

INSPECTION REPORT

SECONDARY SUPPORT SERVICE

PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Sutton, Surrey

LEA area: Sutton

Unique reference number: 102957

Headteacher: Mrs H. Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mrs C. Marsh
2113

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th June 2001

Inspection number: 238538

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Unit address:	Sutton West Centre Robin Hood Lane Sutton Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	Sutton LEA
Name of responsible officer	Mrs M. McIntosh
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2113	Mrs C. Marsh	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities Science Art and Design Food Technology	What sort of unit is it? How high are standards? The unit's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the unit do to improve further? Integration.
9931	Mrs M. Kerry	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the unit care for its pupils? How well does the unit work in partnership with parents?
1204	Mr D. Bolton	Team inspector	English Information and Communication Technology Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15764	Mrs E. Treacher	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Mathematics Geography	How well is the unit led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), now housed in a single building, serves the London Borough of Sutton. It is an integral part of the Local Education Authority (LEA) Secondary Support Service, working to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, with the aim of promoting social inclusion by reducing exclusion. It caters for pupils aged 11-16 who are excluded, at risk of exclusion, or being reintegrated. It has a maximum number of 50 but can currently accommodate up to 15 pupils at any one time. For some of their time staff are involved in outreach and preventative work in schools. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 pupils on roll, including 14 pupils who were dual registered. No pupils were from ethnic minority backgrounds. Two had statements of special educational needs (for emotional and behavioural or specific learning difficulties). Attainment on entry is below average.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

On entry to the unit, pupils' attainment is below average for their ages. Pupils benefit from attending the unit in that most make at least satisfactory progress in improving their attitudes and behaviour. However pupils of all ages are not achieving well enough in their work and do not make enough progress in all subjects, mainly because of weaknesses in teaching and because they do not get enough taught time. Whilst teachers care about pupils and manage them well, and most often reinforce appropriate expectations of attitudes and behaviour, they do not pitch work at a high enough level, nor have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. This is often because of a lack of specialist expertise in the subjects they are required to teach. In too many lessons pupils are not learning well enough. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, and improvements since the last inspection have been too few and too late. Whilst there have been some positive actions taken recently to address known weaknesses, the LEA and the unit have been too slow in getting to grips with important issues. The unit is expensive to run for the amount of teaching it provides and this, taken together with the current weaknesses, means the unit gives poor value for money.

What the unit does well

- The work teachers do to improve pupils' attitudes, behaviour and self esteem.
- The quality of relationships.
- The staff work well together as a team.
- Support for individual parents.
- Helpful links with the youth and community service and with other agencies.
- The direction in which the LEA service (of which the PRU is a part) is moving.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching.
- Pupils' achievement and progress in all subjects.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory, including the amount and use of taught time and the lack of a taught personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme for all pupils.
- The accommodation.
- Management: too little progress since the last inspection, and further weaknesses have developed.
- The way pupils' progress is tracked.
- Attendance for some pupils, particularly Year 11 and those who attend sporadically.
- The rate of reintegration, building on the good work now started.
- The quality and quantity of resources.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the local education authority.

The weaknesses outweigh what the unit does well. In accordance with Section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 the team is of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this unit because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The unit was last inspected in February 1998. Of the eight key issues for action identified in the last inspection, three have been successfully resolved; the other five have not. The management of special needs is now satisfactory; the LEA ensures that statutory reviews take place; and the LEA brief for the service has been clarified. However, in spite of action taken on these three key issues, important weaknesses remain in raising attainment, attendance, use of time, and enabling pupils to take more responsibility for their own work, which are having a serious effect on pupils. A number of other weaknesses have emerged as well, and the overall quality of teaching is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. The accommodation is a serious weakness; the curriculum is unsatisfactory; the monitoring of attainment and the tracking of pupils' progress are poor; reintegration rates have been too low; and there are weaknesses in management. Overall, not enough improvement has been made since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the unit.

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
English	D	Very good	A
Mathematics	D	Good	B
Science	D	Satisfactory	C
Personal, social and health education	D	Unsatisfactory	D
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	D	Poor	E

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

The shortage of taught time and weaknesses in the teaching are preventing pupils doing as well as they should. Pupils do not achieve well enough and make unsatisfactory progress over time in all subjects. They make unsatisfactory progress in one lesson in two. Not enough progress is made in PSHE because the approach is too piece-meal. All pupils have IEPs, but personal targets for improved standards of achievement and behaviour are not precise enough; teachers do not know enough about what pupils know and can do.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	For the most part, pupils have positive attitudes and are prepared to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Around the unit, pupils usually behave sensibly and get on well together. In lessons, pupils show that they are making good progress in managing their own behaviour, although some are still prone to outbursts of difficult behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils make sound progress in their personal development and some make good progress in this respect. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Not good enough. There has been an improvement for a small number of individuals, but levels of attendance overall are too low. For Year 11 and those pupils who attend sporadically, attendance remains a problem.

Pupils' attitudes to the unit are positive, and this represents significant progress for many pupils, considering their previous experience. Some pupils make good progress in their personal

development, and almost all make at least some gains; this is a strength of the unit. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem and most improve their behaviour, in spite of some unpleasant behaviour on occasions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	There is too much unsatisfactory teaching

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is a serious weakness. Teaching was satisfactory or better in only 50% of lessons. In one lesson in two, teaching was unsatisfactory; it was never poor. On the other hand, teaching was good in one only lesson. Literacy and numeracy are not taught effectively enough. There are weaknesses in the teaching of all subjects, often due to teachers' lack of subject expertise. Teachers' expectations of what pupils could and should do were too low and neither teachers nor pupils were clear enough about what had to be learned in order to move forward. Behaviour was managed effectively. Teachers care about pupils' well-being and are good at building their self-esteem. Pupils were prepared to be involved, but there was a lack of urgency.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Pupils have too little time available for lessons in the unit. Of the time pupils do spend in the unit, too little is given over to teaching. As a result, pupils do not get through enough work and fall behind in their learning. Many pupils have no personal, social and health education lessons. Even taking account of other opportunities arranged for pupils outside the PRU (thanks to good links with other agencies), they receive an impoverished curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This has improved since the last inspection and is now sound.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	At present, there are no pupils in the unit for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Personal development is helped by the unit's generally caring and stable atmosphere, the good relationships, some of the opportunities provided outside the classroom, and the way teachers build pupils' self-esteem. Teachers include work that touches on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, but without a PSHE programme the approach is rather piecemeal. Not enough is done to encourage social development during breaks and lunchtime.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. There is a good level of care and personal support for pupils, but arrangements for assessment and for tracking their progress are weak. This needs to be co-ordinated and managed.

