

INSPECTION REPORT

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

SIX PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS

Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121789

Headteacher: Ms R Kelly

Lead inspector: Mr M G Whitehead

Dates of inspection: 8 - 10 November 2004

Inspection number: 268686

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: For permanently excluded pupils and school-age mothers
School category: Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils: 14 - 16 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 159

School address: Cromwell Street
Northampton
Northamptonshire
Postcode: NN1 2DR

Telephone number: 01604 239734
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Appropriate authority: The local education authority
Name of chair of management committee: Mr J Sleet

Date of previous inspection: 14 - 17 October 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Complementary Education comprises six different pupil referral units (known as centres) and a small number of pupils with statements of special educational needs, who follow individual learning programmes and are educated in individual off-site provision. Complementary Education is part of Northamptonshire's special needs provision. There are four centres for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools and two centres for school-age mothers. They are situated in different parts of the county. The main administration and one centre for excluded pupils are situated in Northampton. There is also a school-age mothers' centre approximately half a mile away in the town. There are centres for excluded pupils in Wellingborough and Kettering. In Corby there is a centre for excluded pupils and a school-age mothers' centre in adjacent buildings.

There are 159 pupils on roll – 115 boys and 44 girls. At the time of the inspection all pupils in the units were in Years 10 and 11. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances, which are on average below the national norm. There is a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups – 3 White and Black Caribbean, 1 other White Background, 1 mixed background, 1 Asian- Bangladeshi and 2 from other ethnic groups. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language and there are 6 housed travellers. There are 21 pupils with statements of special educational needs. The attainment of pupils when they join the Centre is generally below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21061	Mr M G Whitehead	Lead inspector	Design and technology
13462	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector	
2512	Mr B Emery	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History Music
20055	Ms S Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography
14563	Mr G Pirt	Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education Special educational needs
20024	Mr P Wright	Team inspector	English Personal, social, health education and citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Complementary Education Centre provides a good standard of education. All pupils make good progress, achieve well and are successful. The six separate centres each provide a good curriculum that is carefully monitored and the progress that pupils make is also well monitored and evaluated. The management of the provision is good overall but there is a weakness as the management committee fails to meet statutory requirements concerning the provision and review of the education of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Despite this weakness, the Complementary Education Centre provides good value for money.

The Centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is well supported by key staff;
- The overall achievement of pupils is good and it is very good in art;
- Pupils receive good teaching in all subjects and very good teaching in art;
- Pupils follow a wide range of accredited courses and are successful;
- The Centre provides a good curriculum which is relevant to the needs of the pupils and is enhanced by good college links;
- Pupils receive good support, guidance and advice;
- A few pupils lack respect for adults and their peers, and there is insufficient challenge of smoking and bad language;
- The management group fails to meet statutory requirements in reviewing and providing the education outlined in pupils' statements of special educational needs.

The overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There has been good improvement in the contribution made by the multi-professional staff who work with the centres. There is now a clear budget, which is carefully monitored by the administrative officer and the management committee. The local education authority is now working closely with the centres, and there is a clearly defined role for each centre. In these respects, also, there has been good improvement. The pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning and behaviour but there are still some weaknesses, and in this respect, the improvement has been only satisfactory. There is now a significant number of pupils who successfully reintegrate into mainstream schools and others move on to more appropriate education in special schools or colleges. This is good improvement. There is, however, still concern over the pupils who have statements of special educational needs. These pupils, whilst receiving a good quality of education, are not necessarily receiving the provision that is outlined within their statements, and in this respect the management committee is failing to meet statutory requirements. This is an area that remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

In all the centres the achievement of pupils is **good**. Achievement in art, however, is very good thanks to the skills of the specialist teachers ensuring that all pupils benefit from their expertise. Pupils follow accredited courses leading to GCSEs and achieve grades that are often in line with those of mainstream school pupils. The good quality of teaching provided for pupils in all subjects enables them to build upon the skills that they have already gained prior to attending the centres

