

INSPECTION REPORT

AGINCOURT HOUSE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

LONDON

LEA area: London Borough of Camden

Unique reference number: 100006

Headteacher: Mrs Poppy Berry

Lead inspector: Mike Warman

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th May 2004

Inspection number: 265743

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	14 – 16 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	28
School address:	Agincourt House Agincourt Road London
Postcode:	NW3 2NY
Telephone number:	020 7974 8030
Fax number:	020 7974 8031
Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Camden
Name of responsible officer:	Carmel Littleton
Date of previous inspection:	15 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Agincourt House is part of the Camden Secondary Learning Support Service and provides for students aged 14 to 16 years within the London Borough of Camden Local Educational Authority. It is the only pupil referral unit (PRU) in the borough for students of this age. It takes students who have been permanently excluded from school or who are in danger of being excluded. Students who attend the PRU are from a wide variety of backgrounds with no predominant group. Backgrounds include White British, mixed Caribbean, Asian, Black Caribbean or African. There are currently 28 students on roll all of whom are full-time placements. Eight students have a statement of special educational need and 20 are identified at school action plus of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. All students are identified as having social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. No students speak English as an additional language. When students enter the PRU they have had a history of interrupted education and low or very low levels of attainment especially in English and mathematics.

The primary aim of the PRU is to re-engage students in learning and provide an alternative provision to school leading to national accreditation. A key focus of the provision is to support students in developing their personal qualities, managing their own behaviour and to develop literacy and numeracy skills. At the time of the inspection a significant proportion of the teachers were employed on a supply basis through agencies.

The PRU was last inspected in 1999 when it took pupils from the age of 11 years. Because the nature of the PRU has changed significantly it is inappropriate to compare the present arrangements against the judgements of the last report.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1516	Mike Warman	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, special educational needs
9502	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector	
1718	Kay Charlton	Team inspector	English, physical education, English as an additional language
1395	Stuart Charlton	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Overall evaluation

Agincourt House Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) has many strengths but because there are significant weaknesses in the science curriculum and lack of appropriate accreditation for students in science, it makes **satisfactory provision overall**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and students make very good gains in their personal development. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the PRU provides satisfactory value for money.

The PRU's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve very well in English and well in mathematics.
- Students' personal development is very good.
- Students' achievements in science are unsatisfactory.
- The headteacher provides a clear vision for the work of the PRU and supports and develops staff very well.
- Relationships within the PRU are good resulting in students demonstrating good attitudes and behaving well.
- The respective roles of the LEA and governance committee in relation to the monitoring and challenge of the PRU's work are unclear, particularly for students' progress and ensuring that they receive appropriate accreditation for their achievements in all areas of the curriculum.
- Through its work with parents and students the PRU ensures it is a very inclusive community and this has a very positive impact on students' achievements.

Because the nature of the provision at Agincourt House has changed significantly since the last inspection it is not appropriate to make comparisons against that report.

Standards achieved

Students' achievements	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
By the time they leave the PRU	Satisfactory	Very Good

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

Pupils achieve well during their time at the PRU and standards are satisfactory. Achievement in personal and social development is very good. The many opportunities provided by the PRU for students to develop their personal and social skills support this area very well. In most subjects staff set clear expectations to which students respond well. In many subjects of the curriculum students' achievements are good. In English students achieve very well, in mathematics they achieve well and information and communication technology achievements are satisfactory. Students' achievements in science are unsatisfactory. In all other areas of the curriculum achievement is satisfactory. In all subjects, except science, students achieve very creditable results in their nationally accredited assessments. Pupils demonstrate **good** personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attitudes to learning are good as are the improvements made in students' attendance during their time at the PRU.

Quality of education

The PRU provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. The overall quality of teaching is **satisfactory**. However, a significant proportion of the teaching seen was good or very good. Teaching is very good in English, good in mathematics and art and satisfactory in information and communication technology. It is unsatisfactory in science. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and manage their classes well. Learning mentors and learning support assistants work very well with the teachers to the benefit of the students.

