

INSPECTION REPORT

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICE

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103146

Headteacher: Peter Wild

Lead inspector: Alastair Younger

Dates of inspection: 10-13 November 2003

Inspection number: 261642

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Social, emotional and behaviour difficulties
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	196 (but varies greatly from week to week)

School address:	The Link Centre Jenkins Street Small Heath Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer:	Mr Peter Wild

Date of previous inspection:	26/4/1999
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

This is a large and complex unit serving the City of Birmingham. It operates on ten different sites. Three of these are for primary aged pupils (Ashbourne, Key and Minerva), three for pupils in Years 7-9 (Burlington, Bridge and Oakdale) and three for pupils in Years 10 and 11 (Kings, Link and Wake Green); the tenth site is an outdoor education centre (Cropwood). Around 200 pupils are provided for on the main sites. This number varies greatly from week to week. It could be as low as 180 or as high as 250. Boys outnumber girls by about 5:1, a ratio often found in this sort of unit. About a half of all pupils are white and of British origin. Representatives of many other ethnic groups form the other half. All pupils speak English as their main language, though a very small minority of their parents do not. There are currently no refugees, travellers or asylum seekers on roll. Attainment on entry is usually below average. Thirty-eight pupils have statements of special educational need and a similar number are being assessed. Nearly all statements of special educational need relate to the high degree of social, behavioural and emotional need that pupil's experience. A very small number of pupils are in public care. In addition to pupils attending the various centres a support service is also offered to about 400 schools in Birmingham. This service includes supporting pupils experiencing social, behavioural and emotional difficulties in their own schools to prevent exclusion, supporting pupils being returned to schools on reintegration programmes and working with mainstream school staff to advise and help them on coping with behaviour problems in the classroom.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Behaviour Support Service is an **effective** service that gives **good** value for money. Pupils of all ages, in all the different centres achieve well. In addition, a **very effective** outreach service is provided for Birmingham's mainstream schools. Pupils' personal development is good, as is the quality of teaching and learning. The service is very well led and managed.

The service's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Visionary leadership and very strong management ensure that the service is very effective in returning pupils to school as quickly as possible.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Pupils are given very good advice and guidance and this helps prepare them for returning to school or college.
- There are excellent links with other schools and colleges.
- Pupils are keen to succeed, primary aged pupils in particular attend very well and show a lot of enthusiasm for learning.
- In a few areas, systems to monitor the effectiveness of the widespread work of the service are underdeveloped.
- The lack of laboratories in two of the secondary centres is limiting the science curriculum.

There has been **significant improvement** since the previous inspection. The greatest improvements are seen in the leadership and management of the service. Most of these date from the appointment of the new head of service eighteen months ago. Up until then the strategic management of the service had floundered but this is now a strength and nearly all weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been addressed. Good and better teaching is on the increase and the curriculum has been hugely improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement by the time they leave during:*	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Years 1-6	Good	Very good
Years 7-9	Good	Very good
Years 10-11	Good	Very good

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

* In schools it is normal to report on achievement by the end of Years 2,6,9 and 11 but, because this service is so effective, pupils frequently move back to school other than at the end of these landmarks

Pupils achieve well. The most significant pointer to this is the speed and frequency with which they successfully return to mainstream education and training. In all centres pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement is variable in science, hindered by the lack of a laboratory in two secondary centres, but it is satisfactory overall. Achievement is very good in personal, social and health education and in physical activities. Pupils, who are unlikely to return to mainstream school to complete examination courses meet with suitable success in Entry Level examinations at the end of Year 10. Last year, 56 candidates gained a total of 82 passes mainly in English and mathematics. Success is also achieved in GCSE examinations. Last Year, 41 candidates gained 52 passes in subjects including English, mathematics and art.

Pupils make good progress in improving their personal qualities. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Pupils have positive attitudes and attend and behave well. Attitudes

and attendance are best in the primary centres, where they are very good. Lack of punctuality occasionally erodes the amount of time a few pupils in Years 7-10 spend in class.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall in all centres. There is a very good number of teachers, so pupils get a lot of individual attention and support to help them to succeed. Lessons are well planned. Teachers do not make the best use of computers other than in ICT lessons. Most support staff work in the primary centres, where they work very effectively with teachers to help pupils learn and develop. Teachers recognise how crucial it is to generate trust and strong relationships with pupils if they are to work to best effect. They benefit from extensive training and have developed considerable expertise in behaviour management. This is used to particularly good effect when they work in and with mainstream schools. **The curriculum is good** and has many, very good features, including the innovative means by which Year 11 pupils are provided with individual programmes ideally suited to their needs and abilities. Pupils are well cared for and given very good advice and guidance. **Links with other schools and colleges are a strength of the service.** They have been transformed in the past year. Staff are welcomed into schools and their support is much appreciated and admired. Obstacles to pupils returning to mainstream school are rapidly overcome.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good. Change and improvement is happening very fast, guided and inspired by the relatively new headteacher, who also has duties as an LEA officer. Change is being carefully and sensitively handled with the result that staff are not feeling threatened, and in most cases are feeling increasingly empowered, confident and optimistic. Systems for unifying the centres into a single, effective service are very good and are still improving. At present though, a few lack refinement, mainly relating to the limited ways in which the performance of each centre can be compared with others to pinpoint relative strengths and weaknesses. Until the appointment of the current headteacher the LEA, in its role as appropriate authority, provided virtually no strategic support to the service and there was a barely functioning management committee. These two weaknesses have now been resolved and governance is now **good** and improving.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are **very satisfied** with the service. Many would prefer their children to complete their education in the centres rather than returning to mainstream schools. Pupils also express **positive views** of the service.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to continue developing systems to enable management to compare the performance and effectiveness of different centres more precisely.