and overcome many of their difficulties that have presented a barrier to their learning. During the last academic year, 179 examination successes by 38 pupils whose grades ranged from A to F. Of these 33 were at grades A to C.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the centres are satisfactory overall. There are times when behaviour is good or very good and other times when inappropriate behaviour lets the pupils down. Attendance is good, and people generally arrive for lessons on time. **The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall**; pupils have good opportunities to develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and a clear appreciation of the multicultural society in which we live.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The centres provide a **good** standard of education. The quality of teaching is **good** overall, with many very good features. Some of the very best teaching takes place during art lessons where pupils enjoy of the variety of work, the enthusiasm and effectiveness of the teaching and their own successes. Pupils benefit from the specialist knowledge that teachers have and this is clearly reflected in the results that pupils achieve in their examinations. Teachers are successful in helping pupils to learn well and to develop good understanding in subjects across the wide range that is available. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance from all staff and benefit from the good knowledge and understanding that adults have of the pupils. There are good links with parents which enable the satisfactory sharing of information between the centres and pupils' homes. There are good links with colleges that enhance the curriculum that pupils enjoy. There are also good links with other schools and the community. Consequently the centres are successful in helping pupils to reintegrate into mainstream schools. The curriculum is good and provides a wide range of subjects that are appropriate to the needs and interests of the pupils and enables them to maintain their studies ready for reintegration or transition to college. The curriculum is carefully monitored by senior management staff and appropriate working parties. There are carefully implemented and managed procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress from the moment they enter the centres.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the Centre are good overall. The local education authority, however, fails to ensure that statutory duties are carried out concerning the pupils with statements of special educational needs. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is well supported by her senior managers who work well together and monitor the work of the six separate centres with rigour. There are good opportunities for all staff to develop professionally. Both the headteacher and other key staff have a very clear vision for the future of all the centres as they develop and improve the provision to meet the needs of the pupils who have been excluded from schools and the school-age mothers.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very comfortable about approaching the Centre with any questions or concerns and are very pleased with the arrangements that enable their children to settle in when they first start at the Centre. They also believe that teaching is good and that their children are treated fairly. Pupils agree that they are treated fairly and that it is a good place to be. They say that the Centre is well run and there is an adult that they can approach if they have a problem.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Reinforce boundaries concerning behaviour and actively discourage the use of bad language;
- Establish a no smoking rule for the pupils

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the educational provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs matches that designated by the statement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement overall is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many of the pupils are working at levels that are close to the national norm and some pupils are achieving top grades in their examinations;
- Reintegration is successful for some pupils as they return to mainstream secondary schooling or move on to college education;
- Achievement in art is very good;
- Pupils' achievement in all subjects is well supported by good procedures for assessing their work and helping them to understand how to improve.

Commentary

1. The levels at which pupils work when they first come to the centres are often well below their true capabilities. Many pupils have had a disrupted education because of their behaviour difficulties. There is a wide range of ability amongst the pupils in the centres, including the girls in the school-age mothers' centres and those in off-site provision. However, all pupils regardless of special needs, ethnicity, religion or gender, make good progress in their lessons.
2. Mathematics and science are taught well and pupils make good progress and achieve credible examination results. In these cases there is a significant proportion of pupils who achieve at levels that are in line with their peers in mainstream schools. Pupils benefit greatly from the good lesson planning that takes careful account of their individual needs and makes sure that the work that is expected of them is sufficiently challenging to motivate them. Pupils also achieve well in English, particularly in speaking and listening skills. They achieve good GCSE grades and benefit greatly from the good teaching that they receive. Pupils achieve well in ICT as they acquire good levels of skill in a wide range of programs. They also benefit greatly from the use of interactive whiteboards, which enable staff and pupils to work together as a large group and gain a clear understanding of ICT. Child development is also an area in which the pupils in the school-age mothers' centres achieve well.
3. Pupils have individual education plans that are specifically designed to help them to overcome their individual difficulties. In most cases, the targets that are set for pupils focus on improving behaviour and taking responsibility for themselves. Occasionally there are academic targets set in order to encourage pupils to improve the levels of their work. On the whole pupils respond well to these targets and consequently a significant number of pupils is successfully reintegrated it each year. Plans are made for the pupils who are unable to return to mainstream education so that they may move on to more appropriate full-time special education or courses in colleges of further education.
4. There are rigorous procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress and achievement during their time in the centres. Assessment begins when they enter to determine the levels at which work should be set. The progress that they make is continually assessed and reviewed informally at least each half term. More formal assessment and recording takes place at the

end of each month and reports are sent home. The assessment procedures include discussions with the pupils to make sure that they understand how well they are doing, the progress that they have made, and how they can improve even further.

5. The list of examination results below gives a very clear picture of the success of the pupils and how well they achieve within the wide range of subjects they study. A significant proportion of pupils achieve GCSE grades A to C, which are equal to and sometimes better than the average grades in mainstream schools. In art half the pupils gained grades A to C.
6. There are times when pupils in Year 10 are encouraged to enter early for their GCSE examinations in any subject. In the last academic year several pupils in Year 10 took examinations in art and design (textiles) and English literature. One pupil took 7 subjects and gained 2 Bs, 2 Cs, 2 Ds and an E grade. The subjects entered and the number of pupils varies from year to year according to the interests and abilities displayed amongst them. Some pupils also receive certificates in food skills which are sponsored by other agencies.

GCSE examination results for 2004

Subject	Grade						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Art	2	5	7	7	5	2	0
Child Development	0	0	3	2	1	0	0
Mathematics	0	0	3	9	10	11	1
Science	0	0	4	5	10	9	3
Geography	0	0	1	3	5	6	4
History	0	1	1	7	4	2	1
English	0	2	1	6	12	9	4
Expressive Arts	0	0	1	2	0	1	0
English Literature	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Art & Design Textiles	0	0	1	3	0	0	0

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall. Attendance is good and punctuality satisfactory. This is a very similar picture to that of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The centres help pupils to improve their attendance and self-esteem well;

- Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good at the centres for school-age mothers, making a good contribution to pupils' achievements;
- Moral and cultural development are good because of the good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) – an improvement since the last inspection;
- Inconsistent behaviour management contributes to an unsatisfactory level of respect for others from a minority of pupils.