The curriculum is satisfactory and students are very well cared for. The curriculum offers a suitable range of activities and meets the needs of the population. This helps students to learn well and be well prepared for life after school. The provision in all subjects is at least satisfactory, with the exception of science, and in some it is good. The provision in English is very good. The way the curriculum is enriched is good. Links with parents are very good and those with other schools and the community are good. The way the PRU involves students by seeking and acting upon their views is very good.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She provides a very clear direction for the work of the PRU and is determined that all students should achieve as well as they can. The way the PRU is managed ensures that it runs smoothly. The roles of the LEA and governance committee are unclear, although they both support the PRU well. The LEA monitors the work of the PRU well but the role of the governance committee in holding it to account lacks clarity and overall, therefore, is unsatisfactory.

Parents' and students' views of the school

Parents have positive views about the work of the PRU. Students are confident to talk about the benefits of being part of the PRU and what it has done for them.

Improvements needed

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

- Improve students' achievements in science and ensure they receive appropriate accreditation for their efforts in this subject.
- Clarify the roles of the LEA and governance committee so that there is appropriate support and challenge and that the management of the PRU has a well understood and regular reporting process.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, students achieve well and standards are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is very good.
- Achievement in mathematics is good.
- Achievement in science is unsatisfactory.
- Students achieve creditable results in their nationally accredited assessments.

Commentary

1. When students join the PRU, their average attainment is below the nationally expected level for their age and often well below this level, particularly in English and mathematics. During their time at the PRU, students make good progress and achieve well in much of their work. In their personal development they achieve very well.

2. Most students have a history of interrupted education and often low or very low attainment and achievement. During their time at the PRU most students improve the standard of their work considerably so that by the time they leave in Year 11 they achieve creditable results in externally accredited assessments. The main factor for this progress is the significant proportion of good and very good teaching particularly in English where teaching is consistently very good. Most teachers have high expectations of students and consequently they respond well both in terms of academic achievement and behaviour. Students' achievements in science are unsatisfactory as they have no opportunity to gain accreditation in the subject and a significant proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Overall, there is no difference in the achievements of different groups of students, different ages or gender in the subjects studied. The students who have statements of special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Their progress is as good as that of other students at the PRU because care is taken to provide good individual support.

3. In English students make very good progress and their achievements are also very good. Very good progress is made throughout the PRU in all aspects of the English curriculum. Given the starting points of the students when they enter the PRU very good results are achieved in their GCSE examinations.

4. In mathematics good progress is made throughout the PRU and students achieve well. Often from a low starting point they develop their knowledge and skills to solve problems as they embark on and are successful in the GCSE course work.

5. In science students make unsatisfactory progress and could achieve more. This is due to significant weaknesses in the teaching and assessment. Achievements in both the knowledge-based aspects and practical elements of the subject are equally unsatisfactory.

6. In information and communication technology (ICT) students make satisfactory progress and achievements are satisfactory. In art and design students achieve well and all gain passes in their GCSE work. Students' achievements are satisfactory in all other areas of the curriculum including physical education, vocational education and citizenship.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes, their behaviour and their personal development are good. Overall attendance is good, because all students have made significant improvements in their patterns of attendance compared to those when they were in mainstream schools. Students' achievement in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students demonstrate positive attitudes to their work;
- The relationships between staff and students and between the students themselves are good and this contributes positively to the ethos in the PRU and to students' achievements;
- Staff provide very good role models and are very effective in helping students to distinguish right from wrong;
- The PRU has good policies and practice to promote improved attendance and although all students have made significant improvements in the patterns of attendance, the attendance of some students can be further improved;
- The development of students' self-knowledge and the strong emphasis which the PRU places on the responsibilities of living in a community pervade all its work.

Commentary

7. All students demonstrate a positive attitude to their work and enjoy attending their lessons. Overall, students are fully involved in the activities offered and appreciate the opportunities, which the PRU offers, to develop their self-awareness. The number of testimonials from former students and the fact that some are now actively involved as personal mentors is a tribute to the effectiveness of the PRU in this aspect of its work. There is a direct correlation between students' attitudes and the quality of teaching. For example, students' attitudes towards science are less positive than those towards English. Generally, students manage their own behaviours effectively, but when they find this difficult they are very clear about the systems which the PRU has to help them and they use these well. Consequently, even when behaviour problems occur these do not affect the learning of other students. Behaviour around the PRU is good and students are polite and helpful to visitors. Students behave very well when they are on visits out-of-school and this was well demonstrated on the weekly visit to the local sports centre. Staff at the sports centre commented very positively on the behaviour and conduct of the students from the PRU, particularly in direct comparison with that of pupils and students from mainstream schools. The good relationships and trust between the students and adults are the key to the PRU's effective behaviour management. Students report that any incidents of bullying in the PRU are quickly resolved. The number of fixed-term exclusions is in line with that which would be expected for the PRU population. The records show that the exclusion processes are carried out in accordance with the PRU policy.