The unit works in satisfactory partnership with parents. The curriculum has weaknesses: pupils do not have enough taught time and best use is not made of what time there is. This limits the progress pupils are able to make, which is currently unsatisfactory. Some pupils have been in the unit for too long, and not enough is done to move them on. There is too little emphasis on preparing pupils for a prompt return to full time in school from the moment they enter the unit. Although pupils receive careers guidance, careers education has been squeezed out – another casualty of the shortage of time. Teachers' lack of specialist subject expertise is affecting the quality of the curriculum. Recent improvements in links with schools, which have been weak in the past, are helping to tackle this.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory. The unit's progress since the last inspection has been too slow and some things have been allowed to get worse. There is too much reliance on informal procedures.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	The management committee receives regular updates from the headteacher of the PRU. Latterly, these have had greater structure and are beginning to provide the necessary information for the committee to carry out its role more effectively. The headteacher has not been appraised.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Not good enough. Weaknesses have not been well enough known and acted upon to bring about improvements where these are needed.
The strategic use of resources	The unit is not making the best use of its resources. Although it has enough teachers to provide many more hours of taught time, pupils are actually taught by them for very few hours each week, because of acute accommodation problems. The unit is expensive to run and staffing and time are not used to best effect.

Accommodation is not good enough. Resources are tight: they are well looked after and used wisely, but too little money is available to spend on them. The lack of subject specialist expertise is affecting the quality of teaching. Although the PRU and the LEA aim to apply the principles of best value, the way the PRU is currently operating is neither economic nor efficient. However, the LEA has clear plans to develop the wider service, which, when implemented, are likely to lead to a more efficient and effective use of resources. This is necessary.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like attending the unit. • The staff of the unit are very approachable. • The unit helps their children to make progress, particularly in their confidence and self-esteem. • The staff provide good individual support for them and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children receive only part-time education. • The amount of homework set.

Inspectors confirm that pupils have a positive attitude to the unit and that the PRU helps pupils' personal development. Parents' concerns about the limited part time provision are justified, as are their concerns about homework, which was not seen to be used appropriately as a way of extending learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The unit's results and pupils' achievements

1. The Secondary Support Service is a pupil referral unit (PRU) which pupils attend part-time. (The service is also responsible for offering behaviour support to secondary schools in the borough.) There is no maximum length of time that pupils can attend the unit; indeed, some have attended the unit for over two years. Although pupils may be dual-registered, very few indeed actually attend a mainstream school for any part of the school week. It is not appropriate to compare the PRU's performance in national tests and examinations with national averages for all schools. All pupils have a history of disrupted education because of their emotional or behavioural problems and are in danger of exclusion, or have been permanently excluded, from mainstream school. Two of the pupils currently attending the unit have statements of special educational need. Records of pupils' attainment on entry to the unit are very limited. The available information shows that most pupils come with levels of attainment that are below, and in a few cases well below, average for their ages. Standards of work in the unit reflect this. For all pupils, standards remain either below average or well below average.

2. The unit does not do enough to help pupils move forward in their learning and, for a number of reasons, pupils do not make enough progress in their work and do not achieve well enough. In spite of this, pupils' stay at the unit makes a difference in terms of improving their behaviour and building their confidence and self-esteem. They make progress in their personal development.

3. In both Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils are making unsatisfactory progress, not only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but also in all other subjects taught, including personal, social and health education (PSHE), humanities, art, food studies and motor vehicle studies. This shows through in the work that they have done since coming to the unit, as well as in lessons. The under-achievement is linked to a number of weaknesses, including weaknesses in the teaching. In too many lessons (half of those seen) pupils were not learning enough, not enough was expected of them and their achievement was unsatisfactory.

4. Another reason that pupils are not achieving well enough is because deficiencies in the amount of accommodation available mean pupils do not have enough taught time in the unit, with a consequent serious restriction on what can be covered. The situation is compounded by the fact that what time they do have in the unit is not well used. Attendance problems for some pupils further restrict their progress. None of this is helping to put pupils in a strong position to move back full-time into school, college or the world of work.

5. All pupils have individual education plans (IEP's). The few academic targets that are included in these IEP's are too general and vague to allow teachers to say with certainty that they have been met. The failure to identify precise, measurable targets and plans for achieving these means that pupils' learning needs are not being adequately targeted by teachers; as a result, pupils are not making enough progress in their learning. Continuing weaknesses in the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress do not put the unit in a good position to improve standards or to evaluate the unit's overall effectiveness. PRUs are not required to set performance targets in terms of National Curriculum test scores or

examination results, and it would not be possible or appropriate for the unit to do so. It is not possible to comment on performance trends over time.

6. No pupils have taken GCSE in **English** in recent years, although there are plans for them to do so next year. Pupils have gained accreditation by taking tests in basic literacy.

7. On entry to the PRU, pupils' attainment in English is below average; for a few pupils (who have particular problems in reading and writing), it is well below average. Even taking account of their low starting points, pupils do not achieve enough and do not make enough progress in English whilst they are at the unit. Standards in listening and speaking are low for pupils of all ages. Whilst pupils listen to one another and to adults with reasonable attention and understand the factual content of what is being discussed, they do not find it easy to interpret feelings, attitudes and intentions. They are not learning to respond to, or build on, the ideas of others. They find it hard to express opinions and to develop their ideas. Many lack confidence, fluency and precision when speaking. They need more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening in progressive, structured ways, in order to overcome this handicap.

8. Pupils' work shows that, in their reading, they have been helped to understand the story line and to grasp the main points in the text. However, they are not learning to get below the surface of what they read, or to develop their use of inference and deduction. They are not learning to respond to what they read, or to express and justify their opinions. They are not making enough progress, either, in understanding how writers use language to create particular effects.

9. In their writing, most pupils are able to express their ideas in simple sentences, although they often need help with spelling, punctuation and basic grammar. However, they produce little sustained writing. What they write is often disjointed and too superficial; they are not learning to develop their ideas or to express themselves in more interesting ways. Their performance remains at the same level. Just occasionally, a few older pupils have produced pieces of well-written, well-structured, interesting narrative that catch the reader's imagination and show a sophisticated choice of vocabulary and expression. These pieces, which show what some pupils are capable of, stand out in stark contrast to their other work, which is too often dull, routine and lacking in real thought or care. Many pupils are underachieving in their writing. They are not making enough progress over time and not enough is expected of them. Too much work is incomplete or not properly followed through. The shortage of taught time and pupils' absences make matters worse. For too many pupils, handwriting and presentation are poor and are not improving. Pupils have too little to show for their time in the unit.

10. Standards in **mathematics** in both key stages are low in relation to national expectations. Although all pupils take a baseline test on entering the unit, the outcomes of the test do not indicate the level at which pupils are attaining nor are they used to inform pupils' programme of learning. Because of weaknesses in assessment, particularly in Key Stage 3, teachers are unable to track systematically the progress made by individual pupils.