Commentary

7. The centres promote attendance well by giving good support to pupils when they experience problems. Telephone calls home on the first day of absence are made regarding any unexplained absence. The majority of pupils show much improved attendance compared to when they were at their former schools. The overall average attendance for the six centres was 80% in the last academic year and unauthorised absence was 7%. The centres encourage pupils to make the most of learning chances and are successful in raising their self-esteem.
8. The attitudes and behaviour of school-age mothers at their two centers are good. For instance, in art and ICT lessons the girls apply themselves well and always produce good work. Most pupils at other centres show interest and enthusiasm in their work and take pride in their achievements. However, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate for long periods and can become disruptive.
9. The standard of behaviour at the centres, overall, is satisfactory. Pupils are given regular reminders about the basic rules at each centre and teachers often stress the importance of good behaviour in lessons. One or two incidents of bad or disruptive behaviour were observed during the inspection period and these were because of a few pupils' lack of respect for adults and their peers. Behaviour management varies at each centre and pupils do not always receive consistent messages. For instance, they sometimes swear or show bad manners without being challenged. The centres have never excluded any pupil.
10. The promotion of good relationships, including racial harmony, is satisfactory. The race equality policy is sufficiently developed.
11. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities in subjects such as art and literacy allow pupils to appreciate the world around them and to reflect on human achievement and failing. Discussions with pupils confirm that their moral development is good. The great majority has a clear sense of right and wrong. There are many opportunities for pupils to consider issues in a moral context. For instance, in history, Year 11 pupils have studied war and conflict through the ages. In PSHE lessons pupils frequently consider topics such as bullying, stereotyping, discrimination, contraception, prostitution and human rights.
12. Provision for social development is satisfactory. Pupils know how important it is to be able to work with and relate to others. The Centre is to develop a council soon, comprising pupil representatives from each of the centres in order to further promote social development. Cultural development is good because pupils have many opportunities to learn about their own culture through the curriculum. Many visitors to the centres and educational trips help pupils to develop their awareness of art, music and literature. They also learn much about other cultures in our multicultural society.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE

The Centre provides a good standard of education at all its centres. Teaching and learning are good and pupils receive a good, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. There are good procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of the pupils throughout their time in the centres. Pupils receive good support and guidance and satisfactory levels of care, welfare, health and safety. There are strong links with other schools and colleges from which pupils benefit greatly. There are also strong links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment is good and pupils make good progress in their lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge which benefits pupils and enables them to learn well;
- Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of the pupils;
- Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their teaching and the ways in which pupils learn;
- Assessment procedures are comprehensive and effective in helping pupils to understand how to improve;
- Teachers have good relationships with the pupils which helps pupils to overcome many of their aversions to learning;
- There are times when teachers do not challenge the inappropriate behaviour and language presented by pupils.

Commentary

13. Teaching is at its very best where teachers are successful in motivating pupils. Teachers make the lessons interesting for the pupils as they plan carefully to meet the special needs and differences within the groups. The work is carefully pitched at a level that is sufficiently challenging to maintain interest and motivation. Teaching in art is particularly good and very good learning occurs because pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work. Pupils select topics of interest to them, with the guidance and direction of the teachers, and develop these ideas into complete projects of study. Where the teaching is not so good, the teachers do not challenge the inappropriate language presented by the pupils.
14. In every subject, teachers make very good use of ICT to enhance their teaching and the ways in which pupils learn. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very effectively and involve pupils in their use. Learning objectives are often displayed for the pupils' benefit and pupils also input information during lessons as they take an active part in the lessons. This is very effective in reinforcing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the new concepts that they learn.
15. The work that pupils complete is marked, often during lessons so that pupils get immediate feedback. Other work, especially in mathematics, is marked later but is done in such a way as to help pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The progress that pupils make is carefully monitored and, at least every half term, there is a review of pupils' attainment and progress. During such reviews the targets are considered and amended as necessary to make sure that they remain relevant and challenging. Targets are based on modifying pupils' behaviour. There are also academic targets to help extend pupils' academic development. The work of pupils who are on individual learning programmes, who are educated in alternative off-site accommodation, is assessed and moderated using the same procedures as those in the centres.
16. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils which help to overcome many of the difficulties that pupils have experienced in their mainstream schools. There are some difficulties, however, because teachers are too tolerant of bad language used by some pupils. Whilst it is inappropriate to be over-zealous, the lack of correction appears to generate a lack of respect within the pupil/teacher relationship. This does not help to prepare pupils for return to mainstream school or acceptance in society in general.