8. Both the PRU's ethos and the planned curriculum promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are increasingly accepting responsibility for their own actions and have a good awareness of the impact of their actions on others. They can distinguish right from wrong and understand the need for rules. This is well supported by the role models presented by the staff. It is particularly noteworthy that students respond very well to staff who were former PRU students. Students are developing an increasing understanding of themselves and have a growing awareness of other people's feelings. They appreciate the cultural diversity within the PRU and challenge racism and value race equality. Students take their responsibilities seriously, particularly the school council and are appreciative of the way in which their concerns are dealt with.

9. The PRU is particularly successful in promoting students' personal, social and emotional development and they clearly understand its importance to achievement in other areas of learning. The good relationships and mutual respect and trust form the foundation of a positive learning environment that allows students to make progress in all areas of their personal development. Adults consistently show patience when confronted with a variety of student anxieties and

challenging behaviour and genuinely try to resolve matters without affecting the students' self-esteem and confidence. Students feel secure to openly display their anxieties as they trust the adults who have created a highly supportive environment within the PRU.

Attendance

10. Attendance is good overall because all students have improved their patterns of attendance compared with those at their previous schools. For many the improvement is significant; for example, in a random sample of 20 per cent of students, their attendance had improved by between 30 and 60 per cent. The very effective implementation of good policies by all staff, but particularly by the administrator, contributes significantly to the success the PRU achieves in this area. The PRU's efforts to promote good attendance by students are effective but are not always well supported by all parents resulting in the attendance of some students being low. Students' punctuality is satisfactory and they arrive at lessons on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 74%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
PRU data	9	PRU data	17

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

Exclusions

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	8	5	0
White – any other White background	5	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	5	0
Black or Black British – African	2	4	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE PRU

Provision is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Curricular provision is satisfactory. The PRU makes very good provision for the care and welfare of all its students. The PRU has strong links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have high expectations and manage behaviour very well.

- Senior staff set a very good model in their teaching.
- All staff have good relationships with students.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	7	7	2	0	0

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

11. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with a significant amount of good and very good teaching and a small amount that is unsatisfactory.

12. The work of the learning mentors and learning support assistants throughout the PRU contributes significantly to the quality teaching seen and the learning opportunities provided for the students. They are skilled when working with individuals or small groups of students. Their necessary interventions to help with the management of students' behaviour are particularly effective.

13. The best teaching was seen in English lessons because teachers had very good subject knowledge and made it clear to students what was expected of them in a lesson and what it was hoped they would achieve. It was also made clear to students how the lesson content would help them achieve well in the qualifications they are working towards. This is particularly effective in motivating students as they have a desire to succeed. In one lesson seen, for example, very good use was made of technical vocabulary such as imagery and visual metaphor when discussing scenes from a novel. These lessons were particularly sharply paced and lively providing a high level of challenge to students.

14. Detailed planning and preparation for most lessons is helping teachers meet the differing needs of students and ensuring that the course requirements are met. What is apparent is that all staff insist on high standards of behaviour and many have good expertise with regards to behaviour management. This, linked to the PRU's effective strategies for supporting staff, leads to a good response from students. Senior staff set a very good example through their behaviour management techniques and the high quality of their teaching.

15. Objectives for most lessons are identified in the planning and these are directly related to the subject content and the requirements of the exam syllabus. They are sharp and clear and support learning well. Students benefit from the positive relationships developed by the staff and the constant encouragement to persist with and improve their work. Teachers recognise students' differing abilities and give as much attention as possible to meeting their individual needs. The result is that most students develop confidence and consequently achieve well in areas that they previously thought they had few skills; for example, art and design. Although students have significant behavioural difficulties many lessons proceed calmly with students showing sustained concentration. When incidents do occur there are very good support systems so that students are re-engaged in learning as quickly as possible and the learning of others is rarely interrupted.

16. Teaching that is unsatisfactory is the result of planning that does not give students experience of all the elements of the subject being studied, for example, investigative work in science.