11. The scheme of work for pupils in Key Stage 3 is almost totally dependent on a set of Key Stage 3 revision workbooks, although previously there was a structured programme based on number, which addressed pupils' progression. Pupils now choose which topic to work on and frequently choose the ones with which they are already familiar. The work now lacks a planned approach to teaching key concepts and skills, and is not sufficiently directed by the teacher. This is constraining pupils' progress and makes it difficult for the teacher to keep track of individual pupils' attainment and progress. Most pupils in this age

group show a basic knowledge of the four rules of number. By the end of Year 9, some pupils have completed a substantial amount of work and show understanding of the twenty-four hour clock and can calculate the area of rectangles and triangles. These pupils can simplify simple algebraic expression, show understanding of the mean, median and mode of a set of numbers and can calculate the volume of cubes. There is insufficient emphasis on investigative work in mathematics.

12. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 4. This progress however, is very dependent on the attendance of the pupils. There is good support for the consolidation of pupils' numeracy skills through the City and Guilds Numeracy Tests and most pupils make sound progress through the different stages, particularly up to Stage 2. All pupils are now entered for GCSE in mathematics, which represents progress since the time of the previous inspection. In the 2000 examinations, the majority of pupils in Year 11 were successful in achieving a GCSE pass, although none achieved a pass at the higher grades. By the end of Year 11, pupils who attend on a regular basis have covered the main topics required for the GCSE examination and show competence in graphical work, simple probability and in recognising the properties of regular polygons. These pupils are able to calculate the mean, median and mode of a range of data, can substitute accurately in algebraic expressions and understand congruence and similarity.

13. In **science**, attainment is well below the national average for pupils of all ages. So far no pupils have had the opportunity to gain any external accreditation. However, pupils are now being given the opportunity to follow a modular GCSE science course.

14. For pupils of all ages, too little time (only 45 minutes a week) is available for science, which restricts the progress pupils are able to make. In addition to this, weaknesses in the teaching mean that progress is unsatisfactory and pupils do not achieve high enough standards. In the lessons inspected, pupils made slow progress because of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers are not subject specialists and in spite of their best efforts have failed to capitalise on the pupils' interest and wish to become involved in science, particularly practical science, and, as a consequence, the pupils are not developing and sustaining positive attitudes to the subject. Because of accommodation issues, pupils do no science investigations or practical work. This is clearly a serious weakness and affects the progress they can make. Evidence from the very small amount of work pupils have done shows that they have covered too limited a range of topics, mostly biology, with much of the work being low level activities such as drawing, cutting and sticking and labelling. There is little evidence of real gains in understanding or an ability to apply what they know. Many pupils find it difficult to relate what they are learning to what they have covered previously. For example, a few of the older pupils showed some limited understanding of the properties of metals, but could not relate their knowledge to a teacher's demonstration on electro-plating. Pupils have a poor understanding of scientific vocabulary and find it difficult to speak or to write about their science activities. The presentation of work is unsatisfactory. For some pupils, their intermittent attendance has contributed to the slow progress they made in science.

15. In **art**, all pupils take a skills-based course, which is not based on the National Curriculum. It does not lead to external accreditation, being regarded by the teacher as a "therapeutic" course, although in the past a combined adult education course and teaching in the unit has led to a very small number of pupils achieving a GCSE pass grade. In the limited work seen, pupils are learning techniques, such as observational drawing and use of pencil to produce portraits, the use of pastels, paints and chalks to produce a range of 2-D pictures. However, too little of pupils' work shows the development of their ideas from inception to realisation. In the one lesson it was possible to see, pupils were learning about

shades of colour. Whilst they were able to use colour, they had difficulty describing their intentions or understanding or talking about effects created by the use of colour. Overall, pupils do not have the opportunity to make enough progress in developing their skills across a wide enough area, for example by using ICT, or in 3-D work.

16. In **food studies**, pupils are given the opportunity to prepare and cook a range of dishes and to write down the recipes and methods they have used. They are beginning to identify the basic nutrients in what they are eating and are learning to discriminate, for example, between poor quality and better quality foods such as different types of beef burgers. The limited time and resources they have restrict the progress they are able to make. They have so far made one visit to a fast food outlet, which has raised their awareness and understanding, particularly of food hygiene and food safety issues.

17. There is very little evidence of pupils' work in **humanities**. Pupils have superficially covered tourism, weathering and basic map work. Pupils' written work is poor in terms of handwriting, spelling and general presentation. The activities provided are at a low level and do not challenge pupils' thinking sufficiently or provide opportunities for extended writing. The low standard of work provided is preventing pupils from attaining at appropriately high levels.

18. Although pupils do not have separate lessons in **information and communication technology (ICT)**, they do have opportunities to use computers in lessons in other subjects. They frequently word-process their work. Most pupils do so with confidence. This gives them useful practice in using and refining the ICT skills they have already acquired. At present, because ICT is not taught, pupils are not able to move forward in the subject.

19. In **motor vehicle studies**, there was no written evidence of pupils' attainment and progress. However, it is reported by the teachers that pupils enjoy this subject and make progress in the practical skills involved.

20. In **personal, social and health education (PSHE)**, including lessons at Key Stage 3 and briefing time for pupils of all ages, pupils do not make enough progress because the approach is too piece-meal. Pupils' limited vocabulary and restricted general knowledge are evident. Many are not confident enough to voice their opinions and feelings. At Key Stage 3, evidence from the small amount of work that was available, and from the one lesson taught during the inspection, shows that pupils have some understanding of their bodies and the changes that puberty brings. They know the elements of effective contraception, but few could explain how individual attitudes affect decisions. The subsuming of PSHE lessons into briefing time for older pupils (Key Stage 4) is not a satisfactory arrangement. The briefing times are used for a range of purposes. Pupils are making some limited gains in this time in evaluating their own work, attitudes and behaviour, albeit in a superficial way. However too little attention and time are given to helping pupils to reflect and analyse. In spite of this, most learn how to manage their own behaviour more effectively. Whilst individual sessions may be helpful in encouraging pupils to consider social issues, such as the James Bulger case, the overall PSHE programme is too ad hoc and piecemeal and does not enable pupils to make planned progress. The lack of a designated PSHE lesson for older pupils is a serious weakness, which limits the progress they can make.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. The behaviour of pupils within the unit is satisfactory, and this is largely due to the pleasant and cordial relationships established and maintained by all staff. Pupils feel that there is a genuine interest in them as people, and this helps to raise their feelings of self-

esteem. The morning briefing generates a feeling that pupils are welcome and valued, and they respond by treating staff with respect. There is a feeling of warmth, and of caring for pupils as people.

22. During lessons, pupils are generally willing to do the work allocated to them. Whilst not usually enthusiastic, they mostly use their time productively. The pace of their learning is not brisk, but they respond in accordance with the demands made on them and involve themselves in the activities provided. They undertake the work given them with little demur. Sometimes they are surprisingly compliant when work is not interesting or challenging. Pupils do take a pride in their work, and will point out pieces displayed on the walls with evident pleasure.

23. Work experience records show that pupils who successfully manage work placements behave well, are reliable, punctual and able to work with others. Too many however, are not able to sustain the demands made on them and do not successfully complete work experience.

