

INSPECTION REPORT

Paradise Park Pupil Referral Unit

Islington, London

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100368

Headteacher: Ms Nell Nicholson

Lead inspector: Steven Parker

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th October 2004

Inspection number: 268698

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Provision for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.
School category: Pupil referral unit (PRU)
Age range of pupils: 5 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 13

School address: Islington Behaviour Support Service
Lough Road
London
Postcode: N7 8RH

Telephone number: 020 7527 5717
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Appropriate authority: The local education authority
Name of the responsible officer: Ms Carole Newman

Date of previous inspection: 5th July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

The unit provides for primary aged pupils who have severe emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. It provides for up to 18 places but, at the time of the inspection, it had 13 boys on roll, ranging from six to ten years old. All have experienced a disrupted education and have either been excluded or would have been in danger of being excluded from their mainstream schools. As a result, pupils' attainment on entry to the unit is well below the average for their age. Half the pupils have statements of special educational need and a small number have to move on to other specialist settings when they leave, in order to meet their particular complex special educational needs. Half the pupils are of white UK heritage, a third are of mixed race and the balance are of black British Caribbean origin. Pupils attend the unit from all over Islington, which is a culturally and socially diverse inner London borough with extremes of poverty and wealth. The majority come from very deprived backgrounds and face significant social, economic and educational disadvantage.

Paradise Park has changed considerably in character since it was last inspected. It has relocated to larger, more appropriate accommodation to accommodate an increased number of pupils, some of whom attend on a full time basis. The unit's aim now is to support pupils' long term needs within their family and local community. Consequently, pupils stay in the unit for a sufficient period to benefit from its multi-agency provision, which aims to help them to overcome the difficulties that prevent them from learning successfully in mainstream settings. During this time they are supported in attending mainstream schools on an increasingly frequent basis, until they are ready to fully re-integrate.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13033	Steven Parker	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
31754	Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, history, geography, personal social and health education and citizenship, religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Paradise Park is a **good** pupil referral unit with many strengths. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils' achieve well. The head of centre provides very strong leadership. She is well supported in her work by an effective management advisory group. The unit provides good value for money.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Links with schools are very good, enabling a high proportion of pupils to be successfully re-integrated back into the mainstream.
- Planning is very good, helping pupils to regain their lost confidence and self-esteem, and consequently to learn successfully.
- The energetic and highly committed head of centre has developed many innovative approaches, most especially in relation to working with other professionals.
- Pupils and their families benefit from very high quality care, guidance and support.
- There are very effective partnerships with parents, carers and other schools.
- Staff work sensitively to include all pupils well in every learning experience
- The very effective behaviour management policy is not always used consistently by all staff.

The unit has changed considerably since the last inspection and comparisons cannot therefore be made with its report findings. It can, however, be recognised that many improvements have been made since then, most especially in relation to pupils' re-integration, attendance, the level of exclusions, the accommodation, the structure of the staff team, administrative support and multi-professional working practices.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is **good overall**. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make equally good progress. They do well in most aspects of English, mathematics and science and in meeting the very clear targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). They make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills and in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils overall progress in personal and social development is very good, because it has a very high priority focus in all the work of the unit. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Unit staff do, however, recognise that many pupils need even more help to learn how to work productively with their peers and to increase their independence. Attendance is good, with many pupils, who had very poor attendance records in their previous schools, now attending regularly. Pupils are helped to re-establish a sense of self worth and the ability to learn successfully. The result is that an impressive number return full time to mainstream schools and thrive in a setting where they had previously failed.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the unit is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** across the curriculum. This is the result of effective individual planning and very well focused support, which is provided through good teamwork from all classroom staff. Teachers, learning mentors and teaching