17. There is also a problem with pupils smoking outside the building before lessons and during break times. The lack of clear staff disapproval of this behaviour could be seen as condoning pupils' smoking habits. This is an area that needs serious consideration by all staff as it is in clear conflict with the great deal of good work that is being done at the centres.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	13	8	1	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. Opportunities to extend the curriculum during and after the centres' day are good. The accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is relevant, with very good opportunities to develop skills in art;
- A good range of examinations are available so that all pupils have the opportunity to gain qualifications;
- Good enrichment, through extra-curricular activities, educational visits and expertise from outside the centres, enhances learning and improves motivation for many pupils;
- Good accommodation enables a wide range of courses to be taught;
- Pupils with statements of special educational needs do not always receive the curriculum to which they are entitled.

Commentary

18. The curriculum provided by the Centre ensures that pupils have access to a good range of GCSE courses and that success in these is good. Provision is good in all subjects that were inspected in detail; and very good in art. Suitable adaptations have been made to aspects of the National Curriculum to ensure the pupils have time to develop their basic skills and there is a good emphasis on the pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils also benefit greatly from the strong and very effective links that there are with local colleges of further education. These are very positive and motivating links that help to smooth the transition from school to college when pupils reach the age of 16. Careers education is good and is well matched to pupils' abilities. It is well supported by effective links with the "Connexions" service and a well planned work experience programme. Pupils are very successful in art and achieve well in their examinations. The Centre is also quite innovative in its piloting of a new humanities course.
19. The centres provide a good range of opportunities to extend the curriculum. There are lunchtime leisure activities and a good range of visitors to the centres, for example, from theatre groups and sex and drugs awareness groups. Good use is made of local sports centres with pupils accessing the facilities on a regular basis. There are good opportunities for outdoor education and pupils have the opportunity to go on residential visits each year. They take part in activities that build their confidence and help them to become more self-reliant.
20. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. There are comprehensive policies on sex and drugs education and alcohol misuse, which inform the effective teaching of the subject. Good links with colleges and the community are used to provide additional opportunities for pupils. For example, a group of pupils took part in a visit to a local prison as part of a crime prevention youth and community project.

21. All centres are pleasant and welcoming. There are sufficient spacious classrooms in the centres for the number of pupils in each class and there are specialist classrooms for science and food technology. Displays in centres are attractive and informative, celebrate the pupils' achievements and show that the centres provide a very positive learning environment. The centres have a good number of teachers and support staff with a corresponding breadth of expertise and qualities, which are helping to move the centres forward.
22. Pupils with statements of special educational needs follow individual learning programmes and are educated outside of the Centre. The well-considered programmes are delivered through computer-based learning, individual tuition and college provision. Although this provision has good content it does not meet the needs outlined in the pupils' statements. Therefore the Centre does not meet statutory requirements and the curriculum is unsatisfactory for pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The centres make satisfactory provision overall for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. They provide pupils with good support and guidance and involve them appropriately in aspects of the Centre's development. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make a smooth transition into the centres;
- They are given good advice, support and guidance in their academic and personal development – a good improvement since the last inspection;
- They are also given good guidance about further study and careers opportunities.

Commentary

23. New pupils are sensitively inducted into their centre, based on good information sent by the local education authority. All pupils are offered a home visit from a member of staff and a worker from the Educational Welfare Service. The code of conduct and learning routines are explained carefully at each pupil's induction visit.
24. The Centre has appropriate arrangements for child protection and for those in public care. The designated officer for child protection deals with issues effectively. The headteacher is looking to train more staff extensively as soon as the local authority can accommodate this. Care arrangements at the school-age mothers' centres are good. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken as required, with the exception of assessments for science activities at the centres.
25. There are good procedures to monitor pupils' personal development. Pupils' records are highly detailed and staff use information well to provide good advice, support and guidance. A very strong feature is the daily 'de-brief' staff meeting held at each centre. This enables staff to discuss pupils' academic and personal issues at the end of the day. It also supports assessment well and helps staff to review pupils' behaviour targets effectively. Each pupil has a 'key tutor' who takes the lead regarding target-setting. The centres work closely with specialist support agencies regarding health, sex and drugs education. The centres also work effectively with the Inclusion and Pupil Support Service where pupils have specific learning difficulties. These factors illustrate the Centre's inclusive approach to learning well. Annual Reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs are carried out as required. However, opportunities to modify the curriculum provision in the statement are not taken.
26. Staff work effectively with colleges and 'Connexions' to ensure that pupils receive good information and advice about further education and career opportunities. The Centre's success in this work can be seen in the high proportion of leavers in the last academic year

who went on to further education.