24. A group of older pupils was accompanied during the inspection to the local further education college for taster courses. The majority behaved with good self-discipline, politeness and courtesy to college staff, and sensible adherence to health and safety requirements in workshops. A few pupils lack the self-control they need to enable them to integrate successfully into college or the workplace.

25. There are some instances of poor behaviour, during lunchtimes for example when pupils are allowed off site and some incidents occur in the town, as recorded in pupils' files. Appropriate responses are made to such incidents, and pupils accept these. Pupils who remain on site do not cause any trouble, but amuse themselves by chatting or sometimes by using the computers. Their behaviour is amiable, as it was during a break time football match during the inspection.

26. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Overall levels of attendance have decreased since the last inspection, and there has been particular deterioration in Year 11 attendance. Since the move to a single site last September, there is more sporadic attendance, and almost all pupils now have unauthorised absence. This was especially noticeable among Key Stage 3 pupils. Too many pupils now have sporadic attendance and this, as well some persistent non-attenders, affects the overall picture. In the term before the inspection, attendance was only 67%. There are isolated examples of pupils who improve their attendance, in one instance as the result of a target being set, but this is not the general picture.

27. The overall level of unauthorised absence has increased since the last inspection, and is now 24%. There are some signs of improvement since the very recent introduction of first day contact with parents or carers. There is still too much absence in Year 11, with three pupils last year attending for a very short while and then never re-appearing, and two pupils with poor attendance.

28. There is some lack of punctuality, for example starting lessons after break, but this is picked up during briefing sessions. In general, registers and observations show that punctuality has improved since the last inspection, when the day had a very late start and pupils were still not on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

29. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and is a major weakness in the unit. Teaching was satisfactory in only 50% of lessons inspected. In only one lesson was it good. There were no very good lessons. This is a cause for serious concern. It has a direct bearing on how well pupils learn.

30. In spite of this there are some strengths to the teaching. In all lessons inspected the staff worked well together as a team to provide consistency for pupils. Lessons are discussed and this ensures that both teachers and support assistants have a clear understanding of what is to happen. The learning support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and to managing pupils' behaviour. They have good relationships with pupils. They work well with individuals and groups of pupils of all ages, encouraging them in their work, and form an effective partnership with the teachers.

31. Pupils can exhibit some challenging behaviour, but staff do not allow this to disrupt lessons or interfere with what has been planned. They are successful at managing challenging behaviour and demonstrate that they care about pupils' physical and mental well-being. They create a calm atmosphere in which pupils can work. The staff are able to anticipate and recognise potential conflict and through sensitive but firm intervention, focus pupils on their work. Expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are made clear. Behaviour is managed well, with constant and consistent reinforcement of expectations, whilst unacceptable behaviour is dealt with firmly and without fuss.

32. Pupils are praised for meeting expectations of behaviour and this reinforces the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not. Teachers are calm, controlled and patient. Warm relationships, underpinned by firmness, are a key feature of teaching in the unit, commanding confidence and respect, and at the same time building pupils' own confidence and self-esteem. Teachers work successfully to ensure that relationships with pupils are positive and encouraging. Generally, teachers can maintain the attention of pupils.

33. However, there is unsatisfactory teaching in almost all subjects. This is not because of weaknesses in basic classroom management skills, but because of a number of other weaknesses. These include a lack of subject expertise in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This results in teachers giving pupils information, but failing to ensure that pupils develop the essential skills and understanding needed to go with it, in order to make progress in the subject. In all cases, teachers' expectations about what pupils can learn and do are too low. For example, in a science lesson on balance and the ear, the drawing and cutting-and-pasting tasks, which took up much of the time, failed to challenge pupils or to extend and consolidate their understanding. Time in lessons was not always well used. Too often teachers failed to inject any sense of urgency. Some explanations and activities failed to capture pupils' interest and pupils were sometimes apathetic about their learning. The ends of lessons were not used well to reinforce key teaching points or to consolidate pupils' learning. In some lessons inspected, teachers were well prepared and had provided potentially suitable resources, but the structuring of the work was not effective.

34. Teachers do not know enough about the prior attainment of the pupils and pitch the work at the wrong level, often making it too easy and not challenging pupils to think or to improve on what they can already do. Teachers are not targeting their teaching at what individual pupils need to do in order to improve.

35. The emphasis on improving behaviour and self-esteem, important as this is, is too often at the expense of raising achievement and promoting learning. Pupils are allowed to have a casual, easy-come-easy-go attitude and superficial answers are too readily accepted. Whilst teachers are good at valuing pupils' contributions, they do not encourage them to take things further. In most lessons, teachers fail to follow up pupils' answers or question them in ways that help them to develop their thinking and expression. Some lessons do not have clear enough learning objectives. In others, although pupils are clear about what tasks they are to tackle, they are not clear about where these are taking them or what they are expected to learn. Consequently, at the end of lessons, and in briefing time, pupils do not know how far these objectives have been met, nor are they able to decide what they will need to do next time in order to improve.

36. Much of the teaching is in very small groups or on a one-to-one basis. On these occasions, teaching is conducted in a "tutorial" style. This does not prepare pupils for what is expected in mainstream school. In the great majority of lessons, teachers do not insist that pupils work hard. References to life in mainstream school, college or work are rare. Successful reintegration does not have a high enough explicit emphasis.

37. In the 50% of lessons where teaching and learning were satisfactory, there were nevertheless aspects that needed improvement. Sometimes, questioning was not challenging enough – for example, checking memory, rather than going on to test and develop a deeper understanding. At other times, lessons were rather lacklustre and the pace tailed off, particularly towards the end. In some work in English, mathematics, science, and food studies, the teachers' own lack of subject expertise meant that they were less sure about how to present or develop material. As a consequence, even though pupils worked and made useful progress, the lessons were not as productive as they might have been and pupils' achievement was satisfactory, but not good.

38. Planning of work at all levels is unsatisfactory and not enough progress has been made on this since the last inspection. Schemes of work are not good enough. They do not provide a good enough basis to help teachers plan what they teach and to make sure that it builds progressively on earlier work. Homework is rarely being used to extend learning.

39. Although some **English** lessons are satisfactory, there are weaknesses in the teaching of English, which, along with other factors such as the shortage of taught time, account for pupils' unsatisfactory achievement, and progress. The teaching is not without some strengths. These lie in the way teachers establish warm relationships, gaining pupils' cooperation and building their confidence. They give clear instructions and explanations. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together; they are good at nipping any problems or distractions in the bud and at spotting where individual pupils need extra encouragement or help. They make sensible use of time targets.

