

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST CUMBRIA LEARNING CENTRE

Distington, Workington

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112096

Headteacher: Julie Bethwaite

Lead inspector: Hilary Gannaway

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th July 2004

Inspection number: 261162

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of unit:	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	7 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	61

Unit address:	Toll Bar Distington Workington Cumbria
Postcode:	CA14 4PJ

Telephone number:	01946 834848
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Responsible Officer:	Stuart Goodall

Date of previous inspection:	8 th February 1999
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

The centre caters for up to 44 full time pupils but has 61 on roll because 30 are dual registered and spend part of their time in school. Of the 31 on the centre's full time roll, 12 spend part or all of their time at other establishments such as college. All pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and have either been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion. Pupils in the latter category are dual registered. Pupils have more complex needs than at the last inspection for example, more have mental health problems and a significant number are on medication. Nineteen have Statements of Special Educational Needs. All pupils are of white British heritage. Most pupils attending the centre, of whom only five are girls, have attainment below, and well below, the national average due to the nature of their needs and interrupted and fragmented schooling.

The centre received a schools achievement award in 2000. Significant partners include the Connexions Princes Trust XL Club, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Mobility Experience Exchange, which covers community activities and Cumbria Outdoors which specialises in outdoor activities.

Provision covers a wide area of Cumbria and some pupils may have to travel up to 40 miles. The centre is part of the local education authority continuum of provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Cumbria has no emotional and behavioural difficulty special schools as it is fully committed to inclusion. The headteacher is due to retire at the end of this term and a new headteacher has been appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21527	Hilary Gannaway	Lead inspector	Science History Geography
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector	
22178	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical Education Special Educational Needs
22391	Nicholas Smith	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Citizenship Design and Technology Religious education Personal, social and health education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIT	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4	
OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective centre. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and is supported by a highly committed staff. Pupils achieve well and sometimes very well, due to good teaching by experienced teachers and very good staff relationships. The personal development of pupils is very good and along with very high quality school and college links equips them successfully for the next stage in their lives. The centre provides very good value for money.

The centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is very well regarded and has ensured the centre has continued to be very effective in response to change.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good due to the high levels of care, provision for personal development and very effective relationships.
- Teaching is very successfully supported by close teamwork with teaching assistants and this means that individual needs are effectively met.
- The centre's links, including outreach, are very good and effectively support pupils' return to school.
- The curriculum, and the many vocational and other activities off site which supplement it, are very good and considerably aid learning.
- Some aspects of assessment and recording, including the use of individual education plans, are underdeveloped
- The centre improvement plan is not as specific and measurable as it could be.

Improvement since the last inspection when there were no key issues is good. Personal development is now very good. The curriculum has been very successfully extended to meet the needs of pupils who are full time and part time. The range of activities available both inside the centre and in other establishments means that work can be tailored to pupils' individual needs. Links with the community and other schools have improved and are very good. However, improvement in assessment and English has been slower.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Pupils' achievement at the end of:		
Year 6	Good	Very good
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. It is very good for pupils with additional special needs. It is very good in personal, social and health education because there is a range of activities provided throughout the day to reinforce important skills. In science and environmental studies, it is very good due to relevant practical activities and highly specialist teaching. It is good in mathematics where achievement is well supported by aspects of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and in information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement in all aspects of English is good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 where there is a priority on basic literacy skills. Achievement in speaking and listening is good for pupils in Years 7 to 11 as many opportunities are given for discussion. However, achievement is satisfactory overall in English for pupils in Years 7 to 11. This is because assessment is not used

well enough to track small steps of progress and there is no specific English accreditation for older, higher attaining pupils. High quality teaching in design and technology, including food studies, has led to very good achievement in this subject. Pupils achieve very well in vocational and work related activities due to high levels of support and work matched to their needs as young adults.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well developed. The very positive ethos in the centre is reflected in the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils. They enjoy coming to the centre, work together co-operatively and get on well with adults. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the centre is very good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers manage pupils very effectively so that they concentrate well on their learning. All staff plan and work very well together so that pupils' needs are met. The excellent accommodation very effectively supports learning. Pupils' learning is also extended very well by the varied range of high quality activities provided within the centre and elsewhere. Formal assessment is not always consistent enough to support planning and some pupil targets are not focused enough to accurately gauge outcomes. Pupils are cared for very well and staff take their views into account. Close working arrangements with other establishments mean that pupils are very well supported when returning to mainstream schools. Good contacts with parents help to raise achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the centre are good. Statutory requirements are met and the management committee and the local education authority have a good overview of provision. The headteacher's very effective leadership has continued to ensure improvements and positive changes. There has been good support from other staff with major responsibilities. Management of the centre is good with routines being understood and consistently used.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

Parents are very supportive of the work of the centre because they feel it supports their children well in times of difficulty. They are confident their children are well prepared for the next step in their education. Pupils generally feel that staff value them and do their best to be supportive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that what pupils know, understand and can do is consistently assessed and recorded and always used to support planning.
- Ensure all individual pupil targets are specific so that improvement can be accurately measured against them.
- Ensure that the targets in the centre improvement plan are measurable and costed.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below, and for younger pupils often well below, average due to pupils having gaps in their learning. Nevertheless, for all pupils, including the few girls, achievement is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in science and good in mathematics and ICT because pupils are taught by teachers with very effective specialist subject knowledge.
- While achievement is good in English for pupils in Years 3 to 6 it is not as good for all other pupils.
- The high level of support for pupils helps them to achieve very well during vocational activities and when in college.
- Achievement is very good in personal, social and health education because teachers use a varied range of tasks relevant to their age and needs.
- Pupils with additional special needs such as learning difficulties progress very well.

