaking and listening and demonstrated his understanding of homophones.

57. A number of year 10 and 11 students who had previous difficulties with their literacy skills are still often reluctant to read in their own time or produce appropriate amounts of written work. However, due to the small groups and the opportunities for individual tuition, appropriate encouragement and support is given to students to improve their skills.

58. Teaching is satisfactory overall and teachers have sufficient knowledge of the subject to deliver relevant tasks leading to be GCSE in Year 11. Teachers are consistent in their efforts to keep students working hard and will use their good relationships with them to encourage them to return to work if they have given up through lack of confidence or energy. In some lessons, however, this strategy results in a lack of challenge when a simpler task, for example a word or card game, is substituted to mollify the student. The teachers' planning is occasionally compromised by a lack of attendance so, for example, group work cannot take place. Where students attend regularly, however, their application to work and their productivity is better, although the presentation of their work is only just satisfactory.

59. Other subject planning shows there is insufficient focus on literacy across the curriculum. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, although the co-ordinator has relevant plans to systematically identify students' progress.

60. The work of the teaching assistants is a strength. In a vocational studies lesson (ASDAN) with a significant emphasis on English, a regularly attending student responded well to the guidance of a teaching assistant to instruct two other adults (there being no other students present) on how to construct an animal's head in origami. Where assessment is built into the structure of such a curriculum, staff and students are able to identify progress. For example, in the latter lesson the student demonstrated core skills, speaking and listening to others, following and giving instructions and working as a member of the team. His achievements were instantly recorded in his portfolio, which formed an instant acknowledgement of his achievements and boosted his self-esteem.

Literacy across the curriculum

61. There is not currently a consistent strategy to ensure students' literacy skills are reinforced throughout the curriculum. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for them to practice and develop these skills. This lack of planned practical application of literacy is not enabling individuals to appreciate the relevance and importance of literacy skills in everyday life and is currently unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

62. The provision for mathematics is just **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have the opportunity to continue with accredited courses and those who attend regularly, achieve well, some very well.
- There is some good teaching with individual students.
- The subject is not effectively planned for, or co-ordinated across the different centres.
- Numeracy skills are not promoted well enough through other subjects of the curriculum.
- The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped.

Commentary

63. Overall achievement, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Occasionally it is good. Teaching reflects an appropriately adapted key stage 3 strategy and care is taken to provide work for individual students, which matches their age and ability. Teachers are aware of what students find difficult and do what they can to make learning enjoyable.

64. Students in Years 11 achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Although the standard of their work is lower than expected for their age, students who attend regularly try hard to do their best. A number of students have aspirations to return to school and they are keen to do the same work as others of their age and some are achieving well. Some teachers are effective in ensuring students have a secure knowledge and understanding of what they have already learned before introducing more challenging work. Commercial course material provides the framework for what students learn next. Students have good relationships with their teachers and respect the comments they make about the quality of their work. As a result, any suggestions for improvement are willingly received. The use of assessment to inform planning and student learning is unsatisfactory. While the teaching of individual students and ongoing assessment of student understanding is generally good, the subject lacks overall co-ordination and planning to ensure consistency of delivery and student achievement.

65. The predicted grades at GCSE for a number of students are good and some should gain creditable results. This represents for them, very good progress and achievement after often prolonged absences from school and when taking into account the barriers some students have had to negotiate in relation to their learning.

66. The role of the subject co-ordinators is only just developing and a draft curriculum statement of intent is very broad and generic, but does emphasise curriculum applications and practical work. This has not yet had an impact on planning or delivery. The co-ordinators understand the need to overcome any communication difficulties arising from delivering the subject across a number of different sites. There is a vital need to quickly improve the opportunities for all year groups to apply mathematics to practical problem solving and life style situations and improve the quality and quantity of learning resources. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is a further essential target with a focus on ensuring additional adults are suitably deployed to support learning as well as behaviour.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Students have sufficient mathematical skills which could be used in other subjects. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to practice and develop these skills. This lack of planned practical application of numeracy is not currently enabling individuals to appreciate the relevance and importance of mathematics in everyday life.

SCIENCE

68. The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The appointment of a subject leader has focused the planning and improved teaching.
- Students can continue following GCSE courses.
- The quality of accommodation and resources inhibits full access to the curriculum.
- There are missed opportunities to develop numeracy, literacy and ICT skills in lesson plans.