40. The main weaknesses stem from teachers' insecurity in teaching a subject which is not their own specialism. They are clear about the topics under study (for example, descriptive writing) but are unsure about where to pitch the lesson and how best to help pupils develop the skills and understanding required. They are not clear enough about what their pupils are capable of in English and about what they should be expected to achieve. Often, expectations are too low; the level of demand is not high enough. Also, the teaching does not focus enough on teaching pupils exactly what to do in order to improve their performance. Pupils become "locked in" to producing work of the same level. In writing, for example, pupils are not helped enough to move beyond a succession of simple sentences. They are not shown how to develop their ideas, how to link them, how to improve the

structure of what they write, how to make their writing more varied, interesting, precise or expressive. In one lesson on descriptive writing, pupils were not helped to understand what features would make for a “good description”. Although the class read a short extract that might have served as a good model, there was no discussion of what the extract was about, of how the author had used description, or of the effect created on the reader. When pupils embarked on their written task, they did not have the “tools” they needed in order to produce work of quality. Pupils’ work shows that teachers make use of a lot of worksheets providing word-level practice, but these are usually “disembodied” routine exercises, not related to “real” writing tasks. Pupils are not being helped to transfer what they learn to their own writing. More needs to be done to develop pupils’ listening and speaking skills. In discussion work, teachers too readily accept superficial answers or statements and do not follow these up with probing questions that challenge pupils to develop their thinking or to express themselves more effectively.

41. In the majority of **mathematics** lessons teaching is satisfactory. Occasionally it is good and occasionally unsatisfactory. Teachers relate well to pupils and are skilled at encouraging them and promoting their self-esteem through positive feedback. Behaviour is managed effectively and good support is given to individual pupils. Where teaching is good, teachers maintain a clear focus on promoting pupils’ learning and understanding. There is effective explanation of the work and the purpose and relevance of it is made clear to the pupils. In such lessons, the teacher maintains an effective balance between challenging pupils’ thinking and encouraging them and supporting their self-esteem. Where lessons are less successful, there is too little teaching, with pupils being able to start another topic even if they have been unable to finish the first one. In these lessons, the lack of direct teaching results in pupils not learning enough.

42. There are major weaknesses in the teaching of **science**. On the positive side, the non-specialist science teachers have worked hard to develop some subject knowledge and some of the explanations capture pupils’ interest, such as the demonstration and explanation of electro-plating. Explanations are clear and there is an appropriate emphasis on safety issues. Lessons are part of a general plan of topics to be covered, which takes some account of the requirements of external examinations and the National Curriculum. Older pupils (Key Stage 4) are now following a course leading to GCSE science.

43. However, lessons suffer from the fact that the science curriculum is not sufficiently well planned. Learning objectives are not properly identified. Links with environmental issues are not made explicit. Expectations of what pupils are able to write down, understand and assimilate are too low. The pace of learning is too slow and some of the teaching in lessons fails to hold pupils’ interest. The absence of any assessment on entry to the unit, and the lack of adequate information about pupils’ prior attainment, mean that the teacher relies too heavily upon informal discussions with pupils to ascertain their level of ability. There are written records of the work actually covered by individual pupils and grades given for effort, However, in spite of this, and modular tests, not enough is done to find out what pupils actually know, understand and can do in science, and thereafter to build on this and to focus clearly on what they need to do in order to make progress. The teachers are not able to draw up records relating to standards attained and progress made by pupils. This is unsatisfactory.

44. In the one **art** lesson seen, the teaching was unsatisfactory. Explanations were patient and there was some teaching of skills, for example the use of colour. However, there was little emphasis on developing the pupil’s artistic or aesthetic appreciation and the tasks set failed either to motivate or to challenge pupils.

45. The one **food studies** lesson seen was well prepared and potentially interesting and appropriate. The teacher's explanations were generally clear but her lack of subject expertise prevented the food tasting from achieving the planned objectives. She did, however, set a purposeful learning climate and use language well to motivate and interest pupils.

46. There was only one **humanities** lesson available for inspection. The teaching was unsatisfactory. While the teacher had a pleasant manner with the pupils and was well supported by the learning assistant, the task was not clearly explained to the pupils, which made it difficult for them to make a successful start. Pupils were uncertain about what to do and this resulted in lost learning time and insufficient progress by the pupils.

47. In the one lesson of **motor vehicle studies** inspected, the teaching was satisfactory. Good use was made of the learning support assistant who had established very good relationships with the pupils, as had the teacher. The pace of the lesson was rather slow initially, but once the two pupils were engaged in the practical task, they made sound progress thanks to the technical advice and support given by the teacher.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

48. The curriculum offered to pupils is unsatisfactory. This is a serious weakness. In spite of some improvements made since the last inspection – a greater emphasis on teaching the basic skills, improved provision for pupils with special educational needs, more account taken of the National Curriculum and the requirements of GCSE – the two key underlying weaknesses remain. Firstly, pupils have too little time available for lessons in the unit. Secondly, of the time pupils do spend there, too little is given over to teaching. Too much time is allocated to breaks between lessons and to “briefings”. The net result is that pupils do not get through enough work and are not able to make enough progress over time in the subjects they are taught. Many who are already behind in their learning when they enter the unit fall further behind; they are not helped enough to keep abreast of what is happening in the mainstream schools to which they should be returning. This is not preparing them adequately for a prompt and successful return to school – the declared purpose of the unit.

49. One of the reasons for the shortage of time pupils spend in the unit each week lies not in a shortage of staffing, but in a lack of suitable accommodation. The closure, for health and safety reasons, of one of the two sites used until a year ago has left the PRU with only one teaching space. An attempt earlier in the school year to increase the amount of pupils' taught time by running classes simultaneously for pupils of different ages proved, perhaps not surprisingly, unsuccessful. Although the unit has enough teachers and classroom assistants to provide many more hours of taught time, the acute shortage of suitable accommodation has led, in effect, to a “rationing” approach to the curriculum provided at the PRU itself.

50. The youngest pupils (those in Years 7 and 8) attend the unit itself for only two days each week. They receive only seven and a half hours a week of lessons, whilst an additional one hour ten minutes is spent on “briefings” and three hours ten minutes are spent on breaks and lunchtime. This balance is wrong; the amount of lesson time is too little. This provision is supplemented by one day off-site on the Link Project run by the Youth Service, which is designed to make a contribution to pupils' personal and social development. For the remaining two days, pupils who are on a reintegration programme can attend their mainstream school. For these pupils, the overall “package” comes closer to

full-time schooling, although not enough is done to make sure that work done in the unit ties in properly with what pupils are doing in their mainstream school, in order to help along the planned transition to full time in school. However, for the other pupils in Years 7 and 8, who are not yet on a reintegration programme – and these are currently the majority – the small amount of taught time they receive is unacceptably low.

51. Pupils in Year 9 (reaching the end of Key Stage 3) currently have lessons on four half-days each week, amounting to nine hours of taught time (excluding “briefings” and breaks). (On one of these half-days, teachers from the unit teach the pupils in a youth centre, because of the lack of suitable accommodation at the PRU. The youth centre is not properly equipped to accommodate such lessons.) In addition, pupils spend one day on the Link Project organised by the youth service. They also attend a half-day course in building and construction (which can later lead to a vocational qualification) or in drama. These additional components bring the overall provision for these pupils up to three and a half days a week – but do not make up for the shortage of lesson time which is essential if pupils are to be adequately prepared, as they should be, to move back into school and cope properly with work there.