27. There are a few chances for pupils to become involved in decision-making that affects the centres. For example, pupil representatives formed an interviewing panel in the recent recruitment exercise to appoint a senior teacher. It is pleasing to note that their recommendation matched that of the local education authority panel.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The centres have an effective partnership with parents and good links with other schools and the wider community. The Centre has generally maintained these areas of its work since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel valued because they have good chances to express their views and these are taken seriously;
- Their involvement in each centre's work and in their children's learning is good;
- Good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and support learning well;
- Good links with schools and colleges ensure that many pupils are successful in re-integration into mainstream education or moving on to further education.

Commentary

28. Parents are treated as partners in the education of their children. Each centre maintains regular contact with parents. Staff are very approachable and always pleased to discuss parental concerns. Consequently, most parents are confident about raising issues and are able to influence provision at the centres. For instance, the centres have taken on board parents' views about lunchtime arrangements.
29. Parents are well informed about their children's attendance, attitudes, behaviour and personal development. For instance, they are informed about any problems at the centres and individual 'praise letters' are sent home to celebrate achievement. These factors enable parents to become even better involved in their children's learning. However, monthly progress reports about pupils' performance are unsatisfactory because there is usually only a sentence or two for each subject.
30. The Centre actively identifies and develops good links in the community to support learning. For instance, there are many contributors to PSHE lessons. They include agencies that promote health, safety and welfare. The fire service regularly gives presentations and theatre groups raise awareness of the problems caused by alcohol and drug abuse. Pupils enjoy learning about birds through falconry experts who also contribute to lessons. Several educational trips make a good contribution to learning. For instance, pupils take part in outdoor activities at adventure and other centres. An inspector accompanied a visit to a local prison and was impressed at how well the youth and community project works. This project aims to help pupils to understand the consequences of criminal behaviour and keep pupils on the right side of the law.
31. The school has good links with local secondary schools and this has, in the past, helped a number of Year 9 pupils to re-integrate into the mainstream. Good links with local colleges provide many pupils with valuable chances to obtain nationally recognised vocational qualifications and practical experience, and to sample courses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the Complementary Education are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. The local education authority, however, fails to meet statutory requirements concerning pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership of Complementary Education and helps to create a positive ethos within the centres;
- The senior management team provides strong support and leadership to all staff;
- The management of the centres is good and responsibilities are shared effectively;
- The management committee is effective in supporting the work of the Centre but does not ensure that the statements of pupils are being met.

Commentary

32. The centres benefit from the very strong leadership of the headteacher who works very effectively in creating a positive team of staff. She has a very good understanding of the needs of all pupils in the six different centres. Her management skills are invaluable in keeping the six centres working effectively for the benefit of all the pupils. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and skills of the staff and makes sure that they are deployed in the most effective manner. Teachers receive good quality training to support their classroom teaching and curriculum development.
33. There is a strong senior management team that work effectively across the six different centres. They monitor the work and moderate the evaluations, thus maintaining uniformity between them. Senior management staff lead and support at staff meetings at the end of each day in each centre when the daily de-briefing meetings take place. They are also good teachers who will cover lessons for absent staff or those who are away from the centres for meetings or professional development. Subjects are well managed by committee and monitored rigorously by senior members of staff.
34. The local education authority works in support of the staff and pupils and is generally effective in its work. Members of the local education authority have a clear knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the centres. They act as critical friends to the headteacher and provide support and guidance. They do not, however, fulfil all statutory requirements. There are pupils who are the responsibility of Complementary Education who have statements of special educational needs. The statements of some of these pupils have not been modified, through review, in order to reflect pupils' attendance at the centres. At present the Complementary Education are not meeting the needs of the pupils as defined in their statements. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection and has still not been resolved. In this respect progress has been unsatisfactory.
35. The roles of each of the six different centres are now clearly defined and each is running well, being strongly managed and supported in its work. There is much more success in getting information from schools concerning the attainment levels of pupils prior to admission. In these respects there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Curriculum groups work well and are effective in monitoring and developing all subjects. The knowledge and skills of staff are shared between all centres.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,815,820	Balance from previous year	53,000
Total expenditure	1,710,244	Balance carried forward to the next	158,576
Expenditure per pupil	9,886		

36. The balances include funding for the new 'school-age mother centre'. This had to be carried over for two years due to delays in the refurbishment.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 4

ENGLISH

Five lessons were seen in English. Discussions were held with English teachers and samples of pupils' work were analysed.

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good and reflects high expectations of what can be achieved by pupils;
- Pupils achieve well and gain a good level of success in public examinations;
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils respond well to the high expectations of the staff;
- The marking of pupils' work is consistent;
- Resources for encouraging pupils to read for pleasure are good;
- Good management has ensured that there is an appropriate plan for developing the subject.