Commentary

69. Achievement is satisfactory in science and students have opportunities to follow courses appropriate to their ability. Teachers plan well to meet students' needs, and despite the constraints arising from accommodation and resources, those students who attend regularly can achieve appropriately.

70. Most teaching is in small groups which helps students and staff to build relationships that were not possible in their previous schools. It was only possible to observe two sessions of science during the inspection; these both took place in the library. Students studying GCSE concentrate well, clearly understanding the properties of aluminium and able to consider the implications of burning and pollution. Students operate in a positive environment and teachers manage to work at a good pace. The relationships between staff and students are very good and expectations are high. Homework is set and completed by students and marking clearly shows how to improve.

71. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Students show interest in the subject and are committed to completing their courses. The procedures for determining how well students are doing are not clear, they do not provide information on what has been achieved and how students work will be planned.

72. The subject has a co-ordinator who is very clear about the development of the subject. The very new policy is a statement of intent. The team approach is being carefully planned. Students have three avenues to follow, depending on the amount of coursework they have done. A new curriculum direction to provide science for life skills and ASDAN is a positive one. These are quite early days for the development of the subject, but the co-ordinator is determined that students should have every opportunity to do well in accredited courses. Planning is new, but opportunities are missed in linking other subjects to lesson plans. Notice is taken over health and safety issues. The subject development is emerging.

73. There is no specialist provision for the subject within the service. When practical work of a specialised nature has to be completed arrangements are made with local schools for appropriate attendance and support. A number of schools appreciate the problem and are willing to co-operate.

74. At present, there are very few opportunities to use information and communication technology to support students' learning, as the current availability of computers is limited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

75. The provision for and use made, of information and communication technology other than in the hospital and mental health units is **unsatisfactory** overall. In the hospital and mental health units it is **satisfactory**.

76. During the inspection there was no use of computers seen to help promote learning other than in the hospital and mental health units where the use of computers was clearly demonstrated. There were no opportunities to observe students using word processing skills or data handling. Teachers' planning does not routinely identify how the information communication technology activities form part of learning in other subjects. One notable exception is the arts project where students clearly improved their understanding of video filming, editing and presentation.

77. Although the service has plans for increasing and improving provision for ICT, accommodation, storage and security problems inhibit their implementation. There is limited opportunity for students to access the computers in the central library, but the insufficiency of ICT provision overall limits the way staff can prepare students for the next stage of their lives whether in work or for further study at college.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

78. The provision for PSHCE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The importance and emphasis on personal and social education is very well appreciated by staff and students.
- The accreditation programmes are improving.
- The vision of the co-ordinator is good.
- There are currently no opportunities for monitoring and evaluating the consistency of teaching.

Commentary

79. The service clearly appreciates the importance of PSHCE for all its students. They recognise it is an especially important area for vulnerable students about to leave school. Students' achievement is good overall. Students increasingly become aware of the need to develop their interpersonal skills and many can take an active part in responsible discussions. For example, a student discussed with a teacher the personal development difficulties connected with drug addiction.

80. In Year 11, students discuss healthy lifestyles and use their own experiences to help their understanding of fitness, and of their duty to look after themselves. Year 11 students work towards personal targets and independent living skills. Students in Years 9 and 10, consider confidence, interpersonal skills and anger management. In citizenship activities, students become aware of their responsibilities toward the Youth Parliament. The planned courses support students' personal and social development well. Students respond positively to issues that arise and teachers take opportunities to explore these.

81. Teaching is consistently good and occasionally it is very good. Knowledge and understanding of many problem areas for students is increased through the very effective use of support staff. A good range of lessons was observed, on different sites, with different age groups and needs. In Year 9 for example, a teachers' relaxed style, emphatic, confident approach enabled one student to successfully test out her own interpersonal skills. A Year 10 student from a local school, who attends for individual support lessons in anger management, was able to clearly identify her own symptoms of anger. In Year 11, a student became increasingly aware of health issues as he was guided through a survey of his eating habits.