The curriculum

Provision is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high focus is given to students' personal development. This is very effective and results in students learning to take responsibility for their actions.
- A good focus is given to the development of students' skills in literacy and numeracy.
- The PRU runs interesting and relevant programmes that lead to a good level of accreditation in most subjects.
- In science, the provision is not sufficiently wide-ranging or balanced to ensure students gain appropriate accreditation.
- A good level of staffing supports students' individual needs in all year groups.
- The accommodation is satisfactory.

Commentary

17. Overall, the curriculum covers all expected areas and students of different abilities have suitable opportunities to learn.

18. There are well-balanced and very relevant programmes to develop students' key skills in literacy and numeracy. Recent improvements to the resources for information and communication technology mean that there is now satisfactory provision in this area. There is also suitable emphasis on students learning about the world of work, careers and good provision in art. Through ASDAN the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network challenges that have been set up under The Prince's Trust, students learn how to problem solve and how to set about action planning. As part of this programme some very interesting and worthwhile work is taking place on the development of the immediate environment around the PRU. A satisfactory emphasis is given to students' physical development, mainly through visits to local sports centres. The curriculum in science, however, is unsatisfactory with too little emphasis given to investigative work. Other than in science students have the opportunity to gain appropriate accreditation for all the courses they undertake.

19. The PRU has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and ensuring all students are included and their needs are met. It fully meets the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice and ensures a wide range of different types of support is provided according to each student's needs. All of this is effectively planned and reviewed regularly to achieve the best outcome for the student. For all students a central feature of the individual educational programmes is to ensure that they learn to appreciate that each and everyone is important and working with others is often the key to success. At the end of lessons and during an allocated period of time each week staff help individual students review the progress they have made towards their targets and then set the targets for the following week.

20. The PRU's provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Throughout the day, staff reinforce their high expectations of the students in terms of students' personal development, for example, during breakfast time and at lunchtime students are expected to serve others and clear away afterwards. In this way the PRU helps students to realise that each individual has responsibilities as well as rights, and that everyone has to learn how to make choices. There is good attention given to the need for healthy living, sex education and the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs. Emphasis is given to the development of students' understanding of citizenship and issues associated with the environment are of particular interest to them.

21. The provision for curriculum enrichment is good. A wide range of extra activities is undertaken to support the overall programme. Different clubs take place both at lunchtime and after

school. The homework club is often well attended with students who are keen to complete course work for their end of unit assessments.

22. Resources are adequate. Resources for ICT are just satisfactory with a number of computers on short-term loan. There is a good level of staffing and this has a particularly positive impact on students' personal development. Overall, staff are well qualified. Most have secure subject expertise as well as understanding about how to work with students who often have experienced difficulties in mainstream schools. Support staff are well matched to the curriculum needs of the PRU. The learning mentors play an important role, particularly in helping students develop their self-esteem.

23. The accommodation is satisfactory. Although there are sufficient classrooms there are too few meeting rooms for confidential meetings and the office is very cramped. The accommodation is made bright and interesting with good displays.

Care, guidance and support

The provision which the PRU makes for the care of its students is very good. The procedures which are in place to care for students and ensure their general welfare are very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The PRU has very good systems in place for child protection and to ensure that students are cared for and that their general welfare is promoted.
- The careers guidance and advice which the PRU provides are good.
- The PRU very actively seeks the views of students and acts on these appropriately.
- The systems to monitor students' achievements and their personal development are good.
- Students have good access to support, advice and guidance to prepare them for life after school.

Commentary

24. The PRU has effective systems to assess the academic performance of students and to monitor their personal development. On admission, students' needs are assessed and an individual education plan (IEP) is drawn up. The targets in this IEP are used on a day-to-day basis by all staff to ensure that the work meets the needs of the students and also as a basis against which students can gain 'credits' for meeting their targets in lessons. These credits are recorded centrally and enable students to gain rewards in the form of shopping vouchers and trips out. These rewards are well valued by students and have a positive impact on helping them to improve their work and behaviour. All subjects, apart from science, have developed an assessment record, which is based on the scheme of work and/or the syllabus requirements. These records are detailed and linked clearly to the National Curriculum and GCSE requirements. They provide a very effective means through which the progress of each student can be tracked and ensure that all students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. They are particularly effective for students in Year 11 where they form the basis through which students' portfolios and their coursework are developed. Through these records the PRU is able to ensure that students attain high marks in the coursework components of their GCSE examinations. These systems have a very positive impact on raising the self-esteem of students by enabling them to celebrate their success on a regular basis.