Commentary

37. Although most pupils are working at standards that are below average in English, they are achieving well given their starting points. There are high expectations that the majority of pupils will gain GCSEs or entry level passes in English and their work is very focused on the requirements of coursework and examinations. In the last academic year the pupils were awarded a total of 34 GCSE certificates. The grades ranged from A to G and included 2 at Grade B and 1 at Grade C.
38. Pupils' achievements are good in speaking and listening. This is because in all subjects pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions and listen to each other's points of view. Good progress is made in improving reading and writing skills for most pupils. Most pupils read with confidence and can discuss texts knowledgeably. They refer to sections of the text to exemplify their views; for example, when referring to selected quotations from the novel 'Of Mice and Men'. They use the correct formats for formal and informal letters and improve their comprehension when answering questions on set reading texts. Many pupils write at length and are beginning to use more interesting vocabulary in their descriptive writing. However, spelling is a weakness and many pupils are not confident in this area.
39. Teaching is good. Staff are secure in their subject knowledge, they plan work that is well matched to the pupils' levels of understanding and deliver lessons that proceed at a good pace with high levels of challenge. Teachers balance praise with challenge very well, and the high quality of relationships between pupils and staff ensure that pupils grow in self-confidence and maturity. Overall, teachers use questioning well that lead to the pupils, including the lower attainers, showing good recall and improved concentration. They are pleased with their achievements at the end of the lessons. Teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and keep them well informed about how well they are doing.
40. This subject is monitored by a curriculum group. This ensures that planning and assessment are good and reflect the Centre's high expectations. Teachers and support staff work together closely to ensure that pupils achieve of their best. Pupils' progress is tracked by the centres and some teachers are using this information to set appropriate targets. Resources are good and are used appropriately. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. The promotion of language and literacy is good across all subjects, with a strong emphasis on speaking and listening. For example, in drama lessons pupils are encouraged to talk about their ideas. Key words are prominently displayed to help pupils learn the vocabulary associated with different subjects throughout the centres. Each centre has a small library section, and newspapers and magazines are available at break and lunch times to encourage pupils to develop their reading skills.

MATHEMATICS

During the inspection, five lessons were observed, work was scrutinised and discussions took place with teachers.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well over time;
- Good lesson planning has differentiated activities for pupils of all abilities;
- Teaching assistants give dedicated support to individual pupils;
- ICT is used extensively to support learning.

Commentary

42. Pupils join the Centre with standards below the national average. Erratic attendance and behavioural difficulties prior to attending the centres have resulted in most pupils lacking confidence in their ability to cope with the subject. From this low base, pupils make good progress and achieve well. In June 2004, thirty-four pupils were entered for GCSE and three achieved grade C. The others were successful in grades A* to G. The chief factors responsible for this improvement are better attendance and a change in attitude to work brought about by the positive ethos of the Centre.
43. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning and preparation are thorough. Teachers discuss learning objectives with pupils so that lessons have a sharp focus. A lively mental starter session is followed by a variety of activities designed to sustain interest and concentration in the main topic. Teaching assistants are deployed well and are effective in giving give focused support to help pupils with their learning and the management of their own behaviour. Teachers generally have appropriate expectations of both work and behaviour and good pupil management skills. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils almost always results in lessons being conducted in a harmonious atmosphere.
44. Teachers use ICT well for presentation and explanation. Pupils have many opportunities to use technology to support their learning. In one lesson, pupils used interactive whiteboards to find the perimeter of their hands. Assessment is good. At the end of each lesson, records of academic progress are kept. In addition, a new system of self-assessment has been introduced. The pupil in discussion with the teacher completes this. Pupils are happy with this arrangement as it makes them aware of what they have learned and clearly understand what they have to do to improve.
45. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is managed by a curriculum group. This curriculum group meets termly to share ideas and good practice. All teachers have specific responsibilities. This corporate pattern of administration works well. Staff have a clear sense of direction for the subject and a shared commitment to raising standards.

46. Since the last inspection the subject has shown good improvement. Plenary sessions are now planned; a new system of assessment has been introduced and behaviour targets are now more realistically assessed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is generally sufficient for the needs of the lessons in other subjects. Practice of numerical skills does take place in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils used calculations to assess changes to blood sugar level and blood pressure when running a marathon. In ICT, pupils applied formulae when preparing spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

Three lessons of science were seen and pupils in the Centre were all in Years 10 and 11 at the time of the inspection.

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; this is reflected in pupils' learning and their achievement in GCSE courses;
- Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly allowing them to plan effectively for the next stages of learning;
- Good use is made of ICT, although more resources are needed to allow it to be used even more effectively;
- Risk assessments are not undertaken.