52. At present, pupils in Year 10 are taught in the PRU for one and a half days only (three half-day sessions), with a total lesson time of only six and three-quarter hours a week (excluding “briefings” and breaks), with an additional half-day spent on a building and construction project. Most, but not all, Year 10 pupils have just completed a two-week work experience. When they enter Year 11 in September, the intention is that they will spend two days each week on extended work placements. They will also have the chance to follow a half-day link vocational course in a further education college. At present, however, their provision is inadequate.

53. At the time of the inspection, the oldest pupils (Year 11) had left the unit. For most of them, their programme this year did not in fact include link courses at a further education college. It did include two days a week allocated to extended work experience. In practice, while some pupils kept up their work experience through the year, many did not. In future years, a more rigorous approach will be needed to ensure that all pupils are in fact receiving the overall education intended.

54. Within the short teaching time available, teachers make an effort to provide a suitable balance and range of subjects. There is a proper emphasis on the core subjects of English and mathematics. Science has been included; but three-quarters of an hour a week, with no practical facilities, is too little to allow pupils to make real progress in this important subject. Pupils are involved in creative and practical activities, for example in art, cookery, motor vehicle maintenance or drama, and have some opportunity to take part in physical activity – although work in these subjects does not take account of the National Curriculum, making it even more difficult for pupils to keep abreast of what is happening in the schools they should be joining. They have the chance to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons in some subjects. Because of pressure on time, there are no specific ICT lessons. As a result, whilst pupils are able to practise and apply the ICT skills they already have, they do not get the chance to move forward in this subject.

55. During the past year, there have been several changes to the timetable and to the curriculum offered to pupils. This has been disruptive. At present, certain opportunities that are offered to some groups of pupils are not offered to others. Pupils in Year 9 have a physical education lesson; other pupils do not. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 do not take humanities; other pupils do. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have a lesson of personal, social and health education (PSHE); other pupils – very unusually for a PRU – do not have a

timetabled PSHE lesson. In the last analysis, however, the main weakness, lies not so much in these inequalities of opportunity within the unit itself, but in the fact that pupils simply do not have enough taught time. As a result, they receive an unacceptably impoverished curriculum diet, even taking into account the elements of complementary provision arranged for them.

56. Opportunities for older pupils to gain recognised qualifications have been too limited. The only GCSE taken by pupils in recent years has been mathematics. There are now plans in hand, and rightly so, to prepare pupils for GCSE English and science.

57. Since the last inspection, a good deal of work has been done to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs. The unit's special needs policy has been updated and its register of pupils with special educational needs is kept up to date. Staff have received training to help them identify and meet pupils' special needs. There is improved collaboration with the LEA's special needs team, which works to the benefit of pupils. Annual reviews now take place as required. More attention has been paid to the teaching of basic skills.

58. A weakness that affects the quality of the curriculum is the lack of specialist subject expertise. This is affecting the quality of planning and teaching and is leading to pupils' underachievement. Recent improvements in the unit's curriculum links with schools, which in the past have been weak, are beginning to make a difference in this respect. They are helping teachers understand better how to assess pupils' levels of attainment, and providing a helpful specialist perspective on teaching mathematics and English. These practical links are still at a very early stage but they are proving useful.

59. Many pupils do not have a timetabled PSHE lesson. Aspects of sex education are covered each year in science and in lessons taught by the community nurse. Visiting specialists teach drugs education, with additional sessions led by a team from a local prison. Elements of PSHE are touched on in other lessons, particularly English and humanities, and in the "briefing" sessions. However, the treatment of topics on this basis tends to be superficial and rather ad hoc. The lack of a planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) for all pupils is a weakness. All Year 11 pupils receive careers guidance from the local careers service, which also arranges some visits to employers. However, careers education, which was part of the PSHE programme, has been squeezed out – another casualty of the pressure on time. This is unsatisfactory and undermines other work done to prepare pupils for their future lives.

60. Established links with other agencies, like the youth and community service, and other providers, such as Barnardo's and local further education colleges, have enabled the unit to arrange activities outside the PRU, which broaden pupils' horizons and help their personal development. (They do not, of course, lessen the impact on pupils' learning of the acute shortage of taught time.) One example is the Link Project, which aims to help pupils develop personal skills, with its emphasis, for example, on personal and group responsibility, teamwork and problem solving. Liaison with the PRU is good. Work experience, where it is successful, also helps prepare older pupils for the world of work. Such wider opportunities help supplement the occasional visits and other activities that staff of the PRU arrange for their pupils – although shortage of time has seriously limited the scope for these.

61. Provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. There are some strengths but also some weaknesses. Pupils are helped in their personal development by the positive relationships within the unit, the generally stable and caring atmosphere, the

emphasis on building pupils' self-esteem, and the focus on helping them to think about their attitudes and actions and their impact on others. Some of the additional activities provided outside the unit have the potential to help pupils develop as people, but pupils' response is not always positive. Teachers make an effort to include work that touches on moral and social issues and helps pupils to think about values and beliefs, as well as other cultures and traditions. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the lack of a coordinated programme for personal and social education means that the approach is somewhat piecemeal. Not enough is done to set up and encourage opportunities for social development during the breaks and lunchtimes, when many pupils simply leave the site. This is a missed opportunity, given the overall shortage of time.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

62. Although pupils receive strong personal support from staff, which helps them to improve their self-esteem, there are weaknesses in the way their progress is monitored and supported, particularly their academic progress. Procedures in this area are not systematic, rigorous or informed by accurate and regularly collected data. This weakness affects the quality of the guidance which pupils can receive.

63. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory, and is a major focus of individual education plans. Targets are often somewhat vague, but they are reviewed and monitored. Briefings and daily monitoring records emphasise behaviour, and there is also some brief and limited element of self-evaluation by pupils. The fact that pupil records are poorly kept means that these are not as useful as they should be when it comes to monitoring personal development.

64. The monitoring of academic progress is poor. Individual education plans give too little emphasis to learning targets, and those that are in place are generally too wide-ranging and non-specific to be of much use. Assessment in all subjects is weak, although there have been some recent moves in science to record coverage, and in English and mathematics to introduce assessment based on National Curriculum statements of attainment. The fact that staff are not really aware of what pupils know, understand and can do means that monitoring of academic progress cannot happen effectively, and this weakens the quality of educational guidance. Baseline assessment is undertaken in English and mathematics, but, as with other assessment, it is not used effectively to help plan work. Pupils entering school for reintegration do not take with them a clear summative statement of their achievement and their current learning needs.

65. Recent work on attendance records has put in place a system that will demonstrate improvement in attendance, but at the time of the inspection there were still significant gaps in the data. Although the systems are better than those criticised in the past report, they are not yet ready to show clear evidence of improvement or deterioration.