This is a wide reaching service, fulfilling many roles to a huge range of pupils. Between centres there is inevitably variation within aspects and subjects, even when these are judged good overall. The most significant of these are the science accommodation at Burlington and Oakdale centres, the limited use of computers in lessons other than information and communication technology and the lack of punctuality of pupils, particularly at Bridge.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils in all of the centres achieve **well**. There is little difference in the achievements of any single group of pupils, nor between boys and girls. Overall achievement is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages achieve well in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and satisfactorily overall in science.
- Achievement is particularly good in personal, social and health education
- Good achievement is helping many pupils to return to mainstream education
- In Year 11, good achievement is often represented by pupils increasing their engagement in a greater range of courses and activities

Commentary

1. Many pupils arrive at the centres having had an education that has often been seriously interrupted by the consequences of their behaviour. As a result, few have performed to their potential and attainment on entry is often low. From this position, most pupils respond well to the good quality of education provided within the service. Close and effective observation of the National Literacy Strategy is greatly helping pupils to improve many of their English skills, especially in Years 1-9. Good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a similar effect in promoting good achievement in mathematics. In Years 10 and 11, many pupils have embarked on accredited courses in English and mathematics before they have been referred to the service. These pupils continue their courses, either in the centres or at college, and most gain passes either at Entry Level or in GCSE examinations, usually with grades at the lower end of the scale. Achievement is satisfactory overall in science. In most centres achievement is good but at Burlington and Oakdale centres the lack of suitable accommodation means that pupils miss out on opportunities to improve their experimental and investigative skills and this slows overall progress. When information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject, achievement is good but computers are not being used enough in other lessons to enable pupils to use and reinforce their skills.
2. Pupils of all ages make great strides in their personal, social and health education. This is because it is often very well taught as a separate subject in the curriculum and also because personal and social education often forms a significant part of other lessons. Teachers miss few opportunities to promote pupils personal development throughout the school day.
3. Pupils' achievements in improving their personal skills are the main factor in facilitating their successful return to school. With such a high turnover of pupils it is very difficult for places such as this to set targets. Quite often pupils are referred only weeks, and occasionally days, before they are due to take statutory tests or to complete examinations, these are often pupils with the least chance of shining in these examinations. Frequently it is the highest achieving pupils who are returned successfully to schools before taking tests or examinations. Nevertheless, the results of examinations and tests are carefully analysed and any apparent anomalies explained. For instance, last year there were fewer GCSE entries than in previous years, but only because there were fewer Year 11 pupils in the centres. The high number of pupils achieving this ultimate goal is evidence of the very good progress they make.
4. Pupils admitted in Year 11, do not usually attend the centres but instead are presented with a wide array of learning opportunities in other situations managed by the service's learning mentors. Before, or shortly after admission individual programmes are set up for each pupil.

These often include college or training placements and work-based projects. These programmes are very closely monitored and there are very clear criteria for this monitoring. One of these is to identify the degree of support each pupil needs. It is a measure of many pupils' achievement in their programmes that the degree of support they require often declines whilst their attendance and involvement in additional activities often increases.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **good**, as are pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is at least good in all centres; in the primary centres it is very good. Punctuality is satisfactory overall but procedures to improve it, especially in Years 7-9 are unclear
- Pupil attitudes within the primary centres are very good.

Commentary

5. Very good progress has been made in the development of provision for pupils' personal development since the last report. 'Together time' and 'food for thought' sessions at lunch times within the primary centres provide pupils with good opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of cultural and religious traditions as well as providing a time for quiet reflection. Good assemblies also help promote awareness and understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others. Across the service, pupils are strongly encouraged to make informed choices about their actions and helped to distinguish between right and wrong. Behavioural targets and codes of conduct are evident in all centres and these help to promote honesty, trust and recognition of personal responsibilities. Pupils are frequently involved in supporting charitable organisations. The outdoor education centre and the wide range of enrichment activities provided enables pupils to develop their self-confidence and self esteem in a social setting. Here, pupils are presented with opportunities to take responsibility as they cooperate with one another to achieve success. Extensive displays in all centres promote positive views and understanding of the cultural traditions of other peoples. Many off site activities and visitors to centres promote cultural awareness. Primary aged pupils, for instance, have visited an Islamic exhibition. The promotion of cultural awareness is also very evident within the curriculum. Pupils prepare foods to recipes from other countries, they benefit from the skills of visiting artists and musicians and they learn about cultures from different places and times in history and geography.
6. Primary aged pupils are brought to the centres by taxi and this plays a significant part in reducing absence. As a result, attendance in primary centres is very good. Pupils miss very few lessons and this significantly helps them to make progress. A few older pupils account for a large proportion of the unauthorised attendance. These are often pupils who have had a long history of non- attendance in previous schools or are new to the authority and have proved unable to contact. The service does not give up on such pupils but seeks always to re-engage them, either in centres or in mixed programmes of work and study at Year 11. Overall, there are effective procedures for promoting and improving attendance, but measures to improve pupils' punctuality are less effective, especially for those in Years 7-10. It is acknowledged that many such pupils have long and complicated journeys to their centres but schemes to promote and improve punctuality have not had as significant an impact as those to promote attendance. In particular, the marking of registers at the beginning of each school day is occasionally slack and there is insufficient guidance as to what constitutes lateness.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7
National data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data	17
National data	N/A

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

7. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good. Pupils' show a keen interest in their work and recreation and take advantage of the many opportunities presented to them. This is particularly evident when pupils participate in outdoor and adventure activities. Attitudes are particularly good within the primary centres where pupils show considerable persistence and commitment to the task in hand, for instance when making puppets in an enrichment session with a visiting puppeteer or when collecting their work and filing and clearing away at the end of lessons. Improvements in pupils' attitudes are also pronounced in Year 11 where many pupils show the self motivation to get themselves to a wide range of activities and to persevere, with the result that they require less and less supervision from centre staff and, in many instances, become significantly more mature.

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	106	44	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	24	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	11	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	24	15	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	1	0

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

8. Behaviour in lessons is usually good. Most pupils are attentive and try hard to meet their behavioural objectives. Given their past histories most pupils show considerable improvements in their behaviour. Many have previously been excluded from mainstream schools, often repeatedly. Exclusions from the centre are not excessive and always for a just reason. No pupil is ever permanently excluded. Systems to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Lively and extensive displays in most centres promote positive values and behaviours. Pupils respond well to these efforts and are pleased to see their work displayed and celebrated. Incidents of racism or harassment are rare and promptly and effectively dealt with. The success of the service in promoting and improving pupils' personal qualities is evident in its great success

in moving pupils on towards mainstream or work related activities. Last year 89 pupils returned to mainstream schools, 18 took up courses in further education and 55 entered training schemes for school leavers.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall. Teaching and learning are good overall for pupils of all ages. The curriculum is good and there are many strong links between the service, parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. The standard is very similar in all the centres. Assessment is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Small class groups mean that pupils get a lot of support and their individual needs are well met.
- Lessons are usually well planned and prepared
- Teachers are not routinely planning for greater use of computers in their lessons
- Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and development
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive and often contribute to very effective behaviour management.