25. The PRU has an effective programme for careers guidance and advice which is integrated well into its personal, social and health education provision. However, the co-ordination of this programme has only recently been passed to a new member of staff who is very enthusiastically re-establishing its effectiveness. The provision is supported well through the local Connexions workers who visit on a regular basis. The vocational education and work-related lessons, which have been introduced by the new co-ordinator, are already making a significant contribution to preparing students for life after school.

26. The PRU actively seeks the views of students through the use of questionnaires and course reviews. Their views are taken seriously and provide very useful information for the school council, which meets on a twice-weekly basis. The students consider this to be a very important aspect of life in the PRU and are proud of the changes which have been implemented by the council. They feel that their views are taken very seriously and that this is very important to them. The PRU attaches high importance to this aspect of its work as a way of raising students' self-esteem.

27. The students consider that one of the most important factors in the way in which the PRU helps them is the effort made by all staff to support them in both their academic work and in developing their personal qualities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The relationship the PRU has developed with parents is very effective and there are good links forged with the community and other schools, which support personal and academic development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are involved very well in all aspects of their child's education and the close and supportive relationship extended by all staff at the PRU to families has a beneficial effect on the achievement and social development of students.
- Staff see the liaison with the community and other schools as an important priority and have fostered many successful links which enrich the curriculum and support staff development well.

Commentary

28. Staff spend a lot of time listening to parents and building relationships with them so that they become more involved in the education of their children. There is good written information about the work of the PRU in the form of the brochure and friendly newsletters and parents receive a detailed written report annually about their child's progress. Parents value the informal relationship that they have with staff; they are invited to regular get-togethers and often at these there is a presentation from specialists on subjects such as the issues that face young people in an urban society or drugs awareness. Parents complete questionnaires about the PRU and suggestions are acted upon.

29. The PRU has established a good relationship with the adjoining primary school with regards to the shared area of the playground and improvements to accommodation. The headteacher keeps in regular contact with other local secondary schools so that she is aware of any community issues that may involve students from the PRU. Students at the PRU have benefited from being part of the Healthy Schools Scheme and through its involvement with the local Behaviour Improvement Project staff are receiving training in counselling skills and parent liaison work. There is support from business for the Prince's Trust XL Club; money has been made available and volunteers will assist students as they refurbish the playground. The PRU is working hard to establish links with colleges that would widen the current curriculum provision but places at local colleges have not been forthcoming and students have had to travel some distance across London to attend courses that are available.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher gives a very clear direction to the work of the PRU.
- New and less experienced staff are supported and challenged very well.
- There is a lack of clarity about the ways in which the PRU is monitored and challenged by the Appropriate Authority.

- Staff are committed to future improvement.

Commentary

30. The leadership by the headteacher of the PRU is very good but that provided by the Appropriate Authority is unsatisfactory overall. The headteacher and other key staff work together effectively to ensure that the leadership and management of the PRU are successful. The headteacher provides a clear vision and along with her deputy provides very good role models. She is fully committed to the improvement of the PRU and to the achievement of high standards and quality. Staff share this commitment to improve standards and work hard to achieve them.

31. The role of the Appropriate Authority is unsatisfactory overall. They have ensured that agreed policies are in place and that statutory requirements are met. They have also put in place a system whereby the PRU is supported by a good range of personnel with specific skills. However, there is a lack of clarity, especially from the Governance Committee, about the ways in which the PRU is monitored and challenged. Consequently, reports from the PRU presented to this group are not questioned in sufficient depth. For example, the report which presented the PRU's examination results in 2003 indicated various anomalies in accreditation outcomes. In particular students' achievements in science had not been accredited and this noticeable weakness was not challenged. The workings of the group are complicated by the fact that at each meeting three PRUs report back to them. This makes it difficult for the PRU to raise issues with the group, particularly if they are of a confidential nature.

32. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall, ranging from very good in English to poor in science. Subject leaders are often the only teachers to teach their subject. Most have a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject and how to move the provision on. They have a good understanding about the standards being achieved and about the best ways in which to gain accreditation for the students' efforts. Most have a clear action plan in place to ensure improvements take place but this is not the case in science.