66. There are a small number of examples of pupils, whose attendance has improved, including one example of improvement resulting from a target being set. In general, although individual education plans (IEPs) are used to address attendance, this is not done rigorously. In the case of Year 11 pupils, it appears to have had little effect. There is good liaison with the education welfare service in individual cases. Attendance at work experience is now recorded, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

67. Procedures to promote good behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils respond appropriately to praise and sanctions. There are good behaviour records for Key Stage 3,

with some element of self-evaluation. The opportunities provided in briefings, however, are used too superficially to encourage pupils to make good progress. Often evaluation is perfunctory.

68. Procedures for health and safety and child protection are broadly satisfactory. All staff, including the designated person, need updated training in child protection. In addition, policies for both health and safety and child protection need tailoring to the specific requirements of the unit, rather than relying on pre-written LEA models. This would enable all staff to think through the particular issues surrounding the circumstances and needs of the unit and its pupils, as regards visits outside the unit, for example.

HOW WELL DOES THE UNIT WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

69. Parents are generally satisfied with the work of the unit, although there are clear concerns about the cut in time available since moving to one site. The majority of parents returning the questionnaire are satisfied, but a significant minority raise concerns across a broad range of issues. Inspectors fully support parents' major concern over the small amount of time pupils spend being taught, and the lack of homework being given.

70. The strength of the unit's partnership with parents lies in the work done with parents as individuals, and support for family difficulties. There is also good admissions paperwork, as reported in the last inspection, with clear expectations set out in a parental agreement and codes of conduct which parents agree to. However, as also noted in the last inspection, once the pupil enters the unit, evidence of the effectiveness of the partnership is less apparent. For example, although 94% of parents are reported to attend reviews of individual education plans, no record is made of their contribution to the discussion.

71. The information parents receive on progress comes through reviews and through letters home on behaviour, attendance and good work. These letters appear to have become less frequent since the unit relocated on one site. The unit produces no written annual reports, in the case of pupils who remain at the unit for more than a year, and hence parents must rely on the reviews for information. In view of this, it is surprising that the letter inviting them indicates that it is not essential to attend if this is difficult.

72. Partnership with parents remains just satisfactory. No improvement has been made in formal reporting since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE UNIT LED AND MANAGED?

73. The LEA's executive head of service has a clear and appropriate vision for improving the reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools and for reducing the amount of time they spend in the unit. This is clearly identified in the LEA's Behaviour Support Plan and is spurring the unit to recognise reintegration as a key focus of its work. However, this has not yet been taken fully on board and reintegration rates are still not as good as they should be.

74. The co-ordinator and the other members of the PRU's senior management team have supported a team of staff who care about, and are committed to, the pupils. Together, the senior managers have created an ethos in which good relationships between staff and pupils are fostered and in which individual staff and the work that they do are valued. Although the service co-ordinator knows the strengths and weaknesses of staff in relation to how they manage pupils' behaviour, she does not have a clear understanding of their strengths and weakness in teaching and in promoting pupils' learning and achievement.

Although the service co-ordinator is aware of what happens in the classroom because there is only one teaching space, and consequently joint teaching frequently takes place, monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous. The unit lacks a structured programme for monitoring teaching and for providing feedback to individual teachers. This is a weakness, as improvement of teaching within the unit cannot take place without a clear understanding of the effectiveness of teaching in promoting pupils' learning and raising standards.

75. There is too much reliance on informal procedures. This is reflected not only in the monitoring of teaching but also in the assessment of pupils' work and in tracking their progress, both in terms of academic attainment and attendance. Although the LEA, through its advice and inspection service, has carried out a review of the unit, the adverse impact of teachers' lack of subject expertise on the learning, attainment and progress of the pupils has not been sufficiently dealt with.

76. The unit's progress since the last inspection has been too slow. Of the eight key issues for action identified in the last inspection, three have been successfully resolved; the other five have not. Good support has recently been given by the LEA, helping to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the unit's management personnel. Appropriate job descriptions are now in place reflecting the current duties and responsibilities of the service manager, the PRU manager and the assistant manager. The LEA has provided appropriate support to enable the unit to address the special educational needs (SEN) issues identified in the last inspection. An up-to-date SEN register is now in place, statutory annual reviews are now carried out and staff have received appropriate training to address the specific learning needs of pupils. However, in spite of action taken on these three key issues, important weaknesses remain in raising attainment, attendance, use of time, and enabling pupils to take more responsibility for their own work, all of which are having a serious effect on pupils. The LEA has been too slow to respond to the inadequacies of accommodation, a weakness identified in the last inspection. The closure of one of the PRU's two sites last year has had a further serious impact on both the quantity and quality of provision for pupils.

77. The behaviour support plan for the service is appropriate and identifies the unit's part in supporting schools. What is lacking, however, is planning which focuses on improving provision within the unit itself. Although there exists a post-inspection action plan for the unit, planning procedures within the unit are weak. There is no ongoing planning aimed, for example, at improving the quality of teaching, raising pupils' standards of attainment, improving attendance, putting in place assessment strategies, or improving the accommodation.

78. The management committee receives regular updates from the headteacher of the PRU. Latterly, these have had greater structure and are beginning to provide the necessary information for them to carry out their role more effectively.

79. The unit is more than generously staffed and has enough teachers to provide many more hours of taught time than pupils are presently receiving. Too frequently teachers are acting in a support capacity more in line with the responsibilities of a learning support assistant. There is a lack of subject specialist expertise, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This is a key contributory factor to the unsatisfactory teaching and to pupils' underachievement.

80. Appraisal of teachers and of the service co-ordinator has not taken place. Although the service co-ordinator reports that she has discussions with individual teachers regarding training and development, there is no structure in place for systematically identifying

teachers' professional development needs linked to the development needs of the unit. Staff have had access to LEA courses and training days are used appropriately.

81. There are insufficient resources for teaching and learning. This was an area of weakness in the last inspection and remains so. In English, mathematics and science, there is too restricted a range of textbooks and too few materials for practical work. The situation is similar in most other subjects.

82. The accommodation is inadequate. The fact that there is a single teaching room is severely restricting the amount of teaching that pupils are currently receiving. The unit had to cut back on the amount of taught time for pupils after the move to the West Sutton Site, because it was not practical to teach classes of pupils of differing ages simultaneously in one room. There is a lack of suitable provision for practical activities such as science experiments. The kitchen, which is used for food technology, is inadequate, dirty and unhygienic. The external environment, not managed by the PRU, is run down and bleak. Litter abounds, as do weeds, cigarette ends, broken glass and empty cans. Although the staff have tried hard to make the internal environment more pleasant and supportive of pupils' learning through displays of pupils' art work and by painting the wall of the main classroom themselves, there has been no refurbishment of the unit since its opening nine years ago. The construction of the building and the lack of ventilation make it uncomfortable in hot weather and reportedly very cold in winter. The cleanliness of the unit is poor. The staff toilet is dirty, cramped and unpleasant. Because of the lack of storage space, the toilet is also used as a storeroom. The small office, which is used by staff as a staff room as well as a room for interviewing individual pupils, has paint peeling off the pipes and has a hole in the roof. These are not suitable conditions for pupils or staff to be working in. Although there are plans to extend the accommodation and provide more suitable teaching spaces, the building programme does not start until 2002. This will not meet the needs of the present cohort of pupils or those coming in autumn.