Commentary

9. Most classes have fewer than five pupils in them. This recognises the high degree of support and attention that many pupils need. It also reduces the potential for distraction. Teachers are particularly adept at managing these small groups and ensuring that every pupil gets the help he or she needs. Usually this is done without overstepping the mark by offering too much support and thereby reducing opportunities for promoting individual working. A Year 10 pupil, being taught on his own at Link centre was fully involved in discussion for part of the lesson but then expected to complete his own work with minimal help. At the same time, teachers do not miss opportunities to get pupils to work together and to join in dialogue and discussion. In a good English lesson at Ashbourne, the learning of a group of five pupils was greatly enhanced by the quality of dialogue between staff and pupils as they explored a story sequence.
10. Lessons are usually carefully planned. Planning for a Year 6 English lesson at Key centre, for instance, included precisely stated learning objectives and included the ways in which the lesson was going to be adapted for one individual with more pronounced learning difficulties. In most lessons good attention is paid to stating what it is expected that pupils will learn and planning stimulating activities that will capture the interest of pupils. Many lesson plans identify what has been taught in previous lessons and this serves as a useful prompt when teachers check what pupils have remembered. A very good example of this was seen at the Link centre where a group of Year 10 pupils were making pizza. The lesson plan showed very clearly how this activity followed on from the previous lesson where pupils had been introduced to yeast mixtures and bread making. Occasionally, teachers' pay insufficient attention to pupils' individual education plans when setting learning objectives.
11. Teachers are not maximising opportunities for pupils to use computers to help them to learn. When they do, the benefits are plain to see, such as in a good art lesson for Year 10 pupils where interest was stimulated by the use of a digital camera and computer to record initial images at the start of creating clay and card models of 'an ideal bedroom corner'. In another instance a computer game was very effectively used to reinforce a Year 10 pupil's understanding of subtraction. The pupil's attention had been declining towards the end of the lesson but picked up very quickly by the change of activity and by the incentive of beating previous scores. In many

lessons, however, computers are not being used. On the first day of the inspection for instance, other than in ICT, only two lessons out of 29 incorporated the use of computers.

12. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together. Support is given in many ways, occasionally to teachers, when helping to prepare or review lessons, but more often to pupils, either to help them to learn or behave. In good, innovative practice, support staff involved with a social skills group of primary age pupils visit schools before and after pupils are referred to a special part-time programme. This contributes strongly to the outreach role of the service and also helps to ensure that transfers in each direction proceed as smoothly as possible by generating links between the teachers involved. Support staff frequently offer pupils useful prompts when they have forgotten instructions and quiet, subtle encouragement to pupils who appear to be becoming frustrated.
13. Underpinning much of the success of teaching are the strong, trusting relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils recognise that teachers are trying to help them, not only to learn, but also to cope better with their problems. Teachers set firm boundaries and have high expectations that pupils meet their demands but they also recognise that many of the pupils have great difficulty in meeting these demands in every instance. Older pupils often respond well when involved in mature and responsible conversations, such as in a good Year 8 ICT lesson at Bridge centre. Good relationships help to create a calm and supportive atmosphere in most lessons and greatly reduce the need for sanctions to help manage behaviour. The sanctions exist but teachers in all the centres offer frequent demonstration of the benefits of understanding their pupils' problems and recognising the small signs that point to potential difficulties. In this way disruption to lessons is usually averted.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 88 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	8 (9 %)	56 (64 %)	24 (27%)	(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Most teachers effectively use information from the pupils' schools and from tests, which are carried out when pupils are admitted to the centre, to plan learning that matches their abilities. Teachers have good information about the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding but the learning opportunities planned do not always ensure that these gaps are addressed in the most effective way. A few teachers do not use the information to plan, in detail, the next steps in learning that each pupil needs.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. This is a big improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum was judged to be unsatisfactory. A wide range of subjects is taught and there are **very good** opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** and the service is **very well** staffed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunities provided to enrich pupils' learning are very good, particularly in outdoor education activities.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Not all pupils, for whom the PRU is the only source of education, receive the same amount of teaching time.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and careers education and advice.

- Very good individual programmes of study are provided for pupils in Year 11.
- There are very good programmes of support for pupils in mainstream schools.
- There is a very good number of teachers and support staff.

Commentary

15. Primary aged pupils are taught all the subjects of the National Curriculum and secondary pupils are taught an appropriate range to provide them with a suitable education. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language in the Oakdale centre but not in the others. A very good individual programme of study, out of centre, is established for each pupil in Year 11. These programmes make very effective use of college courses and alternative community based learning programmes. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have their achievement suitably recognised through a good range of accreditation. The curriculum overall is particularly relevant because it successfully combines promoting pupils' personal development whilst ensuring that they do not fall behind with their work, especially the development of key skills such as literacy and numeracy. In this way the curriculum is particularly effective in helping pupils to return to mainstream schools or to work and college opportunities. Pupils of all ages are very well prepared for each stage of their education. There are very good induction programmes for pupils when they start at the centres, and very effective support for pupils when they return to their mainstream schools or move to a new school.
16. Primary age pupils receive a good amount of teaching time and the primary centres have plans to increase it further so that the time pupils have for learning matches that in mainstream schools. There is variation in the time allocated to secondary aged pupils and not all secondary age pupils are receiving the same amount of taught time. This is not significantly affecting achievement in the main subjects of the curriculum but it does lessen the time that can be dedicated to other subjects.
17. The curriculum provides pupils with very good opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting activities and interesting outdoor education activities such as rock-climbing, canoeing and orienteering. There are also opportunities for primary age pupils to learn how to swim and for secondary age pupils to dry slope ski. Further opportunities are provided to enrich pupils learning through a good range of trips, for example, to the theatre and many visiting artists and craftspeople provide workshops where pupils of all ages greatly improve their skills in art and music.
18. Learning opportunities for personal, social and health education are very good. In all the centres teachers make very good use of the local community to enrich pupils' learning by arranging interesting visits and a good number of visitors, such as the community policeman, who talk with pupils about their lives and work. These opportunities make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development and their self-esteem. The programme for careers education and guidance and work related learning is very good. Effective links and a very good working relationship has been established with the careers service and this ensures that pupils are very well informed and supported.
19. The curriculum has been very effectively developed to include learning opportunities for pupils who have been identified by their mainstream schools as causing concern. Short-term courses of three or six weeks are provided for these pupils. These are successful in supporting pupils to develop skills to enable them to participate in learning more effectively and to remain in their schools. A very effective example is the three-week course for secondary age pupils who have low level behaviour problems. Here, pupils are provided with good opportunities to maintain their learning in mathematics, English and science whilst participating in extensive activities, which address their behaviour through anger management and life skills. Another, six-week course very successfully meets the needs of pupils at risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream schools. This course is focused on raising achievement both in and out of the classroom and on addressing pupils' behaviour through activities such as team building and individual counselling. There are similar, equally successful, programmes for primary age pupils.