Commentary

1. Overall there has been improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. This is because once they enter the centre the clear routines ensure they settle down quickly, improve their behaviour and attitudes and begin to make progress. This is aided by improved attendance and very effective care and behaviour management. In science, mathematics and ICT, teacher's confident understanding of the subjects further supports academic achievement. In science and environmental studies this ensures pupils are taught through a very wide range of practical activities matched to their age and needs; this they enjoy. They show enthusiasm, concentrate well and produce good quantities of written work which includes accurate diagrams and charts showing the results of investigations. Consistent use of a key vocabulary effectively reinforces their understanding. All areas of mathematics are effectively taught so on return to school pupils have the skills to continue achieving well. They make gains in deciphering graphs, and carrying out investigations such as those on patterns and generally use the computer effectively for entering data. In both mathematics and science pupils in Year 11 achieve well in Entry Level accreditation with the few higher attaining pupils achieving success in GCSE mathematics.

2. The centre has high expectations that pupils will work hard and gain a good range of skills in ICT. Pupils' achievement is supported, as in mathematics, by effective use across the curriculum. The good understanding of ICT means pupils use web cams, spreadsheets, data bases and do research using the internet. In all these subjects, good knowledge of the national strategies by staff ensures activities are practical, challenging and pupils make effective progress.

3. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good gains in English because their basic literacy skills needs are carefully assessed. Work is then effectively matched to this and reinforced through other areas of the curriculum so they have many chances to progress. For older pupils, achievement in speaking and listening is good. This is because numerous occasions occur when they discuss and answer questions, not just in English lessons. Achievement in reading and writing for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory because planning and assessment are not as consistent as they could be. Although there are literacy achievement tests, there is no specific higher-level accreditation for Year 11 pupils.

4. Pupils, especially those in Year 10 and 11, have many opportunities to experience vocational courses. These are matched to their needs, often taught outside the centre, and carefully staffed to make sure pupils have the best chances to make progress. Pupils work hard gaining very useful

skills on the motor project, during work experience and on community work such as constructing a garden. They make particularly good progress at college where they often choose their own courses and they are keen to achieve well. For example, this year, one pupil from the centre has been named the most improved college student of the year. On these courses, staff support and monitor pupils regularly. This means that they know what skills are being gained and can help out quickly if difficulties arise so pupils can continue to progress.

5. A great emphasis is placed on personal, social, health education and citizenship. Lessons and activities throughout the day, including the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Youth Award Scheme, and the Connexions Princes Trust XL Club for older pupils provide many experiences for them to very effectively gain and reinforce appropriate life skills and learn to be independent. Younger pupils in Years 3 to 6 are mainly taught by one teacher and personal and social skills are interwoven through their lessons, helping to carefully emphasise important skills so ensuring they progress very well.

6. Although targets on their individual education plans are often too vague to be accurately measured, pupils who have additional special educational needs progress very well. They develop confidence and positive self-esteem because of the very good support they receive. They relate well to the teachers and support staff, developing an enthusiasm for their work and an increasing ability to concentrate. This is because of the very good use of observations to identify their needs and because staff know them well. This means staff recognise when these pupils are faltering and take immediate action. Overall parents consider that high levels of individual attention are very beneficial, ensuring their children focus on work. There is clear evidence that the additional support given to these pupils enables them to gain in confidence, to participate successfully with the other pupils and to achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitude and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for and effectively contributes to the respect pupils have for the traditions and values of others.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to the centre and improve their attendance.
- Relationships are generally very good and pupils work well together in lessons.
- The centre sets exceptionally high standards with regard to pupils' conduct and this very effectively supports their behaviour and attitudes.
- Pupils' personal development improves as they move through the centre.

Commentary

7. The level of pupils' attendance has been maintained since the last inspection and is in line with that at similar centres. The attendance of many of those pupils who had poor attendance prior to joining the centre is significantly improved and parents confirm this. The centre works hard to encourage all pupils to attend regularly and nearly all parents and carers support the centre by ensuring their children attend unless they are unwell. The centre closely monitors the attendance of the few pupils who they have concerns about and works with the education welfare service to try to improve the attendance of these pupils.

8. Given the increasingly complex needs of the pupils who now attend, the centre has done remarkably well to maintain the high standards of pupils' behaviour reported at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils clearly enjoy being at the centre, feel it is a good place to be and get on very well with all the adults and other pupils. They greet visitors cheerfully, asking them how they are. They feel trusted and that staff are interested in their views. This has had a significant effect on attitudes which have improved since the last inspection. In the classroom, most pupils are

enthusiastic and when lessons are well planned and challenging they try very hard. All staff share high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the centre rules, and the behaviour targets set for individual pupils, provide a very valuable framework that helps ensure the centre is an orderly place with a positive learning environment. The 'Cover System' effectively ensures that the few problems that do occur in the classroom are dealt with appropriately with the least disruption to the rest of the class.

9. The very high quality of relationships between pupils at the centre is reflected in the classroom where pupils co-operate and are quick to appreciate each other's success. Pupils are equally well behaved when involved in visits away from the centre. As a result, pupils enjoy many off-site experiences including vocational activities and fieldwork supporting many environmental study projects. Bullying is not a problem at the centre but the few incidents that do occur are well handled by staff. Pupils are only excluded from the centre as a last resort but the safety of other pupils and staff is not jeopardised.

10. Personal development is given a high priority and has improved since the last inspection, with all aspects of spiritual, social, moral and cultural development now being very good. This is effectively shown by the positive way pupils value each other and staff. Each morning starts with a thought for the day where pupils have the chance to consider what they will be doing and how they are to work together. Activities in the local environment provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues relevant to them. Pupils are constantly encouraged to understand the differences between right and wrong behaviour. Through games they learn to understand the need for rules and how they are applied as well as co-operation and fair play. There is a clear understanding of the rules of the centre by all pupils. The centre encourages pupils to look to themselves and how they present to others. As they move through the centre, pupils become aware of the importance of appearance in work related lessons. They consider the impact of body language and can make informed comments during discussion. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect the culture of others. This they do through a variety of activities such as art where they learn about aboriginal and Asian artists, English where they listen to a Native American Indian poem and in food technology where they learn about different countries while cooking their food. All these activities are carefully planned so pupils' build on previous skills and are supportive of their return to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10	School data	17
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

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	61	16	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIT

The quality of education provided by the centre is very good. Teachers manage pupils very effectively so that they concentrate on their work. High quality activities provided within the centre and elsewhere extend pupils' learning very successfully. Pupils are cared for very well and staff take their views into account. Close working arrangements with other establishments mean that pupils are very well supported when returning to mainstream schools. Good contacts with parents help to raise achievement.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers consistently manage pupils very well and expect high standards of behaviour and work.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning very well.
- Teaching is best where lessons are carefully planned; teachers have effective knowledge of the subject and there are a variety of teaching methods.
- Some aspects of assessment are underdeveloped.