33. Management systems are good. The performance management arrangements are working well. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning, planning and students' work has been regularly undertaken by the headteacher and the LEA. A good level of staff training results from this with noticeable impact on the PRU's work, for example with support staff undertaking teacher training courses. Action plans are also prepared, as a result of this monitoring, leading to improvements in the way the PRU operates. In science, the headteacher has used this information to draw together a well-focused action plan that supersedes that written by the subject leader.

34. The induction procedures for new staff are very effective. A particularly strong feature is the way temporary staff are trained and supported. Learning mentors and support assistants are given very good support so that they make a particularly positive contribution to the learning ethos of the PRU as well as greatly contributing to students' progress and achievement.

35. The PRU does not have a delegated budget. It cannot, therefore, budget from year-to-year for major developments. It does, however, have responsibility for monitoring and accounting for its spending and it does this well. The PRU's office is very efficiently managed and positively contributes to its smooth running. The PRU suitably applies the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well and gain a good level of success in public examinations.
- Teaching and learning are very good and students respond very well to staff's high expectations.
- Students enjoy English and are very motivated in lessons.
- Staff ensure very good challenge and pace in students' learning.
- Teachers and support staff work together very well to ensure learning is effective.
- Subject leadership is very good.

Commentary

36. In all aspects of English, but particularly in writing, many students start from a low base of skills on entry to the PRU and they achieve very well. All gain some form of national accreditation. Many attain good levels in GCSE.

37. Throughout the PRU, a high focus is given to the development of students' skills in speaking and listening. Most develop confidence to contribute to class discussions and are keen to talk about topics of interest. The staff's determined efforts to help students improve their skills in listening, which many do not find easy, are working very well and as a result students take part in debates showing appreciation of others' points of view. This was very noticeable in one Year 10 class as they discussed the Depression and students drew out similarities with life today.

38. Students of all abilities try hard with reading. Most students read with confidence and can discuss texts knowledgeably. They refer to sections of the text to exemplify their views; for example, when referring to the fact that women tended not to be treated as individuals in the novel, 'Mice and Men', one student referred to the fact that, 'Curley's wife is not even named. This makes her sound like his possession.' Most are able to use indexes and glossaries to find information from books. Magazines are provided and pupils read informally at different times of the day.

39. Students write for different purposes and audiences and are prepared to 'attempt anything'. They express well their ideas about the poems, plays and novels they have read. They are prepared to draft and redraft work to achieve a good final copy. Information and communication technology is used effectively as part of this process.

40. The quality of teaching is very good. A high focus is given to English and the development of students' skills in literacy. Students receive a significant amount of individual attention and there are well thought out approaches to encouraging students' independence. Consequently, students are motivated and confident and openly say how much they enjoy this subject. Staff are very secure in the subject and they ensure that work is well matched to the students' levels of understanding and that lessons proceed at a very good pace with high levels of challenge. Students try hard and they respond particularly well to the expectations made of them. Occasionally, students who find self-discipline difficult create some disturbance but this is handled very well so that the learning of others is not affected. Teachers and support staff work together closely to ensure that students achieve of their best.

41. Subject leadership is very good. The subject leader is very enthusiastic about her subject and inspires others who work with her. Assessment is very good and she ensures that students receive a high level of feedback to know what they should do to improve. There is a clear action plan about what needs to be done to improve provision. Resources in the subject are good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. Good attention is given to literacy in other subjects with a suitable focus on key words to be learnt. The PRU is clear that more specific targets for literacy will form an important next step in developing further consistency of approach by staff teaching other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
- The teacher plans well with clear learning objectives for lessons based on the course requirements.
- Students achieve good success in nationally accredited assessments.

Commentary

43. From the time they enter the PRU students make good progress and achieve well in mathematics. Many start with few skills and low levels of confidence. Work in their books shows that much of the content of Year 10 is planned to fill the gaps in students' knowledge and understanding of the basic mathematical processes. By Year 11 work shows students more confident to use their knowledge to solve problems. Despite this, during lessons many students required regular support and reassurance which was readily available from staff.