20. There is a very good number of well qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. They have access to very good professional development, which ensures they have skills to effectively meet pupils' needs. There are also a very good number of experienced support staff who are effective in helping pupils learn and improve their behaviour. Accommodation across the service is satisfactory overall. It is good at centres such as Minerva and Ashbourne but is less suitable for secondary age pupils at Wake Green. There are variations across the different centres in terms of the specialist accommodation available to support learning. This has an impact on the range of learning opportunities that can be provided for pupils and on their opportunities to achieve. For example, facilities for food technology are good at Oakdale but the accommodation for science at Oakdale and Burlington is unsatisfactory. Facilities for secondary age pupils to work with resistant material in design and technology are limited in all centres. There are enough suitable resources to support learning and across all centres the quality and range of resources available in information and communication technology and art are good.

Care, guidance and support

The care provided is **good** and pupils receive **very good** support, advice and guidance. This is an area of strength, as at the time of the last inspection. **Good** systems are in place to consult pupils on their views and take account of them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The advice and guidance given to pupils is very good
- There are very good procedures to help pupils settle into the centres and prepare them for leaving
- Each pupil has a very good and trusting relationship with one or more adults
- The Service takes good care of pupils; child protection and health and safety have a very high priority
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' punctuality are inconsistent
- There are good procedures overall for seeking, considering and acting on pupils' opinions.

Commentary

21. During their involvement with the service, whether it is through in-school support, shared provision or for a longer period following permanent exclusion, pupils receive very good individual support. A particular strength is the flexibility of provision. From the start of every placement, staff make it very clear that they expect pupils to remain in or return to mainstream education and make every effort to ensure that this happens. The effectiveness of this advice and guidance is clearly seen in the numbers of pupils successfully reintegrating to mainstream schools or, in Year 11, successfully completing their alternative programmes and progressing to further education. All centres have very well established and effective procedures for settling pupils in and also supporting them when they leave; this is particularly important as a few pupils only attend for three weeks. A small number of pupils spend longer periods in the centres, occasionally moving from one to another. These pupils are well supported overall but there are occasional lapses in the transfer of information and this weakens the process.

22. All the centres that cater for secondary aged pupils work very closely with *Connexions* advisers to ensure that pupils know the options available to them after they leave. Year 11 pupils do not attend the centres. Appropriately, they are found alternative placements, including extended work experience and community-based courses, by the service's learning mentors who work very effectively with *Pupil Connect*, part of Birmingham's Education Welfare Service.

23. Staff are committed to helping the pupils succeed both academically and personally. The pupils recognise this and each has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adult. The tutorial system plays an important part in developing these relationships and encourages pupils to reflect

on their behaviour and achievements. This is particularly strong at the Wake Green Centre where older pupils maintain very detailed tutorial files which, amongst other things, include their weekly marks sheets and targets, attendance and punctuality graphs, and a 'personal action plan' in which pupils reflect on their progress and achievements.

24. The service has good procedures to ensure that pupils and staff work in a healthy and safe environment and these are generally implemented well in the centres. The very high priority the service attaches to continued improvement in this area is reflected in its appointment of a 'Care and Control Co-ordinator', the implementation of a service-wide care and control policy, and a comprehensive staff training programme in the *team-teach* approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This training is available to centre-based and mainstream school-based staff and focuses very effectively on prevention of major incidents that might result in permanent exclusions.
25. A few centres make better use than others of the detailed information collected to try to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. The Link Centre has been particularly innovative in providing incentives such as a breakfast club, at which pupils can play table tennis, and a weekly raffle in addition to the more usual certificates and vouchers. Procedures at the Bridge Centre are less effective. Similarly, although there are good service-wide procedures for seeking pupils' views these are implemented to varying extents by individual centres. For example, the Burlington Centre has particularly good systems, with a formal pupil council which meets half-termly to encourage pupils to express their views and make suggestions for improvements. At Bridge centre, pupils' views are sought mainly at their review meetings and this is less effective.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The service has **very good** links with parents and the community. Links with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships are established with other schools and colleges to promote pupils' academic and personal development.
- The partnership between the service and pupils' homes is very good.
- Very good communication keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and achievements.
- Parents think very highly of the service and have very good opportunities to make their views known.
- The service makes very good use of the community to enrich pupils' experiences.

Commentary

26. The service has excellent links with other schools which it uses to ensure that, whenever possible, pupils are successful in remaining in or returning to mainstream education. Pupils join and leave the centres at any time of the year, but the very effective transfer arrangements ensure that most pupils settle quickly with minimum disruption to their learning. Schools think extremely highly of the work of the service and this benefits pupils because schools are often willing to offer 'fresh starts' to pupils as they know the service will support them. Year 11 pupils often attend colleges as part of their alternative provision; the service's learning mentors work very closely with *Connexions* and *Pupil Connect* to develop and maintain these links. The Wake Green Centre offers pupils from a local special school work experience placements in their excellent environmental area, created with the help of a *Barclays* 'New Futures' award. The adjacent primary school also makes very good use of the area and the 'outdoor classroom' at the centre.
27. Parents are strongly encouraged to work with the service to help their children. They are expected to visit the centre and meet staff prior to their children receiving support from the

service. Where appropriate, staff also make home visits and this strengthens the partnership further. Parents are encouraged to back up at home what is being taught, for example they work on behaviour management plans. Very good information is freely shared with parents. Each centre provides a comprehensive information pack prior to their children starting. Then, not only do parents receive half-termly reports on pupils' progress through the formal review meetings, which are very well attended, but staff regularly telephone or write home to share concerns and, very importantly, to celebrate good behaviour and work. All the centres issue very impressive newsletters which contain a very good mix of information and advice, for example on the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, and items celebrating the successes of pupils.