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching has been effectively maintained since the last inspection when pupils had less complex needs and did not have access to a full time education. This has been possible because a range of training, particularly on behaviour management, has helped ensure consistent and skilled management of pupils by staff. The training has been thorough and is regularly updated. This ensures that staff are confident and pupils know what is expected of them in the centre. As a result, there are high expectations that pupils will behave well and concentrate on their work. This they do, settling quickly and calmly to work so little time is lost, lessons are rarely disrupted and they learn the work routines they are often lacking. The very good relationships mean that pupils often respond well in lessons and begin to make up the gaps in their learning. As lessons mainly run smoothly, teachers have the confidence to plan practical and investigative work, which often takes pupils out in to the community. This effectively supports a wide range of learning and personal development activities. It is also possible for staff to extend the range of work so pupils' learn to be responsible and begin to work autonomously.

12. Teaching assistants know the pupils very well and work and plan very effectively with teachers. Pupils concentrate well on their work because teachers and teaching assistants constantly work with pupils, often in small groups, or one to one. Parents have commented on how effective they feel working in these small structured groups is. The support and skills of teaching assistants often keep pupils on task and motivated, assisting them to become more independent. This effective collaboration works well with children with additional special educational needs, and they are successfully included in all learning. For example, in a lesson on pattern poems one pupil with additional needs was supported well to complete work which was a challenge for the pupil. For older pupils, who are often taught by different specialist teachers, the teaching assistant is often the one who has the whole picture of the pupil during the day. This helps to maintain a consistent approach with pupils feeling secure because they are treated consistently. Teaching assistants have a very effective role in supporting pupils back in to mainstream schools which is highly appreciated by these establishments.

13. Teachers plan work carefully, often using national strategies so all staff know what they will be doing. Coverage of National Curriculum work is successful and this reinforces learning and aids the return to mainstream schools. Good introductions help pupils know what is expected by the end

of the lesson. Subjects such as science, environmental studies, outdoor activities and mathematics are organised so that most work is practical and pupils participate fully. They get to take part in a very good range of activities suitable to their needs. These keep them motivated, as in a science lesson where pupils concentrated well counting weeds in a quadrant. Resources are effectively planned into lessons, although occasionally ICT is not used as much as it could be and sometimes teachers are over-reliant on work sheets. Lessons always have a strong component of social training such as sharing work together. This contributes well to pupils' social development and helps pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. In the most successful lessons, teachers challenge pupils to problem solve and try things out for themselves. Very good subject knowledge means that questions are often used to check and extend learning. Confident subject expertise gives pupils the security to try new activities in the knowledge that they can safely take risks. However, on the few occasions where subject knowledge is not as good and introductions are unclear, pupils become restless and do not produce as much work as they could.

14. Some progress has been made in assessment since the last inspection. Currently, a whole County working group are meeting to revise and implement pupil referral unit assessment policies and procedures. This is in recognition of the need to provide more detailed reporting of academic progress and achievement in subjects and to support reintegration. A good start has already been made with baseline assessment procedures and admission information. In all subjects positive features have been identified, such as the sharing of learning objectives at the beginning of lessons and the growing involvement of pupils in evaluating the progress they have made, for instance the use of 'I can' sheets. However, what pupils know, understand and can do is insufficiently recorded. Assessment is weakest in English where gaps in individual pupils knowledge and understanding have not been clearly identified, making planning less focussed. The overall quality of target setting in individual education plans is often vague and success difficult to measure. There are however, regular staff meetings to discuss the progress pupils are making against their targets. Staff know pupils very well and pupils responding to the questionnaire felt that work was assessed helpfully. However, the information that staff offer is often informal and not securely based on specific evidence.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	12	6	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum offered to pupils is very good. It prepares them very effectively for the next stage in their lives and is very successfully augmented by a very imaginative range of activities that supplement pupils' work. Accommodation and resources are very good overall and provide very good support for learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning means that there are now very good opportunities for each pupil to receive a curriculum that is both broad and personally relevant.
- Provision for pupils with additional special education needs is very good.
- There are many stimulating and very successful activities that enrich pupils' stay at the centre.
- Specialist accommodation has a highly significant and positive impact on learning.

Commentary

15. Considerable work has been undertaken since the last inspection to improve the breadth and relevance of the curriculum. The National Curriculum is used extensively to support work throughout the centre, aiding pupils' return to school. This has been very successful, particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 11 where planning includes relevant National Curriculum and vocational work. The curriculum is flexible enough to cater to all needs because a carefully thought out and planned range of provision utilises facilities both on and off the centre site. National strategies are beginning to be effectively used for pupils up to Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 a good range of accredited courses are available however, the current lack of appropriate accreditation in English limits opportunities in this subject. For younger pupils, a more suitable curriculum and resources are currently being developed to meet the diverse needs of an increasingly more complex and younger group of pupils and are presently good.

16. Pupils are well supported by the use of a range of other provision such as Connexions, who have introduced the XL curriculum, the local college and the Mobility Experience Exchange (Mobex). These contacts help the pupils to develop key skills needed for the transition from the centre to work or college of older pupils because they are very well prepared for life after school. The Year 10 and 11 curriculum is very successfully planned using the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme and the XL curriculum work and life related courses. This mix of experiential learning and written evidence provides a very clear structure for vocational studies and also gives the opportunity to have work accredited externally. Those pupils who go to college usually maintain their placements successfully because their individual requirements and choices can usually be met.

17. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good. Many pupils require a detailed pastoral support programme as well as an academic one. This is provided by all teachers as the result of very prompt attention to individual needs, and the high quality of relationships between adults and pupils within the centre. For example, the support given to one Year 11 pupil has enabled him to achieve the ASDAN bronze and silver awards and gain a place at college for mechanics. The very strong network of professionals that support the centre from outside, notably the educational psychologist, makes a very important contribution to ensuring these pupils have a carefully thought out curriculum.

18. Opportunities to supplement the curriculum are very good. Visitors to the centre including football coaches and performing artists such as the clarinet quartet during the inspection, augment the curriculum significantly. Personal, social and health education is very good. It is interwoven throughout the day. For example, pupils' personal and social development is promoted very effectively by regular outdoor activity sessions and residential visits within the area. In addition, there is very good provision for the delivery of specific aspects of safety, drug misuse and sex education. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in sporting activities. Special events such as five-a-side football give pupils the opportunity to compete against pupils from other organisations. They also benefit from innovative projects such as the very good environmental studies curriculum and the Allerdale Motor Project. Additionally the very good links with Cumbria Outdoors for Years 10 and 11 is key in developing pupils' knowledge of a variety of activities such as hill walking, fishing, mountain biking and camping.

19. The accommodation is excellent. It is spacious, well furnished, bright and welcoming resulting in a very good 'school like' learning environment for pupils. This is because there are specialist rooms including a science laboratory, ICT suite, design and technology room and food technology room. This helps pupils' self esteem, as facilities are similar to those in mainstream schools. It is very well maintained and all areas are enhanced by displays of pupils' work. This is comparable to the position found at the last inspection. Although the outside provision and resources have improved, there is still work to be done to make it suitable for younger pupils. Artefacts, resources and pupils' work are displayed well in the centre, helping to make it an exciting place to work in and showing a value for pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' welfare is a priority of all staff at the centre.
- The centre is a safe environment for pupils and staff, care is taken to make sure pupils are calm before lessons and off site activities are carefully assessed for risks.
- Every pupil has a key worker allocated to them ensuring pupils' have access to good advice and guidance.
- Induction arrangements for pupils new to the centre and re-integration into mainstream schooling are very good.

Commentary

20. The centre has improved its provision of the support, guidance and pupil welfare even above the good standards reported at the last inspection. A very positive ethos exists, reflected in the centre's motto of 'Be All You Can Be', which is embraced by all staff.

21. The centre deals very well with the problems brought about due to the dual-registration of many of the pupils where they work both in school and at the centre. The complex transport arrangements are well managed by the centre to ensure pupils arrive on time at lessons wherever they may be held. Very good procedures ensure that the centre is informed if pupils do not arrive at other educational establishments when expected. Staff always have time to talk to and listen to pupils about any concerns and this is valued.

22. Safety for pupils and staff is a priority. Health and safety issues are taken very seriously. Regular safety audits are undertaken and any issues are quickly addressed. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out for specialist teaching areas such as science and design and technology and detailed ones are carried out for the many educational visits enjoyed by the pupils. Staff understand that, given the pupils special educational needs, the practical nature of many tasks, and the varied, often-rugged, localities that are used, they need to ensure that activities are carefully planned and adequately staffed. Staff are well trained in defusing potentially difficult situations and this extends to physical restraint techniques. In the few incidents where, due to immediate danger to others, staff have to use physical restraint there is a detailed recording and reporting procedure.

23. The morning and afternoon meetings are used very well to set the tone for the session and also ensure pupils are fully informed of events. These sessions are also used well to celebrate the successes of other pupils. For example, during the inspection staff and pupils acknowledged the excellent Standard Assessment Test results of fellow pupils.

24. All pupils are allocated a named teacher known as the key teacher. This provides pupils with a point of contact if they have any concerns. It also ensures there is at least one member of staff who has a good understanding of the circumstances of any particular pupil. They attend individual education plan meetings at the pupil's mainstream school and talk to them about what they might do next. In this they are well supported by the Connexions and Youth Offending Team staff who work with the centre. Staff meetings are very well used to ensure all staff are informed of any problems of particular pupils they may be having to deal with. Very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. Parents consider that staff deal quickly with problems and their children are safe at the centre

25. There are very good induction procedures for pupils joining the centre. Individual induction programmes are devised for all pupils and the centre ensures that pupils are not rushed into situations they are not prepared for. This level of detail is extended to pupils on reintegration programmes and this helps to ensure the failure rate of pupils returning to mainstream education is kept to a minimum.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The centre enjoys good supportive links with parents. Learning opportunities are very well supported by very good links with the community. Links with other schools are very good and fully reported in *Other Specified Features*.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the centre.
- The centre makes imaginative use of community links.

Commentary

26. The good links with parents reported at the last inspection have been successfully maintained. Most parents live some distance from the centre and this makes regular involvement very difficult. However, parents are very supportive of the work of the centre and are confident their children are well prepared for the next step in their education whether this is reintegration into mainstream schooling or moving on to college.

27. Many parents regularly telephone to keep staff appraised of any issues that may be affecting their children. This is a reciprocal arrangement with staff phoning home to share information, both positive as well as negative. The centre takes all concerns of parents very seriously and responds to any issues promptly. Parents confirm they are very comfortable in approaching the centre and they consider staff values their suggestions and take their views into account.