assistants are successful in gaining the trust of pupils and nurturing strong relationships with them. All staff are enabled to do this because they benefit from good training and have developed considerable expertise in managing pupils' highly challenging behaviour. The unit's behaviour management policy has to be flexible, because of the complex way in which pupils react to situations, but this sometimes results in it being applied inconsistently. The curriculum is good because it is relevant to pupils' needs and enriched by a wide range of motivating activities. Pupils receive very good care, welfare and guidance, owing to the extremely effective teamwork with the wide range of professionals immediately available on site. There are very productive partnerships with parents, carers and other schools, and good, still developing, links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good overall**. The head of centre's very good leadership inspires her colleagues to think deeply about what they do to help their pupils and how they might make a contribution to the continuing improvement of the unit's work. She has created a culture in which everyone feels they have something to offer and that their opinions are valued. Management of the unit is efficient and effective, although it is recognised that the role of the teachers as subject co-ordinators requires further development. The management advisory group plays an active role in ensuring it has a good understanding of the unit's strengths and areas for improvement, recognising the challenge presented by the increasingly complex needs of pupils referred to the unit. Members of the group hold the unit to account for its quality of education, whilst providing active support and encouragement to the head of centre and her colleagues.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT

Parents and carers are very positive about the unit, particularly in relation to the active help that they and their children are offered from the whole staff team. They find staff approachable and positive, appreciating the 'one stop' nature of the service offered and the consistency of message they receive. Pupils recognise the kindness and patience of staff in the face of their own often aggressive and negative behaviours, agreeing that over time they are helped to reflect on and improve their own behaviours. One boy spoke for many of his peers when he talked about how grateful he was for being helped to get back into a 'proper school'.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Review the current policy for behaviour management, with a view to assuring its overall effectiveness and consistent application.
- Further develop the role of subject co-ordinators.
- Develop pupils' ability to work both collaboratively and independently.
- Improve pupils' achievements in writing and ICT.

The last three development points are already recognised by the unit and incorporated in its good improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well in most aspects of English, mathematics and science, helping those who have the opportunity to return to mainstream schools to carry on learning successfully.
- Achievements in information and communication technology are not as good as in most other subjects.
- Pupils' progress in their personal and social development is very good.

Commentary

1. All pupils arrive in the unit underachieving in their learning because of their very negative earlier experiences of school. Over half have statements of special educational need relating to their emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and many have related learning difficulties. Good planning, based on early assessment of these difficulties, ensures that each pupil follows a relevant programme of study that meets their identified needs and ensures that they experience early success. Consequently, pupils start to believe in their ability to learn, and they all make good progress over time. There are no identifiable differences in the achievements of particular groups relating to their differing needs.
2. Staff recognise the importance of helping pupils to gain the key skills of literacy and numeracy to use productively in accessing wider curriculum opportunities available to them. All pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, and many become confident communicators, often able to express their feelings and opinions successfully in group situations. Many pupils discover the satisfaction of reading successfully, often for the first time in their school careers, and this helps them in the rest of their learning. They make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills, especially when considering the low base from which they start. All pupils make good progress in their use and application of mathematical skills and in their understanding of scientific principles, because staff work hard to make lessons practical and relevant to pupils' day to day lives. Progress in information and communications technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Pupils use the technology confidently, word process their work and extend their understanding of concepts, through productive use of the Internet. Progress is good in other subjects across the range of practical and academic studies that they study.
3. The unit quite appropriately prioritises pupils' personal and social development. As a result, they make overall very good progress in becoming more confident, cooperative and productive learners. Well thought out IEPs contain very relevant individual targets that focus pupils' efforts on developing the ability to cope more successfully in challenging situations and to be able to benefit from the opportunities offered them. Both pupils and parents are closely involved in termly target setting and reviews, and pupils are profitably encouraged to evaluate their own progress all the time.
4. Challenging targets are set for the unit and careful analysis of results, using a range of measures, shows that pupils' achievements are good overall. The impressive improvement in pupils' learning and ability to cope enables them to spend increasingly more time integrating into carefully selected and well supported mainstream settings, and the majority are ultimately able to return full time to ordinary schools.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **good** and their behaviour is **satisfactory** overall. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to develop positive attitudes to school and learning and to improve their behaviour.
- Relationships between pupils are often problematic.
- Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development.
- Behaviour during the inspection was sometimes poor.
- Pupils' attendance improves during their time at the unit.