28. Parents have very good opportunities to make their views known, although the procedures for carrying out surveys and analysing the findings are less well developed in some centres than others. The survey of parents carried out prior to the inspection showed that parents have very great confidence in the service. This was strongly reinforced during the inspection by the very many letters seen from parents to all the centres thanking them for helping their children. The service, in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service, has a policy of offering family support through the centres, based on the 'positive parenting' programme. This covers issues such as improving relationships between family members, strategies for coping with common problems and sharing communication and listening skills. The Ashbourne centre has a comprehensive programme of six sessions organised this year, but this is not yet the case in all the other centres.
29. Links with the wider community are very good and provide a wide range of opportunities to extend pupils' experiences and help them succeed. For example, during the inspection, pupils at the Minerva Centre enjoyed a lesson with a visiting musician from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. All centres provide opportunities for visits and visitors, including artists and drama groups, and use of community sports facilities. Provision of off-site activities in the afternoons for those pupils attending centres for longer periods is inconsistent, being limited for a few by a shorter centre day. Oakdale Centre has a very good programme of sports activities, and some pupils from all the centres catering for the oldest pupils work as volunteers in local primary schools as part of the 'Valued Youth Programme'. Very good use is made of community placements for Year 11 pupils on the alternative provision programme. These range from work experience in Internet cafes to construction industry training to a very wide range of voluntary projects catering for young people alienated or excluded from full-time education in schools. The success of these programmes is evident in the numbers completing the placements and moving on to further training when they reach 16.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Governance by the local education authority, in conjunction with the management committee, is **good**. There has been a huge improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has an exceptionally clear understanding of how he wants to develop the service
- Systems to allow direct comparisons between the different centres are only partially in place
- A very good training programme is in place to help staff develop specialist skills
- Improvement planning is very good and finance is very carefully managed

Commentary

30. Prior to the headteacher's appointment, the future of the different centres was in question. In a very short period of time the whole picture has been transformed. Each of the nine centres had been operating in a considerable degree of isolation and there was virtually no strategic management by the LEA. Admissions were not always appropriate and many pupils with special

educational needs were wrongly placed. Pupils were not routinely being returned to school within a short period and links with those schools were underdeveloped. With very good support from a strong leadership team the headteacher has very quickly conveyed his vision for the service's function and purpose into practice. In this he has been helped by also serving as the named LEA officer, responsible for the governance of the service. A clearer remit has been given to the management group, which for a long time after the previous inspection played very little part in shaping the service's future and supporting its development.

31. Several staff are very effectively deployed to prevent the need for pupils to be admitted in the first place by addressing their needs within schools and working with mainstream staff and individual pupils to prevent exclusion. The service has recently acquired a *Leading Aspect* award in recognition of the quality of its in-school support. There is now close working between the local authority's SEN assessment team and managers of the service to ensure that pupils with statements of special educational need are referred only when absolutely necessary and then only with a clear exit route identified. When the need arises for pupils to attend a centre it is on the understanding that whenever possible the pupil will be returned to school as quickly as possible. Under the old management system many staff found themselves in a position where there were few opportunities for promotion within the centres and many were leaving to promoted posts elsewhere. In response to this a new management structure was quickly developed and staff made aware that very good professional opportunities were opening up within the service. This has encouraged training and commitment and significantly reduced staff turnover.
32. The Behaviour Support Service in its present form is, as the headteacher describes it, 'In its infancy'. Many changes date back only to the start of the school year last September. This is why some of the systems for monitoring the work and effectiveness of its constituent parts are underdeveloped. Managers, for instance, recognise that whilst teaching is being monitored in individual centres there is still a need, especially in the secondary centres, for more moderation and greater consistency in this monitoring. Many centres have different assessment and recording systems making data hard to compare. Also, factors such as punctuality are difficult to compare because centres operate different criteria and record lateness in different ways. At the moment, not enough clear indicators of performance and effectiveness have been identified and there is no system whereby statistical data is regularly and systematically returned to senior managers to help inform them more precisely about smaller, but possibly telling, differences in the performance of individual centres. A good start has been made in the primary centres with an audit of the curriculum and staff skills in each centre in an attempt to ensure that pupils in different units get similar experiences.
33. Improvement planning is very good. It takes careful account of the City of Birmingham Corporate Plan (the total vision for the city) and identifies the areas in which the service can contribute or be involved. This is often through the Inclusion Support Division of which it forms part. Out of this comes the service business support plan. At the other end of the scale, staff in centres are consulted about areas that could be improved. All views are taken into account and priority is given to areas that match well with the corporate vision. Consultation is also extended to mainstream schools to check what improvements to the service would most help them. Out of this consultation, for instance, has come the service's involvement in an initiative to reduce violent behaviour in schools, which has recently been included in the improvement plan. Closely allied to improvement planning is the management of finance, which is very good. The service has a substantial budget with several funding sources. Management of the budget is very complex but all income and expenditure is very carefully monitored. Accounts are audited monthly and there are frequent meetings with the accounts department of the LEA.
34. Staff training needs are given a very high priority and the programme is healthily funded. The staff development plan is produced following consultation with all staff. Training is closely linked to the service development plan and to the findings of staff performance management reviews. Staff are encouraged to involve themselves in training which fulfils the needs of the service and in which they are particularly interested or suited to. Training opportunities over the past year have ranged from individual research under a tutor, to degree courses. A very good balance is

maintained between curriculum training and that relating to professional skills in behaviour management. As a result of this, staff have considerable credibility in local mainstream schools where they are often asked to provide training and this is greatly helping to reinforce the exceptionally strong links that exist between the service and schools. Non-teaching staff are fully involved in training opportunities, a few learning support assistants, for instance are doing an *Access to Learning* course and several administrative staff are involved in day release courses relating to finance and computing.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of outreach provision?

Overall effectiveness

The very good quality of outreach services is extremely effective in supporting pupils and who require a fresh start to their education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The success rate of the service is high.
- There is an impressive breadth in what the outreach provision seeks to offer in its service to schools and to pupils.
- The staff working with schools are highly skilled and very effective in meeting the objectives of the outreach provision.
- Relationships between the outreach service and schools are exceptionally positive.
- There is skilful reintegration of pupils following permanent exclusion.
- The alternative provision available to permanently excluded pupils from Year 11 is broad ranging and carefully matched to the pupils' individual needs.
- Greater detail is required in the data and evidence that is collected as part of the monitoring and evaluation of outreach provision.