28. The centre is very outward looking and uses the local and wider community very well. The centre does not have its own minibus; however, the great number of visits that are arranged to enable pupils to enjoy as wide a range of educational experiences as possible is very impressive. The arts, science, geography and history curriculum are supported by visits to such places as Wordsworth's house, Muncaster Castle, libraries and local beaches, rivers, lakes and forests. Pupils are also able to enjoy sporting activities such as swimming and football at local leisure centres as well as vocational activities associated with the mobex and motor projects and visits to local employers and colleges. Links with the community are having a very positive impact on how well pupils learn. This is due to the high quality communication between professionals and on-going evaluation of what pupils need to do to make progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management are good. The management committee has a good overview of the centre. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and of other key staff good. Management is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's high aspirations and understanding of the centre's evolving role, has ensured that there has been continual improvement.
- Very effective teamwork is well supported by staff training.
- There is good support from the management committee and the local education authority.
- Objectives in the improvement plan are not always costed or measurable so cannot always be effectively evaluated.

Commentary

29. There have been many changes in the centre since the last inspection. For example, pupils now enter with more complex needs and all have access to full time education with many spending time in both the centre and school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together and lead by example, often being in the classrooms and around the centre. Improvement has been good because farsighted, very effective leadership has ensured that pupils' individual needs have always come first and provided staff with the training to do this in a flexible way. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the role of the centre within the range of county provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, this centre is widely regarded by other establishments with whom they work.

30. High aspirations ensure a very good work ethos. This is supported by a consistent approach to behaviour which takes into account the increasingly more complex needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils know what is expected of them and achieve well. This means that the centre is a calm place throughout the day, even though many pupils move daily between the centre and other schools or activities. A strong emphasis is placed by senior managers on providing a relevant curriculum which can change according to need. The particular concentration on the extension of community and vocational work has led to pupils having access to a very wide range of activities so they get the best possible education for their needs.

31. These improvements have been very well supported by the local education authority's strong commitment to creating high quality specialist facilities at the centre. All of these make pupils feel valued and assist them in gaining the skills and confidence to return to school or equip them for life as a young adult. There are frequent productive evaluative meetings between the headteacher and local education officers, who have a good understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development. Members of the management committee are often in the centre. They are supportive and knowledgeable, which is an improvement as the management committee had only just been set up at the time of the previous inspection. They are involved in interviews, improvement planning and receive reports and the centre performance indicators, challenging where necessary. Statutory requirements are met. However, focused visits to review and evaluate developments first hand are limited.

32. Regular meetings are held for staff with open agendas so staff can raise and discuss issues. This helps them to feel valued members of the team and gives them an understanding of centre priorities. Along with effective performance management for teachers, there is appraisal for teaching assistants and frequent meetings with the deputy headteacher where they are always looking at ways to extend their practice. All this effectively contributes to ensuring staff have the right skills to meet these pupils' diverse needs. For example, teachers are not only subject specialists but have qualifications in emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teaching assistants have their own responsibilities and are very involved in integrating pupils back into mainstream schools. As a result, staff are highly committed and work together very well because they are flexible in their approach. This aids learning.

33. The centre has not long had a delegated budget. Despite this, financial planning has improved. It supports curriculum development and is monitored well with the headteacher knowing what needs to be spent. However, costs are not written in to the improvement plan and some of its goals are not specific enough to be accurately measurable. This means that the centre cannot always gauge the correct amount of improvement made. Despite this, the headteacher knows the centre well and the monitoring of teaching, learning and planning is effective so staff know where developments are needed. Finances are well and carefully used to buy in packages such as college courses to fit individual needs.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	570839
Total expenditure	547623
Expenditure per pupil	12,446**

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	N/A *
Balance carried forward to the next	N/A*

*Any budget underspend goes back to the local education authority.

**This is based on 44 full time equivalent pupils

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of outreach?

Provision in outreach support is very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures for pupils transferring to mainstream education, including college are excellent.
- The relationships the centre has with other schools and service providers are very good.

Commentary

34. The centre has an excellent reputation with local schools and the college. Schools and the college jointly involved with the centre in helping pupils return to mainstream education speak very highly of the quality of staff and the overall provision at the West Cumbria Learning Centre. The centre has very high quality working links with other support services, particularly those based on the same site. The local authority emotional and behavioural difficulties team has good links with key teachers in the centre. They hand over pupils they have been monitoring to the centre key teacher when they enter the centre and receive the pupil back for further monitoring once re-integrated. This helps to make sure that pupils have the best possible chance to succeed once back in school. This team, and the individual tuition service, effectively share training and skills with the centre. For example, the centre's expertise on behaviour restraint training has been disseminated very effectively so other teams can use this knowledge in schools to the benefit of staff and pupils. Further a field, the centre has successfully supported other pupil referral units being set up in other parts of the country. Staff have spent time making sure that their relationships with providers of other experiences such as outdoor activities, community work and vocational activities are such that pupils get the best out of these highly appropriate experiences and they are monitored effectively.

35. The centre provides opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants from mainstream schools to work alongside centre staff so good practice, particularly behaviour strategies, can be shared. While pupils are in the centre, joint and regular meetings are held by key teachers with mainstream colleagues to discuss individual education plans. This is to make sure they are relevant to individual needs and help with their plans for the future. This is particularly important when pupils are working in both their school and the centre where one aim is to prevent permanent exclusion. Staff from the centre share very good information built on their knowledge and understanding of the pupils and this is highly valued. They work closely with special needs co-ordinators in mainstream schools and this enables them to develop very successfully detailed programmes for returning pupils. For example, in one school with a support unit, this cooperation has successfully enabled pupils to follow their individual plans and maintain their good progress. Centre teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils returning to mainstream schooling. Pupils appreciate the support they are given to help them return to school. They are grateful for both teaching assistant support and behaviour and work strategies that are taught. Pupils' use some of these skills learned,

especially those about self-awareness and the impact their behaviour has on others. One Year 9 pupil spoke about how useful the latter had been in aiding a successful return to school.