44. Students are working on their GCSE course and show sound knowledge of the elements covered. Their files show work completed with care and accuracy and data presented through using a range of charts and types of graph. They show a sound knowledge of angles and the calculation of areas of complex shapes, rotation of shapes, and work on algebra involving expanding brackets and substituting values in expressions.

45. Students throughout the PRU apply themselves well to improving their numerical skills as a result of the interesting activities planned. Much of the repetitive work is covered through practical and real life tasks to which students respond well.

46. Teaching is good. The teacher plans with clear mathematics objectives for lessons which are well paced and present a good level of challenge. Teaching is based on careful explanation and patience for those who find it difficult to understand. This is linked to careful questioning and differentiation of task. In this way students learn well and gain confidence. This was clearly seen in a lesson involving one student working algebraic expressions. The teacher explained very carefully so that by the end of the lesson the student understood and could achieve success with the examples given, to her obvious delight!

47. Leadership of the subject is good. Good development has taken place and the curriculum is well planned to meet the requirements of the GCSE course.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. There are some examples, in a few subjects, where this is effective but it is not routinely planned for.

SCIENCE

Overall, provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- No students were entered for external accreditation in the 2002/2003 academic year and none of the present Year 11 students will gain external accreditation by the end of the present academic year.
- Overall, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, but in some lessons students' achievements have been improved significantly by recent staffing changes.
- The leadership and management of the subject area is weak, but an appropriate action plan has been drawn up by the senior management team.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is generally satisfactory, but they are very concerned about the present unsatisfactory nature of their science education.

Commentary

49. In June 2003, no students were entered for external accreditation in science whereas in previous years entries had been made to GCSE Science Single Award. Entries have been made for the OCR Entry Level Science Plus programme for accreditation in June 2004, but only part of one of the three assessment components has been completed and two components, the practical assessment and the 'Can-do' tasks, have not been attempted. The lack of accreditation in 2003 and this year compares very unfavourably with students' achievements in other subjects. In April 2004, there were changes in the staffing of science lessons. The co-ordinator moved to a half-time teaching post and each of the two groups in the present Year 11 is taught for one period each week by another teacher. The rest of the Year 11 science provision, and the whole of the provision for Year 10, is taught by the co-ordinator. The inspection evidence shows that overall, students' achievements in science are unsatisfactory, but in two of the lessons seen achievement was satisfactory.

50. Overall, teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. It was sound in two of the lessons seen and unsatisfactory in the other two. In discussions with students, and in the school council meeting, they were very vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction about not having sufficient opportunities for practical work in science. They felt that the work they had done in the week of the inspection was a significant improvement because there were opportunities for practical work. Teachers have sound subject knowledge but their planning is not effective. This is mainly due to the fact that the scheme of work is rudimentary and simply puts the units required by the OCR syllabus into a time sequence, with Year 10 and Year 11 both following the same programme. There is no indication how the balance between the three assessment components, which is required for accreditation, will be delivered. Students' behaviour in lessons was generally managed satisfactorily, particularly by the learning support assistants, but the teaching often lacked focus and did not involve or challenge students. In the lessons where teaching was satisfactory, students were keen to take part in the practical activities and they made progress in developing their experimental skills.

51. The leadership and management of science are weak. The present science co-ordinator took up his post in September 2002 and introduced the OCR Entry Level Science Plus syllabus to supplement the GCSE Single Award in Science. However, the scheme of work developed to cover this provision is ineffective. It does not indicate how the balance between investigative work and knowledge and understanding will be delivered and there is no indication of how it can be extended to cover GCSE requirements. There is no evidence in the documentation how students' investigative science skills will be developed and the only evidence of practical science being undertaken in the last two years was in the lessons during the week of the inspection. Students in both Year 10 and Year 11 acknowledged that these lessons were their first experience of practical work in their time at the PRU. Although the laboratory provides satisfactory accommodation for the teaching of science it is a very barren learning environment as there are few displays to stimulate interest in the subject,

again this compares very unfavourably with the situation in other specialist teaching rooms. The preparation room and the science resources are badly organized and not well matched to students' learning needs or to the syllabuses being delivered. The accreditation aims identified in the science policy document are not presently being delivered and the co-ordinator's Action Plan for science is inadequate. However, the senior management team has drawn up a rescue plan, for immediate implementation, which re-assesses and builds on the present strengths in teaching and addresses the issues of balance in the curriculum and the accreditation needs of the students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**. The hardware and software has only recently been updated and the lack of appropriate facilities has hampered the development of students' basic skills in the subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently updated facilities have had a immediate and very positive impact on the development of students' basic skills.
- Students have obtained satisfactory results at GCSE and the PRU is now well placed to further improve attainment.
- In the lessons seen teaching and learning were good but over time its effectiveness has been limited by the lack of appropriate facilities.