Commentary

35. The very good quality of outreach services is extremely effective in supporting pupils and who require a fresh start to their education. The service is justifiably highly regarded by the schools it serves. The complex and broad reaching provision is led and managed with a clear vision, sense of purpose and a determination that vulnerable pupils can succeed in restoring their confidence in education. The organisation of the service is very efficient, allowing a quick response to pupils' needs and to the expectations of parents and schools. The strong emphasis on teamwork ensures that the service is very effective in meeting individual needs through both school-based programmes and alternative provision. High levels of staffing to support the extensive work of the service and the capacity to direct resources to supporting the variety of initiatives and programmes that are currently in place ensures that the outreach provision gives good value for money. The current processes for monitoring and evaluation are adequate but require further development, especially in the detailed collection and evaluation of data, so that the strategic development of outreach provision is better informed.

36. Two key performance criteria reveal the success of the outreach provision in re-engaging pupils and restoring their willingness and confidence to return to and to benefit from mainstream education. Over the last ten terms the provision has ensured that just over nine out of ten pupils at risk of permanent exclusion have not ultimately succumbed to that sanction. Over the last academic year just under half of the pupils permanently excluded from school have been successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools. Of this number, four out of ten pupils are reintegrated within the 16-week target set for successful reintegration. During the same period, seventy five per cent of the permanently excluded Year 11 pupils successfully reintegrated into the alternative provision provided by colleges, training providers and community projects.

37. The outreach provision puts into practice the very clear mission of the behaviour support service. The emphasis on the safer working environment and improved learning outcomes is seen in the significant contribution made to the development of the Team-Teach strategy and the importance placed on the prevention and management of challenging behaviour and exclusion. Schools like the flexibility of the provision and its capacity to tailor the response and the planned programmes to the individual needs of schools and pupils. Activities, such as those provided through the excellent outdoor education programme and courses on anger management, make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal and social development. In addition, the links with external agencies provides another layer of very effective support. The provision makes an outstanding contribution to the inclusion strategy of the whole service.
38. Observations of staff working with schools and pupils confirm their versatility, excellent knowledge of behavioural issues, detailed planning of behaviour support programmes, very successful in-service training given to schools and a capacity to suggest innovative suggestions to meet specific needs and demands. When supporting vulnerable pupils in school the in-school support teachers bring excellent insights, clear expectations and a capacity to get alongside the pupils with whom they work. They help their pupils to understand the situations in which they find themselves, establish clearly defined targets and facilitate improved communication between all those involved in the guidance and support process. This is especially the case for parents when their child is going through the reintegration process following permanent exclusion.
39. Schools and pupils value the high quality support they receive. The purchase of the subscription service and supplements by almost all secondary schools is a measure of the high regard with which the service and its outreach provision is held. At the heart of its success is the professional understanding and empathy that outreach staff bring to their work and contact with schools. The mechanisms for the transfer and managed moves of pupils either into alternative curriculum provision, another mainstream school, or into shared provision are exceptionally well handled. The arrangements for shared provision are invaluable in preventing exclusion. This is because the needs of the pupils are accurately identified, their response is carefully monitored and their return to school very effectively supported.
40. The excellent alternative provision available to permanently excluded Year 11 pupils is based on a range of education and training opportunities designed to improve their life skills and employment prospects. The learning mentors show great tenacity in supporting and advising those pupils who continue to find it difficult to maintain their attendance and commitment to the courses on offer.
41. Although data is collected to monitor the success of the outreach provision the capacity to analyse it in greater detail is at present limited. The service is waiting for a new database to get up and running. It is anticipated that this will enable new fields of data to be collected to better inform the processes of monitoring and evaluation and the future development of the provision.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 and 4

ENGLISH

Twenty-three lessons were observed. A large sample of pupils' work was analysed and discussions were held with staff responsible for teaching and planning the English curriculum

The provision for English is **good**. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

- The quality of teaching and learning is good for all year groups and in all centres and the subject is well led and managed.
- The National Literacy strategy has been implemented effectively and pupils successfully use and develop their literacy skills in several other subjects.
- Standards in writing are satisfactory and improving.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, and does not always help pupils improve their work.

Commentary

42. Good leadership and management of the subject across the whole service has led to good, effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy for primary and younger secondary pupils. This is having a strong impact on pupils' enjoyment of literature, and on their achievement. Teaching has particular strengths in subject knowledge, relationships with pupils and planning. Activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities and are very relevant to pupils' needs and interests. Teachers carefully share their lesson aims with pupils and they explain lesson structures, so that all can work together on common objectives. This leads to successful lessons in which pupils are usually clearly focused on their tasks. Last year, eleven Year 11 pupils gained passes in GCSE foundation course examinations in the range C-E. In addition, forty-six Year 10 pupils gained Entry Level passes, most at Level 2 or 3. In statutory tests at the end of Years 2,6,and 9 pupils' results are below national averages but they are still achieving well in relation to their ability.
43. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening in almost all lessons. They gain confidence and listen carefully to their teachers and their peers. In and around the centres pupils are usually polite to adults and engage in conversation when spoken to. In lessons, they are encouraged by good questioning and relevant activities to join in with discussions and comments. Several pupils, especially older pupils recently admitted in Year 10, are much more hesitant in their speech. It is against this standard that the progress of pupils who have attended for longer is seen to best effect, especially in formal speaking situations.
44. Achievement in reading is good. Pupils choose their own personal reading materials, and are given many chances to share in the reading of a wide variety of material in lessons. These include a good range of texts, such as plays, poetry, fiction and non-fiction. There are good opportunities during the day for pupils to engage in group, paired and silent reading. Older pupils achieve well when studying classic texts, such as Macbeth, and have good access to books from other cultures.
45. Achievement in writing is improving and is good overall. Pupils are writing to many different purposes in English lessons. Primary pupils write short stories and accounts of things they have done at home. Older pupils write short works of fact and fiction and many pupils of all ages are contributing good articles to centre newspapers. Pupils are sufficiently encouraged to improve their writing in other subjects. For example, in food technology lessons, pupils record and evaluate recipes. Younger secondary pupils write perceptive newspaper reports, often as part of their studies in personal, social and health education. The service is successfully addressing its own targets for improving writing across all centres and is receiving good support from the LEA.