Commentary

48. Pupils enjoy their work and make good progress because teaching is interesting and enthusiastic and because of the high expectations and good subject knowledge of the teachers. Lessons are well planned from a commercial science scheme and from the GCSE single award syllabus. In the last year there were 31 GCSE certificates awarded and the grades ranged from C to G with 4 of them being Grade C. Teachers plan with clear objectives, taking account of pupils' current knowledge. Practical investigations are chosen well, although teachers would like to increase the number that they undertake.
49. Teachers start lessons with confidence and maintain this with well-chosen questions, so that pupils develop their knowledge at a good rate. Good use of praise and encouragement also helps to maintain a positive atmosphere. Staff work well to encourage and support pupils and help them to manage their behaviour, so that pupils remain on task and gain confidence and skills. Given the previous histories of pupils, it is unsurprising that there are occasional outbursts which, on occasions, affect learning. At these times staff do not always set sufficiently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Nevertheless, the staff manage behaviour well, for the most part, so pupils return to their studies as soon as possible, and relationships between staff and pupils remain positive.
50. Teachers plan well for pupils to extend their scientific vocabulary through speaking and listening tasks and opportunities in writing tasks. There is good use of the very good provision of interactive whiteboards. These are relatively new and, as yet, there is insufficient software to make full use of the interactive capability of this resource. The internet access is being improved at present and pupils have undertaken a small amount of research using this resource. Worksheets and books are at a suitable level and pupils are expected to read instructions and record their findings. Although most of the work is recorded on worksheets,

pupils do have the opportunity to write more extended answers. Opportunities are taken at the end of lessons to assess what pupils have learned.

51. Subject leadership and management are good. The science teachers work as a team and so understand the needs for the subject. They produce a subject development plan that drives the subject and contributes to the Centre's development plan. They have developed a good scheme of work and already identified the need to re-write the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 because of changes in the GCSE syllabus. Accommodation varies between the different sites but overall it is satisfactory. Although there are hazard cards relating to the materials used in lessons, risk assessments are not undertaken and this should be rectified. Resources and materials are good, and easily accessible. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their use of ICT;
- The use of interactive whiteboards is very effective;
- ICT is used well across the curriculum;
- The subject is well led.

Commentary

52. Improvements in pupils' use of ICT since the last inspection have been good. A large investment in computers and interactive whiteboards has enabled pupils and teachers to have extended opportunities to use technology effectively in teaching and learning. Pupils are very motivated when using ICT; they find the subject relevant and interesting and this has a positive impact on their learning and achievement. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils studying for City and Guilds level 1 accreditation were learning how to make spreadsheets. They used good text production skills and showed an understanding of how spreadsheets can be adjusted and modified. A Year 11 group, building on their previous work with spreadsheets, were able to write a simple formula in text. Due to good teacher knowledge and behaviour management, pupils in both these lessons achieved well and had positive attitudes to their learning. In another lesson pupils used the Access programme to set up and use a data base. They were able to enter, delete, change and sort records and showed good understanding of the various applications of data bases. Their good, confident keyboard skills enabled them to address new areas of learning about data bases very quickly. Later in the lesson pupils completed a mock examination paper where they were required to follow instructions to set up accurately a data base for a florist. Good teaching, focusing on what the pupils could do and extending their learning, enabled pupils to make very good progress in their understanding and use of data bases and prepared them very well for their forthcoming examination.
53. Teachers make very good use of the newly installed interactive whiteboards. They use them for instruction and demonstration as well as interactively. In a science lesson, for example, a pupil very effectively used the electronic stylus to connect up details and information about planets to the correct label. As a result of this good teaching and the commitment to the effective use of ICT to promote learning, pupils have developed a wide range of basic skills which they use confidently in their work across the whole curriculum. They can word process their work, edit, save and retrieve text and create and store files. They use the well equipped ICT bases and the good resources in other class rooms efficiently and with respect. Scrutiny

of pupils' work shows that they are clearly, as a result of their own enthusiasm and good teaching, achieving well.

54. The subject is well co-ordinated and staff at each centre who form the ICT curriculum group. This system works well, the staff meet regularly and the subject aims, policies and the intentions in the subject development plan are good. All pupils have access to accreditation through City and Guilds levels 1 and 2 examinations.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. A number of lessons were observed where good use was being made of technology to reinforce and promote learning and this is good improvement since the last inspection.
56. Some good examples of pupils using ICT to support learning were seen in English where pupils used their good word processing skills to compose and edit their work; in mathematics where pupils used the computers to practise their addition and subtraction and self-correct their work; and in science where they used interactive whiteboards to demonstrate their scientific knowledge and understanding. In many subjects, pupils used technology for recording purposes, such as digital cameras to record events for example. In art, pupils very effectively used programs such as Adobe Photoshop to create their own images. Teachers make very good use of PowerPoint presentations in nearly all subjects.

HUMANITIES

57. In one centre, a pilot course of integrated humanities leading to accreditation has been introduced. The course covers elements of economics, citizenship, history, geography as well as aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE). There is also a section on techniques of research. If this trial is successful, the course is to be established in the other five centres.
58. It is not possible to make a judgement concerning the **geography** provision overall as it was possible to observe only one lesson. This was on the topic of fossil fuels and renewable and non-renewable sources of energy. In this lesson the teaching and learning were both satisfactory.
59. Insufficient teaching was seen to allow an overall judgement on provision in **history**. In a history lesson concerned with Saxon and modern law, pupils showed good understanding in a discussion about punishment and the lesson promoted their learning in PSHE very well.
60. In an **integrated humanities** lesson, Year 11 pupils studying economic and industrial issues addressed market research and how companies market their products. The pupils showed interest and good insights which they were prepared to share with their peers and the teacher. They had understanding of social groupings and knew that advertisers target certain groups. Good teaching using interactive whiteboards challenged pupils to think in new ways, for example the hidden messages in Coca Cola advertising which promote feelings of happiness by using images and colour. This lesson had a good practical component; two pupils undertook the Pepsi Challenge - both failed!