82. The citizenship elements are to be managed by a member of Youth Service, once again, demonstrating a good partnership. Students record their successes in Records of Achievement, in ASDAN programmes and in PSHCE courses. This progress is not very clearly recorded yet and the co-ordinator is planning to raise staff awareness of the importance of the subject for every student. The assessment of achievement, against clear targets, has not yet been addressed sufficiently by the whole service. Planning to include it in every development is a good suggestion.

83. Planned resources are necessary to develop the subject further. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory and while the co-ordinator has clear views for development, currently there is no opportunity to observe direct teaching, or for identifying and sharing good practice.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

84. *Several other subjects were sampled during the inspection and samples of students' past work, photographs and records were looked at. Inspectors asked students about what they had learned.*

Design and Technology

85. Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The appointment of an experienced instructor has widened opportunities for students in woodwork.
- The teaching is good.
- Student attitudes to the subject overall are good; they work safely and with confidence.
- Resources in woodwork are satisfactory, but unsatisfactory overall.
- Staff have to carry too utensils in cars to teach food technology in the different sites.

Commentary

86. Students enjoy their work in woodwork and in food technology and they achieve well in lessons. They produce good evidence of their earlier work by completing records for ASDAN and portfolios with very good photographic evidence. While the opportunities to observe lessons were limited, students engaged in practical cookery, preparing apple crumble and designing and planning next weeks' work.

87. In design technology, students design carefully, they can describe, draw and build a variety of furniture and storage for their own use. Students achieve well because they have skilled instruction in both aspects of the subject observed during the inspection. Tutors use their expertise to raise the expectations and abilities of individuals. They encourage students to try a range of cooking techniques in food technology. In woodwork, students develop skills in using a range of materials, including plastic and wood. They also join pieces of timber using tools safely and efficiently.

88. Students grow in confidence and are pleased with their work. They understand that they must follow instructions and are fully aware of the importance of hygienic practices in the kitchen. Teachers are skilled in small group and individual work and students clearly respond well to praise and encouragement. There were no incidents in kitchen or workshop. The safety elements surrounding the arrangements call for careful planning and good management of the class. When these essentials are in place, students work extremely safely and confidently.

89. Teaching is good overall. The food technology plans follow an accredited course and the teachers adapt these well to meet the abilities of students. Students become increasingly skilled, careful and interested, as a result of the skills of teachers. Lessons are well prepared and staff work

very hard to give individual attention when working with a group. Students have learned about the safety aspects and sign agreements about behaviour in lessons.

90. Facilities are unsatisfactory. The kitchens are small and not designed for the needs of these students. Students do look after resources, but most utensils are supplied and transported around by staff. Woodwork fares little better, tools belong to the instructor, and he looks after the storage as part of his duties in the youth club. Tools are well looked after, but there are no areas to display work. The workbench is sufficient for one student only and turns have to be taken.

91. Written work and assessment of progress are weaknesses. There are skill checklists, but these are not very specific. The service has not developed an adequate system for recording and analysing progress. The subject is well managed, despite the difficulties. The use of computers to assist learning is undeveloped.

Art and design and physical education

92. Although teachers do their best to provide a relevant range of activities in **art**, the limitations imposed by the accommodation make the provision **unsatisfactory** overall. Due to the shared nature of the teaching rooms, students are very rarely able to display their work. Opportunities are therefore lost for students to discuss their work with others or to enjoy seeing their efforts on show.

93. There is a limited range of media in use and resources are limited. However, the teacher is also a practising artist and is able to motivate students with his knowledge and enthusiasm. Very little work was available for inspection and no direct teaching seen. The curriculum is not yet linked to national curriculum requirements, but the co-ordinator offers good advice to students on how to improve their knowledge and skills, for example, through the use of tones and shades.

94. It was not possible during the inspection to see **physical education** taught. However, students do have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities at the local Outdoor Education Centre, including abseiling, indoor wall climbing, canoeing and a certificated course in power-boating. Students talk enthusiastically about their participation and there is an extensive range of photographic evidence demonstrating their progress and enjoyment. Students also have the opportunity to take part in a 12 week project that combines outdoor activities with team building exercises that are aimed at increasing personal confidence and self-esteem. Activities include raft building, dry slope skiing, ice skating, quad biking, swimming and hot air ballooning. Overall sporting activities offered to students are exciting, varied and fully support their personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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