Computers are not sufficiently used to enrich pupils' learning and improve their creative writing opportunities.

46. Appropriate new initiatives have been introduced and these are helping to improve achievement. Pupils' work is regularly assessed; however, the information gathered is not yet used well enough to set specific targets for improvement. Pupils' individual education plans contain a literacy target, but these often do not clearly identify the intended literacy skill to be mastered. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always indicate how pupils can improve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils' use of their language and literacy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. It is best in the primary centres where pupils are encouraged to develop their vocabulary. At the moment opportunities to link subjects together are not always structured into teachers' medium term planning.

MATHEMATICS

Seventeen mathematics lessons were observed. A wide selection of pupils work was looked at and key staff were talked to about their planning and records

The provision for mathematics is **good**. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to pupils achieving well
- There has been good implementation and adaptation of national strategies for improving the numeracy skills of pupils in Years 1 to 9
- The testing of pupils on entry gives good quality information but marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always provide guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.
- There is good use of a commercial mathematics computer program, but otherwise there is insufficient use of computers in lessons
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for using mathematics in other subjects.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good overall for pupils in all years and in all centres. The quality of teaching has been maintained from the previous inspection but in centres where teaching and learning were previously judged satisfactory it is now good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide pupils with clear explanations of the work they are expected to undertake. They use questions well to check if pupils have understood and correct misconceptions quickly so that pupils are successful. During lessons teachers support pupils well, monitor their work and give good feedback so that pupils achieve well. However, they do not always use marking constructively to indicate to pupils the strengths and weaknesses of their work and how they can improve. Last year, teacher assessments and statutory tests showed that Year 6 pupils were achieving at about Level 2 or 3 and that at the end of Year 9 they were achieving mainly at Level 4. In Entry Level examinations at the end of Year 10, sixteen pupils gained passes, most at levels 1 and 2. Sixteen Year 11 pupils gained passes in GCSE examinations, mostly with lower grades.
49. The good implementation of national strategies for improving numeracy in Years 1 to 9 provides teachers with guidance that leads to good planning of lessons. The work prepared for pupils enables them to reinforce their understanding and to recall and use knowledge and skills in different situations. Teachers establish good relationships and this is effective in encouraging pupils to behave well and participate in lessons. Learning provides pupils with enough challenge to engage their interest and teachers provide good levels of support to ensure that pupils experience success. Pupils of all ages use a commercial computer program to support their

learning in mathematics but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in areas such as data handling or modelling using spreadsheets. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory with particular strengths apparent in the leadership of the curriculum and teaching.

50. Teachers use the information from testing pupils on entry to plan a good, relevant curriculum, well matched to pupils' ability. However, information gained from further assessment is then not sufficiently used to plan for individual needs through, for instance, precise individual education plan targets. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is based on the requirements for accredited courses. The syllabuses for these provide good guidance for teachers when they prepare lessons. Teachers make better use of information about pupils' attainment to plan work so that pupils can be successful in gaining accreditation and this is reflected in the exam results for 2003 when almost all pupils achieved awards in accredited courses including GCSE.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Planned opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are not well developed. Occasionally, the chance to promote mathematics in other subjects arises, for example, in design and technology and science but this is usually seen as part of those subjects, rather than an opportunity to build upon or reinforce pupils' mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Eleven lessons, covering all age groups, were observed. Pupils' past work was looked at and discussions were held with science teachers.

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 7 to 10 at Oakdale and Burlington centres have limited opportunities to improve their experimental and investigative skills because the science accommodation and resources at their centres are inadequate.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall; it is best in lessons where teachers provide interesting resources and promote the active involvement of pupils in practical work.
- There is insufficient co-ordination of the subject across the service.

Commentary

52. Science provision for primary aged pupils is good but in Years 7 to 10 it is inconsistent, mainly because the centres are not all equipped to a suitable standard. The inadequate science accommodation and resources, in the Burlington and Oakdale centres, for example, does not enable secondary age pupils the same opportunities, as their peers in other centres and mainstream schools, to develop a good range of practical skills. Inadequacies in the science facilities significantly restrict the range of science work that can be planned. Many of the secondary age pupils are therefore at a disadvantage when returning to mainstream schools. Not enough has been done to upgrade science accommodation and resources for secondary pupils since the previous inspection.

53. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. As is pupils achievement. There are many good features; for example, at the Key centre, pupils in Year 3 achieve a good understanding about their teeth and oral hygiene because they are well taught and interesting resources are provided. In all centres pupils are encouraged to answer questions helping them to verbalise their ideas, re-enforce their understanding, and extend their vocabulary. In a very good lesson at the Bridge centre, Year 8 pupils learned through their own investigations that yeast feeds on sugar and, to their delight, produced enough carbon dioxide to blow up a balloon. Pupils

deduced that oxygen is crucial for this reaction to take place. They worked safely with the equipment and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to take part in a practical investigation. Although science facilities at the Link centre do not compare well with mainstream provision, teaching and learning are good because staff prepare resources inventively so that Year 10 pupils can do experiments. Pupils learn, for example, how to find the effect of temperature on rates of chemical reactions. They investigate which brand of crisps contains the most energy. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to do practical work. Teachers successfully promote high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in science. Staff understand the different needs of pupils well; and adopt consistently calm and supportive methods. They help pupils overcome barriers to learning that they bring to lessons. Nevertheless, teachers are missing opportunities to use computers to enliven learning and broaden pupils' understanding of science. Paired working for practical activities successfully promotes pupils' personal and social skills. Pupils enjoy doing science. Last year, in teacher assessments and statutory tests at the end of Year 6, all pupils achieved at Level 2 or 3. At the end of Year 9 most pupils achieved Level 4. At the end of year 11, six pupils gained GCSE passes with grades in the region C-F.

54. With no-one having been appointed to lead, co-ordinate or monitor science provision across the service there is inadequate sharing of good practice, plans or facilities. This is unsatisfactory as it leads to too much variation in provision and reduces opportunities for older pupils to succeed in externally accredited examinations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Ten lessons were observed. Pupils' past work was analysed. Discussions took place with teachers and records of pupils' progress were looked at.