Commentary

52. Over a number of years students have been entered for a GCSE short course in Information Technology (IT) and for an Entry Level qualification. Generally, the majority have achieved at least a pass grade at GCSE and those who did not, obtained Level 2 or Level 3 Entry Level certification. From the evidence seen, students' achievements have been constrained by the lack of appropriate facilities which has not allowed them to develop their basic skills through constant practice. The inspection evidence shows that students' achievements are satisfactory overall and that in the lessons seen many were making very rapid improvements in developing their basic skills using the new hardware and software.

53. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory having been constrained in the past by lack of access to appropriate facilities. In the lessons seen, both teaching and students' learning were good. All staff have good subject knowledge and they use this well to enthuse and maintain students' interest in their work. Each student has their own learning plan which enables them to work at their own pace towards a qualification which is well matched to their needs. Teachers' planning reflects this, but does not always identify clearly what each individual is expected to achieve in each lesson. Assessments are carried out regularly as required by the syllabus but the feedback from staff to students from these assessments does not always identify clearly what the student needs to do to improve. Relationships between staff and students are good and contribute well to students' achievements and enable behaviour to be managed effectively.

54. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has developed an effective scheme of work which is well matched to students' needs and which enables them to progress smoothly towards an appropriate qualification at their own pace. The ICT suite is now well equipped. The safeguards which are presently in place for students when accessing the Internet are satisfactory, but will be improved when the installation is complete. Up to April, students visited the Camden Learning Centre one half day each week to gain access to appropriate hardware and software. This involved a taxi journey of about half an hour and was unsatisfactory, as it did not allow students to practise their skills on a daily basis. The present situation is very much improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Good use is made of ICT across the curriculum. Across all subjects, apart from science, ICT is used well to prepare portfolio and coursework and in English in particular, the use of ICT for drafting and re-drafting work has a very positive impact on students' achievement.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

56. Other subjects were sampled and it is not possible, therefore to make firm judgements about provision.

57. In **Art and design** students achieve well. They have good opportunities to develop their imagination and skills using a variety of media. The teaching seen was good and gave students the confidence to express themselves and produce good work. Good use is made of the work of a range of artists to help students develop their own ideas. Students' portfolios show some good work that has been very carefully produced. Assessment relating to the GCSE criteria is well used to help students achieve good grades. The subject is currently being well led on a temporary basis.

58. In **physical education**, there is satisfactory coverage of the expected areas. Students take part in a good range of activities with increasing emphasis being given to the evaluative aspects of the subject. Teachers' planning shows a conscientious approach and awareness of the need to match work to students' needs. Students' efforts are accredited appropriately within a national framework. Facilities for the subject are satisfactory with suitable use made of a local sports centre. Subject leadership is satisfactory. There is a clear plan about the ways in which future improvements can be achieved.

59. Overall, in **personal, social, health education and citizenship**, students achieve very well and make very good progress in relation to their starting points. The PRU places great emphasis on students' personal development and this is evident in all the work that it does. Lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship build on this well to promote pupils' personal development in a formal and planned way. This results in pupils becoming more confident and willing to participate, whether it is in the school council or in discussions in lessons such as in an English lesson about the Depression in English.

60. The leadership and management of this curriculum area are satisfactory. A team of recently appointed staff with an enthusiasm for this area of work has produced a comprehensive programme that addresses topics such as personal care, safety, healthy living, bullying, and sex and relationships, as well as encompassing the requirements for citizenship, in a structured and progressive way. A suitable careers programme also contributes significantly to preparing students for the next stage of their life.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the PRU	4
How inclusive the PRU is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the PRU	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Students' achievement	3
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the PRU	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well students learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for students	3
How well the PRU seeks and acts on students' views	2
The effectiveness of the PRU's links with parents	2
The quality of the PRU's links with the community	3
The PRU's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the PRU	4
The governance of the PRU	5
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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