36. The centre co-ordinator for pupils in Year 10 and 11 works exceptionally closely with the local college where pupils from the centre are often on full-time courses. Cooperation is excellent. Meetings are arranged with all parties including parents to agree at what rate Year 11 pupils will access college courses. These meetings are valuable and important to pupils. Without such care they may not succeed in agreeing a programme. Pupils continue to be very closely supported by their centre contact teacher as well as a college personal tutor. The staff regularly liaise to monitor progress. This flexible link helps to ensure pupils who may previously have had difficulties coping with school are well supported in accessing college courses. The links widen to Connexions to prepare pupils for leaving. Pupils are aware of the constant contact arrangements. They regard the support as an important reason behind the smooth move to college.

37. Overall these links are very well managed and highly beneficial to both mainstream schools and pupils due to careful monitoring and collaboration.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- While pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in all aspects of English, achievement for older pupils is satisfactory because assessment is not regular enough to track progress or support planning.
- Staff work effectively together to give pupils the confidence to improve their English skills.
- Where lessons are well prepared, pupils produce good quality work.

Commentary

38. The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is supported effectively because staff know them well. As a result, work is planned successfully and well matched to pupils' ability. Staff effectively reinforce and consolidate basic literacy skills based on good initial assessment of pupils' needs. For older pupils in Years 7 to 11, achievement is satisfactory with the use of assessment, on a daily and regular basis, being inconsistent. It does not identify clearly enough what pupils know, understand and can do. This means that their small steps in learning are not always noted to enable the teacher to plan further work and as a result teaching overall is satisfactory. Currently accreditation in English is limited to the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme and the literacy achievement tests, although the centre is planning to improve the range of accreditation available in English in Years 10 and 11.

39. Many pupils join the centre with very little confidence in expressing themselves either verbally or on paper. Although achievement in reading and writing is satisfactory, overall, staff are very skilled at working around pupils' anxieties and avoiding undue pressure while still reinforcing what is expected in the way of work. Consequently, pupils make good gains in their confidence. As a result of this, they are increasingly willing to write, discuss and read aloud. For instance, a higher attaining Year 11 pupil produced a well-written and illustrated extended newspaper article on Ellen MacArthur. Younger pupils worked well in a lesson on instructional writing, recognising the use of bullet points and sequence whilst creating their own 'nasty' recipes. Generally, pupils recognise the need to re-draft their work and take care over presentation. The recorded gains in individual reading ages are good and for pupils with additional needs they are very good but not always reinforced by a variety of reading matter. This is similar to the position noted in the previous inspection. Achievement is better in speaking and listening where staff encourage pupils to engage in conversations maturely. As a result they often express themselves clearly, listening well and responding sensibly when teaching is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection where pupils found class discussions difficult. However, on occasions they are reluctant to speak, notably when explanations are not clear.

40. The three-part lesson structure of an introduction, a main activity and a final review is evident as part of the literacy strategy and mainly implemented well. However, at times introductions are not clear and pupils are not sure about the learning objectives. When expectations are high and pupils are presented with inspiring, well designed activities they listen well and are productive. For instance, one Year 10 lesson was successful because a task had been carefully prepared which motivated the group. They worked well preparing a short story book for a young child using illustrations and text. The good mix of practical and written work ensured that pupils were productive and proud of the finished product. Pupils appreciate the value teachers' place on their accomplishments. During lessons most pupils have a very good attitude to their work, however, when lessons are taught and planned in an unimaginative way a minority of pupils become distracted and this leads to restlessness.

41. Co-ordination is shared by two staff that are new to the co-ordinator post. Improvement since the last inspection as well as leadership and management is presently satisfactory. This is because the curriculum still needs development to make sure pupils gain the most from their experiences. However, a good start has been made by the introduction of the literacy strategy.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. Throughout the centre, all teachers make the most of opportunities to promote language and literacy and pupils respond very well to this. In design and technology pupils use reference books to design masks. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is used well to introduce new words and as a result pupils recognise key words for different subjects and know what they mean. For example, during an ICT session pupils could recognise words such as “annotate” and “evaluate”, whilst in science pupils are familiar with words such as “habitat” and “organism”.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good understanding by teachers of the individual needs of pupils ensures they achieve well.
- Good planning focuses on the needs of pupils in lessons and is securely based on the numeracy strategy.
- Activities and resources enrich the curriculum and provide many challenges for every pupil.

Commentary

43. Effective baseline assessments are carried out in mathematics when pupils start at the centre. These identify gaps in learning and help teachers to have a good knowledge of pupils’ skills and areas for improvement. As a result, teaching is well focused and subsequent assessments show that pupils make good progress against their prior attainment. For example, they develop good knowledge of negative numbers and temperatures, and are able to decipher graphs. They also carry out investigations on patterns arising out of squared and cubed numbers. Pupils use the computers to enter data from surveys on transport and use spreadsheets and graphs confidently. A range of accreditation is used to meet pupils’ needs and they successfully complete numeracy tests, Entry Level accreditation or GCSE.

44. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is now consistently good because teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning covers all mathematical areas and this ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged on return to mainstream school. Knowledge of the numeracy strategy is clear in the work planned. This identifies clear learning objectives for pupils and fits in well with longer term planning. A good balance is maintained in all aspects of the subject. Activities are challenging and interesting and they help pupils to make good progress. For example, the use of ‘football mathematics’ ensures that all pupils improve their mathematical skills and are able to use calculators to confirm their results.

45. Teachers effectively plan these activities to include some competition and challenge. The results are that lessons are enjoyable, relationships are good and pupils feel confident to question staff about mathematical puzzles. Teachers provide good resources often using the internet for games; although they do not always use computers enough in lessons. The younger pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 do practice some basic mathematics skills on the computer.

46. The subject is progressing well and improvement has been good since the last inspection as ICT and assessment are used more effectively. Careful management and good leadership have resulted in a comprehensive curriculum cover.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Mathematics is well supported throughout the centre. Teachers are aware of the national strategy and they work to consolidate basic skills. In design and technology pupils calculate dimensions when planning a rocket. In food studies they weigh and measure and estimate accurately. Science provides opportunities for measuring chemicals and temperature and working out the distribution of weeds.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well due to high quality practical investigations provided in both science and environmental studies.
- Very good subject knowledge is very effectively used to assist pupils in their learning.
- Very effective leadership has ensured that there has been good improvement in science.