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject, teaching, learning and achievement are all good.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning in the different subjects of the curriculum and this slows pupils' progress.

Commentary

55. There has been a significant improvement in hardware and software resources since the last inspection; this has resulted in pupils having much better access to computers. Pupils achieve well in ICT lessons and make good progress with their learning. They are receiving a good grounding in key computer skills in preparation for a return to mainstream education.
56. The subject is well taught. Specialist teaching normally takes place in the well-resourced computer rooms. In these sessions basic computer skills are very effectively taught. For example, pupils are learning how to use paint programs, word-processing and publishing packages, data handling programs and how to search for information on the Internet. The majority of pupils displayed good mouse skills, but many were less secure when using the keyboard. Senior pupils were observed being well taught on their accredited course, Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). The teacher used a digital whiteboard effectively to demonstrate word-processing skills; for example, cutting and pasting.
57. The scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations, shows that teachers are not using computers to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum as well as they could. Currently pupils are not getting enough opportunities to reinforce and apply the skills they have been taught in the discrete lessons. However, several instances of good practice were observed in the primary centres where pupils were being introduced to spreadsheets and being taught the

purpose of cells and how to enter and change data, and the size of the cells. In a good mathematics lesson, for Years 7-9 pupils, computers were used effectively to explore and interrogate information about the costs of a projected visit to Paris.

58. Throughout the service teachers are making good use of digital photography. It is being used effectively to record achievement. Many examples of this were seen in the displays around the centres and in the scrutiny of pupils' work. The impact of recent training can also be seen in the way teachers are using ICT for planning their work and recording assessments. This is largely the result of good leadership and management of the subject.

Other curriculum areas

Fourteen lessons were observed where personal, social and health education or citizenship was the main focus.

59. Provision for personal, social and health education is **very good**. The subject is very well taught and pupils achieve well. The curriculum for primary pupils is particularly well planned and managed. PSHE opportunities are woven into many different activities. In one Year 6 lesson cookery and social skills were taught very effectively in tandem with pupils learning the importance of behaving well in the kitchen and how to politely ask other pupils to move if they were in the way. Pupils learned the importance of cooperation and politeness as well as how to make good pizzas. In other lessons, pupils have learned about what constitutes right or wrong and the importance of respecting one another's feelings. They also develop an understanding of their own bodies and the importance of looking after them. Secondary aged pupils learn about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and the importance of taking more responsibility and control of their own behaviour. In a good Year 10 lesson at the Link centre, pupils learned about the difference between criminal and civil offences. Here, the teacher demonstrated a particularly good knowledge of the subject and used skilful questioning to get pupils to reflect upon the differences between crimes against the public and crimes against the individual. In a short period of time pupils improved their understanding of issues as diverse as assault, trespass, debt and libel and also the way that the courts treat each. A wide range of additional opportunities helps secondary aged pupils to learn more about their place in the community. The *Valued Youth* project runs in all secondary centres and enables pupils to gain skills as citizens through fund raising for local and international charities. Work experience for the oldest pupils further promotes values of citizenship by including community work. Excellent links with careers and Connexions advisers ensure that pupils are particularly well supported and advised in preparation for life after school.

There is insufficient evidence to make secure overall judgements about teaching, learning and achievement in other subjects. In all, five art lessons were seen, one music lesson, six cookery lessons and two modern foreign language lessons. No geography or history lessons were observed but good account was taken of pupils' past work and teachers' records. Half a day was spent observing pupils participating in a range of physical and adventure activities at Cropwood.

60. The **art** teaching observed, nearly all of it in Years 7-10 was good and there are many examples of older pupils going on to achieve well in GCSE examinations; last year, 24 pupils gained passes, four of them with grades higher than C and most of the rest with grade D. The good quality of work displayed at the centres illustrates the wide range of two and three-dimensional work undertaken by the pupils. In Year 10, there are many examples of pupils' work that had been influenced by the styles of artists such as Edward Munch, Vincent Van Gogh and Chuck Close and it is clear that pupils are building up a good understanding of the appreciation of the art of others as well as the skills to improve their own work.
61. Pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness is being well promoted in **music** and **design and technology**. Personal and social skills are effectively developed in food technology. During the inspection pupils were observed making pizzas. They were applying the rules of hygiene, working

together and sharing tools and equipment, clearing away and washing up at the end of the lesson. In design and technology lessons for pupils aged 11-16 years, a relatively narrow range of materials is used. Wood is the preferred material; there are few opportunities to experience working with different metals or plastics.

62. The service has planned very well for pupils to experience a wide range of **physical activities**, and as a result, there is a very good curriculum in place. During the year, pupils are offered such activities as skiing, mountain biking, rock climbing, sailing, canoeing, orienteering and camping. During the inspection, beginners on the artificial ski slope listened carefully to the instructor and enjoyed the physical challenge of the work. They achieved well when snow ploughing down the nursery slope. Primary pupils at Cropwood Outdoor Centre were being introduced to orienteering. They were being very well taught, and worked hard on team building skills and made very good progress during the session.
63. It is clear from the evidence of past work on display and in pupils' files that many pupils have experienced a good range of **geography** and **history** topics and have achieved well. However, there are inconsistencies between centres in both the provision and delivery of humanities. Within the primary centres pupils have produced some very good pieces of work detailing the life of Dickens and considered the life experiences of people in Victorian times. Work includes a power point presentation compiled by a pupil, a variety of written and research based activities using the internet and a wall display showing their work. There is good evidence that pupils have their work assessed and their next learning targets identified within the history and geography topics covered. By the time pupils leave the primary centres they will all have experienced either a history topic or geography topic as they are taught on a rotational basis. Within Burlington Centre there is evidence of very good work being undertaken by pupils in geography. Good teacher planning and assessment evidence indicates that pupils achieve well and are able to undertake accredited courses accordingly. Good use is also made of ICT in supporting the geography curriculum at this Centre.
64. Very few opportunities are provided across the service for secondary age pupils to learn a **modern foreign language**. Good teaching, however, is helping a small number of pupils in Years 8 and 9 to learn simple conversations in Spanish. These pupils enjoy their Spanish lessons and are building up a useful vocabulary and improving their pronunciation. Pupils are pleased with their achievements and this helps raise their self-esteem. A modern foreign language does not have to be taught in centres such as this but this is a good example of how the curriculum is being enriched for these pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the service	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