83. The unit is not making the best strategic use of its resources. This is because, although the unit has enough teachers and classroom assistants to provide many more hours of taught time, pupils are actually taught by them for very few hours each week. A key reason is the lack of suitable accommodation, already referred to. As things stand at the present, the unit is overstaffed for the curriculum it is able to offer, it is expensive to run and teachers spend too little of their available time teaching. When they are teaching, they usually work in pairs with one teacher taking the lead role and the other supporting (sometimes with the support of a learning assistant as well). With the numbers attending the PRU at any one time, this is an expensive use of teaching staff. There is a further inefficiency in the use of time when pupils do attend the unit, with too much time being given to breaks and briefings at the expense of teaching. This was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection report and remains so. This practice does not align with the priority of raising achievement.

84. Although the PRU and the LEA aim to apply the principles of best value, it is clear that the way in which the PRU is currently operating is neither economic nor efficient. The LEA has clear plans to develop the wider service of which the PRU is a part, which, when implemented, are likely to lead to a more efficient and effective use of resources. This is necessary.

WHAT SHOULD THE UNIT DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. To improve provision, the head and staff of the unit, working with the LEA, should:

- (1) **Raise achievement and ensure pupils make better progress by improving the quality of teaching.** This will involve:
 - ensuring that teachers' subject expertise is sufficient to match the demands of the curriculum;
 - raising expectations and understanding of what pupils can and should achieve, and making work more challenging;
 - taking account of individual pupils' needs and levels of achievement;
 - providing work that teaches pupils the knowledge and skills they need to move forward in the subjects they are studying;
 - improving the quality and extent of planning;
 - taking account of the National Curriculum in all subjects taught.
(*Paragraphs 3, 11, 14, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 58.*)

- (2) **Improve the curriculum,** by:
 - providing pupils with more taught time;
 - making better use of the time available whilst pupils are at the unit;
 - providing a planned programme of PSHE taught to all pupils;
 - making sure careers education is taught.
(*Paragraphs 4, 9, 20, 35, 39, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 59, 79.*)

- (3) As a matter of urgency, **improve the accommodation,** so that it is fit for the purpose of providing pupils with a suitable education.
(*Paragraphs 4, 14, 82, 83.*)

- (4) **Improve the leadership and management** of the unit, by:
 - improving day-to-day systems, including keeping adequate and up-to-date records;
 - putting in place a structured programme to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, with a clear focus on pupils' learning;
 - making sure the unit's own development plan focuses on improving the quality of provision within the PRU itself;
 - setting up and implementing a coherent system for monitoring pupils' achievement and progress.
(*Paragraphs 62, 64, 74, 75, 76, 77.*)

- (5) **Improve the way pupils' progress is tracked,** by:
 - assessing pupils' attainment more accurately;
 - tracking systematically the progress pupils make in their work;
 - ensuring that IEP's have more precise, measurable targets, not only for behaviour but also for learning, against which success and progress can be measured;
 - collecting, collating and making systematic use of the data available
(*Paragraphs 5, 10, 62, 63, 64.*)

- (6) **Improve attendance,** particularly in Year 11 and for those pupils who attend sporadically. (*Paragraphs 26, 27, 66.*)

- (7) **Improve the rate of reintegration**, building on the good work done recently.
(Paragraphs 73, 86 – 89.)
- (8) **Improving the quantity and quality of resources for learning.**
(Paragraph 81.)

INTEGRATION

86. One measure of the unit's effectiveness should be in its rate of moving pupils back into full time at school. Whilst the rate of reintegration of pupils has improved recently, the figures show that too few pupils from the PRU have made a successful transition back into full-time education over the past two years. This is a concern, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 3 (aged 11-14) and those in the early part of Year 10. At the time of the inspection, four pupils on the PRU's roll (all in Year 9) were successfully attending their school full time. With the exception of one Year 7 pupil, no pupils were actually attending both the PRU and their mainstream school, even where they were dual-registered, although a few were stated to be due to start the process of reintegration.

87. There are a number of reasons for this. There has been a logjam of pupils who have been in the PRU for too long, partly because mainstream schools have been over-subscribed and partly because of schools' reluctance to accept these pupils. Within the unit itself, not enough is done to prepare pupils for reintegration to mainstream school. They do not get enough taught time. Links with what is being taught in mainstream school are not strong enough. Some of what is taught is not yet linked to the National Curriculum. The flow of information between the PRU and schools is ad hoc, rarely covering academic issues.

88. There is evidence that things are improving. At LEA level, there is a strong commitment to inclusion, and the LEA has a good strategic oversight of all pupils within the borough who are out of school. The Pupil Placement panel meets every two weeks and there is a determined and focussed approach to dealing with the pupils who are out of school by the responsible LEA officer. The appointment of an inclusion officer working within a multi-agency framework is also paying off, and this is reflected in the increase in reintegration rates this year.

89. However, some of the problems still exist. Although some of the time of PRU staff is spent in outreach, preventive or support work in schools, it is not clearly targeted to support the reintegrating pupils. Whilst schools and the PRU do work together with the aim of dealing with pupils' behavioural problems, the approach to this is too informal and too little emphasis is placed on ensuring continuity in learning. Staff of the PRU recognise that it is important that Year 10 pupils should return to school wherever possible, but there is a tendency to accept at too early a stage that these pupils will not in fact return to school. For some of the older pupils in Key Stage 4, reintegration into mainstream school may indeed be unrealistic; but even here, a more rigorous approach is needed to preparing school leavers to move on to the next stage of their education, training or employment. Not enough has been done for pupils of all ages to move them on. Pupils have been allowed to stay at the unit for too long, with too little to show for it.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	6	44	50	0	0

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

Information about the unit's pupils

Pupils on the unit's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the unit's roll	29

Special educational needs	No of pupils
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the unit's special educational needs register	31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
Unit data	9

Unauthorised absence

	%
Unit data	24

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for last whole term before the inspection

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	36
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y10

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N.A.

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y10

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	N/A
Total expenditure	N/A
Expenditure per pupil	N/A
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	29
Number of questionnaires returned	9

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	22	33	22	22	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	22	22	22	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	33	11	22	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	22	11	22	22
The teaching is good.	44	44	11	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	33	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	22	0	0	11
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	22	22	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	22	22	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	22	22	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	22	22	0	11

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to the nearest whole number, sum may not = 100