Commentary

48. Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection because lessons are very effectively planned to motivate them and provide active learning. Work is carefully based on National Curriculum programmes of study and very successfully matched to pupils' ages, interests and needs. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 had an exciting time completing an investigation on a mini beast safari in the grounds of the centre. They concentrated exceptionally well, showing great enthusiasm whenever something was found. They then brought back their finds and looked at them through a computer microscope, enthusiastically taking digital photographs for future work. Pupils in Years 7 and 8, and those in Year 9, carry out a varied range of specific investigations. For example, they concentrated carefully while measuring the distribution of weeds in a quadrant, producing computer-generated graphs to show the results. They complete experiments such as those on the use of temperature to speed up a chemical reaction while older pupils in Year 10 investigate harmful substances.

49. As well as science, pupils in Years 7 to 9 take part in environmental studies where they carry out investigations in a wide range of local habitats such as the seashore, marshes and quarries. Activities such as comparing habitats of banded snails, Osprey watching, visiting the aquarium and using the Yottenfews educational centre add greatly to their scientific experiences.

50. The confident specialist teaching ensures pupils have a positive approach to the very practical tasks and investigations and behave very well while handling equipment or when out in the local area. Lessons are well organised with the use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, with key vocabulary constantly reinforced so pupils begin to understand scientific terms. High quality questioning is aimed at getting pupils to think, predict and work things out for themselves as well as understanding a fair test. As a result, pupils are not afraid to try practical activities because they know they will be very effectively helped if they need it.

51. Very effective co-ordination has led to all aspects of science improving well. Entry Level accreditation is in place and this motivates pupils to try hard. There is now a very detailed scheme of work with all aspects of science covered. Information and communication technology is well used. Assessment is effective for pupils in Years 10 to 11 where there is accreditation. It is satisfactory for those in Years 3 to 9 where it needs to be more specific about what pupils know, understand and can do, particularly for those in Years 3 to 6 with more complex needs. However, the co-ordinator knows it needs to be improved and has plans for this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are expected to achieve to the best of their ability.
- There is good, knowledgeable specialist teaching.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

52. There are high expectations of what pupils will learn and as a result pupils' achievements are good overall. The very good relationships in lessons enhance the progress pupils, including those with additional special needs, make. Expectations are that pupils will work and behave in lessons so that no learning time is lost. Pupils find the correct programs and use them effectively. They write short 'control' programs and use them to operate sensors to make a lighthouse flash or operate traffic lights. Pupils are proficient at writing 'flowcharts'. Good links during ICT lessons to other areas of the curriculum are used to access a variety of programs. For instance, during their study of nesting ospreys Year 6 pupils have access to the Internet to view the live 'web cam'. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 create presentations on ospreys to show to younger pupils, whilst in Year 10 they are becoming familiar with aspects of spreadsheets and databases whilst creating traffic survey graphs. Pupils show great pride in their work, building self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are keen to learn and their responses to lessons are very good at all times; they concentrate very well, listen carefully and behave impeccably.

53. Good subject knowledge is used effectively to provide challenge so pupils extend their learning. The Key Stage 3 Strategy is used well and pupils have a good knowledge of ICT language because key words are displayed and pupils are expected to know what they mean. Support staff are well briefed to enable them to support pupils' learning, although their knowledge of some programs is limited.

54. The subject coordinator has good knowledge of the subject and leads and manages it well. Although improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, learning resources have been very effectively developed. Information and communication technology is taught in a re-designed suite furnished to a high standard. The coordinator has recently introduced an '*I can*' assessment system which allows pupils to identify what they can do. This is working well but, as yet, it is not consistently used to support planning or fully impact upon pupils' progress. Opportunities are made for pupils to meet with staff informally and the co-ordinator is always available to offer support and advice to staff on using ICT effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Information and communication technology is used effectively in the teaching and learning of most other subjects. It is used extremely well both for research purposes and to extend the range and creativity of pupils' work in science and as a teaching resource. For instance very good use was made of pupils' data to produce a graph to show how many different weeds were in a quadrant. A microscope computer was used very well to look more closely at mini beasts. In English, pupils use word processing to enhance their work and improve their presentation. Additionally, "Successmaker" is used to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

56. Work was sampled in all other subjects except personal, social and health education which is reported in full. Samples of pupils' past work, photographs and records were looked at. Inspectors talked to pupils and held discussions with staff. In these subjects, insufficient evidence was available to make judgements on provision.

57. All pupils have good opportunities to take part in **art and design**. In the one lesson seen, pupils recalled the last lesson when a visiting artist worked with them completing pastel drawings of whales. This was then linked to work in the style of cave people which pupils went on to complete. Staff work tirelessly to create varied opportunities for all pupils. Visiting local artists bring special skills to share with pupils and their work enriches pupils' experiences. Displays around the centre show that pupils produce some high quality work. These are well presented and pupils are justly proud of their work. They have many opportunities to try new techniques and learn about well known artists. The use of art from many lands informs pupils and enables them to practice techniques such as those from aboriginal and Asian, including Chinese, art. As a result, art makes an important contribution to pupils' appreciation of their own, and others', cultures. Pupils enjoy their art, they learn to create models from pictures, and they try their hands at clay and painting and printing. Art work is well supported by the new well equipped art room and good quality resources.

58. **Citizenship** is effectively taught in a variety of ways so pupils gain appropriate skills to help them with life after school or college. For younger pupils, work is aimed at helping one another to make choices with many opportunities to consider consequences and responsibilities. The Princes Trust XL programmes for pupils in Years 10 and 11 follows a very comprehensive and well thought out module with aspects addressed effectively through the pupils' own action plans. Other elements of citizenship are taught in personal, social and health education and religious education. Issues such as rights and responsibilities, the role of the United Nations and a range of moral issues are covered. As the centre is near Sellafield, pupils have opportunities to consider the nuclear industry and the use to which nuclear shelters should be put. Citizenship is also very well developed through the links with the community when pupils meet older people.