TECHNOLOGY

61. Pupils follow a course in technology that focuses mainly on **food technology**. It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence of teaching to be able to make an overall judgement on this provision. Special certificates are awarded through the educational initiative of a major national chain store.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

62. The Centre has been recognised nationally and has been awarded the Arts Council's 'Artsmark' for its commitment to theatre, art, drama, dance and music.
63. No **music** was observed during the course of the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' timetables and Centre documentation shows that most pupils experience a small amount of the subject over time.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and this leads to the pupils' very good achievement in GCSE results;
- The curriculum is very good as it has a very broad content;
- Very good use is made of ICT to support the subject;
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

64. Most pupils arrive with a low opinion of their capabilities and few skills in expressing themselves. Standards on entry are generally below average. As a result of the very good teaching, good resources and, most importantly, very good relationships, pupils grow in confidence and achieve very well. Staff are very enthusiastic about the subject and provide well for pupils to explore a wide range of materials. Half of the pupils achieved GCSE passes between levels A to C. This is better than many mainstream schools.
65. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work on silhouettes of people holding conversations, describing how the subjects look angry or happy. Work is very well organised and shows clear progression in skills. Pupils have produced some particularly high quality work in the portfolios produced for examinations. They have produced imaginative, colourful masks, derived from a study of their own feelings. There are large-scale three-dimensional ceramic objects and pupils have opportunities to work on sculptural forms. There are very good opportunities for pupils to use computer-based images with pupils learning to manipulate their work graphically using professional quality software.
66. Teaching is very good leading to lessons that are purposeful with opportunities for pupils to explore the required elements such as shape, form and texture. In a GCSE project exploring shoes pupils research the history of shoe design, produce a small-scale model and finally construct a full-size 3D model as well as advertising material for the finished article. Very good use is made of demonstration, and the teachers' very good subject knowledge facilitates the development of skills. Very good attention is given to helping pupils to evaluate their work and this provides them with targets for the next lesson.
67. Pupils enjoy their art lessons. They say they find the activities exciting and are proud to achieve success. Often during the course of a lesson, they feel sufficiently at ease to discuss things that concern them and this contributes to their personal development. Their cultural awareness is developed through an increased appreciation of different styles of art. The subject is very well led and managed and this contributes to the success of the subject. Resources are very good and accommodation is good overall. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

68. No physical education was observed during the course of the inspection. Pupils do have opportunities to take part in sports activities during each week and these are enjoyed by the pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

69. During the inspection one lesson in **business studies** was observed in which the teaching was good and developed pupils' previous knowledge of marketing strategies and how there are specific target groups for some products. Pupils gained a good understanding of how to analyse and evaluate marketing strategies.
70. The two centres for school-age mothers provide accredited courses that enable pupils to gain qualifications in **child development**. This approach to the curriculum planning and provision is a strength and enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills that are totally appropriate and from which they will benefit greatly.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons were seen. A variety of other activities were also observed and contributed to the judgements made.

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Topics covered are relevant to pupils' needs;
- Personal, social and health education and other activities and subjects develop pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence well;
- Pupils' awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens are developed well;
- There is good support from outside agencies.

Commentary

71. Pupils make good progress in their personal, social and health development. The programme for citizenship has been incorporated into the planning for what pupils throughout the centres will be taught in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Lessons in PSHE promote pupils' personal development in a formal and planned way. The good citizenship curriculum is effective in making pupils aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. A suitable careers programme contributes significantly to preparing pupils for the next stage of their life. The curriculum is well supported by good links with outside agencies.
72. Teaching in personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons is good. Staff provide good role models of appropriate behaviour and social skills. The teaching programme is carefully planned and there is a good range of interesting activities to motivate pupils and maintain their interest. For example, in an effective Key Stage 4 lesson, pupils were very interested in discussing the responsibilities of owning birds of prey. The good relationships between pupils and the teachers ensured that pupils participated fully in the lesson, knowing that their contributions would be valued,
73. Leadership and management of the subjects are good. The centres attach great importance to this area of its work, and allocate a significant amount of time and staff resources to promoting it. A team of staff from each centre have produced a comprehensive programme that addresses topics such as personal care, safety, bullying, healthy living and sex and relationships education, as well as encompassing the requirements for citizenship, in a structured way. At present the centres do not enter pupils for any accredited course because they feel that courses currently available are not appropriate. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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