59. Pupils study **history** and **geography** as part of humanities from Years 3 to 9 and **religious education** from Years 3 to 6, where pupils completed work on the main world religions and festivals. Only two lessons were observed, both of which were in history. Work was appropriate to the pupils' ages. The lesson for Year 3 to 6 pupils was follow up work on a Roman topic where pupils were completing a Roman mosaic in the shape of a fish. Older pupils concentrated carefully when completing work on the causes and effects of the Black Death during work on Medieval Realms. Pupils were also observed proudly completing a display on Native American Indians and were keen to talk about their work which they remembered well. All work in history and geography is planned using appropriate aspects of the National Curriculum. Educational visits such as that to Muncaster Castle and aspects of environmental studies that concentrate on, for example, glaciation contribute well to pupils' understanding. For a pupil referral unit, a good range of history and geography activities is planned. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 study topics such as Romans, children in the Second World War, world weather and rivers using Qualifications and Curriculum Authority planning documents. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, work is completed on topics such as indigenous peoples and social change as well as settlements, maps and local studies in Cumbria. As a result, pupils complete similar work to that in mainstream schools. This helps to support their return to school.

60. **Design and technology**, including food studies, is a strong aspect of the centre as it was at the last inspection. In the lessons observed pupils achieved very well. This is due to very good teaching by specialist teachers who understand the needs of pupils. Pupils enjoy the lessons in resistant materials because they have the chance to complete a range of activities such as designing and making models from junk, rockets and jewellery. They have safe, hands-on experiences and use tools appropriately. Resources are very good and work is provided for pupils to

do whilst waiting after completing stages of a task. These activities always reinforce skills and pupils are able to paint even delicate objects.

61. In food studies, pupils develop skills in cooking meals from around the world to reinforce their work on other cultures. The highly skilled teaching motivates and generates genuine interest in lessons and how to cook. For example, pupils know when to use self-raising flour and they can explain what happens if you spread tomatoes wrongly on pizza base. They are thrilled when working with yeast to see it rise.

62. No **music** is taught but the centre has a good range of visiting performers such as those from *Live Music Now* and a musician story teller. This is organised to help widen pupils' understanding of different types of music. The centre also has a range of percussion instruments which are used with pupils and there are visits to a local secondary school to see drama and music. During the inspection, a group of professional musicians performed for the pupils. Pupils enjoyed the experience, concentrated well and participated when encouraged to do so, either by clapping to time or conducting.

63. The curriculum for **physical education** is very good. In the one session observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The visiting football coaches provided very good encouragement and high quality development of skills for pupils in all age groups. Pupils with a history of nonconforming joined in and showed a growing understanding of how to use space and work as a team. At the end of the session, all pupils had made rapid gains in skills and personal development.

64. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a variety of sporting activities such as badminton, hockey, football, swimming and other sports. In addition, they respond very well to the excellent outdoor education opportunities provided by *Cumbria Outdoors* with very good dedicated input from one of the centre's own support staff. They have opportunities to sail and develop rock-climbing skills. They have camped over night in caves, developed skills in fishing, experienced gill scrambling and canoeing, in addition to a variety of residential experiences in youth hostels. These opportunities play a crucial part in the pupils' personal development. For instance, one pupil with significant difficulties in Year 11 has been made an 'associate instructor' because of his dedication and commitment to the course. Younger pupils have the opportunity to make visits within the locality, for instance Whitehaven, where they explore the surroundings identifying historical facts and negotiating the 'friendship' maze. Their behaviour when they participate in sport is very good and this is a very significant achievement. They work well together and develop good team skills. In a local competition the centre came second in five-a-side football.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision for personal, social, and health education is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education underpins the whole curriculum; it enriches pupils' experiences and provides many opportunities to support personal development.
- There is a very well thought out plan of work

Commentary

65. Teaching is very good because every chance is taken during the day to support pupils' personal, social and health education. Staff respond very well to any issues that arise. They take opportunities to explore personal dilemmas and support pupils' life and work related skills in a wide range of relevant lessons effectively planned to augment personal, social and health education such as citizenship, the XL club, ASDAN Youth Award Scheme and religious education. This aids the very good achievement pupils make in personal, social and health education. It effectively equips them

with the skills needed for independence and to succeed when they go back to school or for life as young adults. Personal and social development of pupils is very well addressed in lessons such as design and technology where they learn the rules of the workshop and safe behaviour, understanding the need to take care of other pupils. During play and physical education lessons pupils use their social skills in games, sharing, turn taking and helping each other. Every opportunity is used to take pupils out into the local environment so they learn how to respond to a range of different people. For example, they complete community projects such as litter collecting and work on tasks about environmental issues such as badger management. Some complete work related experiences, including a day with the army, and are introduced to a range of recreational and leisure activities such as climbing where they need to rely on each other.

66. This use of a very comprehensive and well-planned programme enables pupils to develop confidence and self-awareness. Work is matched to age and needs. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 complete work on being healthy, keeping safe, feelings and being responsible. By the time pupils are in Year 9 they are looking at jobs and the qualities you would need while Year 11 pupils apply for jobs, talk about friendship and complete home management tasks. Health education is very well planned for all ages and topics such as personal safety; drugs abuse and healthy living are discussed in sensible and mature ways, effectively supported by science and the XL Club. Pupils progress to award bearing work and to college or to mainstream schools where they apply their new skills.

67. There has, rightly been a strong emphasis on this subject. Personal, social and health education is managed very well and there is a very good appreciation of the important part this subject plays in a pupil referral unit. Improvement has been good due to the range of ways this subject is supported by all staff so that pupils learn the important interpersonal skills necessary for going to other establishments.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

poor (6); very poor (7).

*In a unit such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*