Commentary

5. It was clear from the pre-inspection visit, the more settled times during the inspection itself, when it was possible to talk to pupils and, most importantly, detailed records, provided sufficient evidence to indicate that pupils have positive attitudes to the unit and the opportunities they are offered. However, although they had been well prepared by staff for the visit of the inspection team, pupils found the experience of the inspection itself very unsettling and did not show themselves at their best during this time, often being highly negative in their attitudes and behaviour.
6. Considering the failure they have experienced previously and the negative attitudes they understandably have to school and all that it represents, pupils make very good progress in developing more positive attitudes. Every pupil has been admitted to the unit because of their extremely challenging behaviour. Staff in the unit work very hard to establish and nurture productive relationships with these confused, resistant and often violent boys. They do this through structured programmes and patient, highly caring support. Appropriate behaviour is rewarded and pupils learn, too, that there are consequences for any unacceptable behaviour. Classroom staff are given considerable help in this task by the very well focused work of learning mentors, a social worker and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) team who are based within the centre, and form an inclusive part of the service. This highly successful approach has been developed through the initiative and drive of the head of centre, and provides a model of good practice espoused in much recent central government guidance and legislation. These professionals work very well together to provide very effective analysis and highly focused treatment and support for the pupils. Classroom staff are helped to adapt their approaches appropriately because of the guidance and advice they receive. The result is that pupils make impressive gains in their ability to understand their difficulties, learn to control their own behaviour (to the point where it is satisfactory most of the time and occasionally good) and develop productive relationships with others. Every pupil has at least one trusting adult that they can turn to for special help and the unit is built on high quality child adult relationships.
7. Fixed term exclusions are used carefully as a last resort, often related to violent behaviour, and only when staff judge that that this action will have a real impact on pupils' future behaviour. In reality, staff are more likely to exclude pupils from favourite activities, rather from the unit, especially since a few of them would actually prefer the opportunity to remain at home. Any acts of harassment or bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The unit's commitment to promoting racial tolerance and understanding is very evident. The head of centre is fully involved in pointing out to pupils the error of their ways when they make comments of a racial nature or are abusive to each other. This is an area taken very seriously and one which is slowly having a very positive impact on the values and attitudes of individual pupils. In addition to tackling racism as it occurs, staff actively teach through the curriculum about different cultures, religions, traditions and customs from around the world, so that pupils' horizons are broadened and their understanding and tolerance is developed.

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	6	11	0
White – Irish	1	10	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	6	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	4	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	6	0

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

- All activities, be they in the classroom, during whole unit circle time and assemblies or out in the community, are seen as providing opportunities to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge. Consequently, pupils make good progress in these areas of their development. The unit does, however, recognise that the highly structured and complex character of their intervention does not always successfully encourage pupils' independence or their ability to relate successfully or work productively with their peers. There were a few positive examples observed during the inspection of both these abilities and the potential is clearly there to nurture these aspects. The unit has good plans in place to work constructively on this area.
- Staff encourage good attendance and levels are good overall. Attendance rates at the unit have improved greatly since the time of the previous inspection when rates were very low. For the last school year they averaged 82% which was not quite as good as the previous year. Staff carry out their roles efficiently. Phone calls are made to the home immediately if a pupil does not arrive in the morning and support from the education welfare service is sought as necessary. In most cases last year, only a very small number of pupils did not show improvements over time. Good attendance is expected by staff and the majority of families support the unit. Nearly all pupils also have consistently good levels of attendance during their integrated placements in mainstream schools. Whilst there is currently no transport provided, families are given bus passes to enable them to accompany their sometimes young children to the unit every morning. There was debate going on within the local authority at the time of the inspection about the possibility of providing transport in the future. This would clearly improve attendance further. A few of the older pupils travel independently, and, in general, they arrive in time for the start of lessons. Overall punctuality at the start of lessons and throughout the day is satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	12%	School data	6%

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good** overall.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are all **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, because of effective planning, based on a thorough understanding of the wide range of pupils' difficulties.
- Supportive relationships enable pupils to develop confidence in their ability to learn.
- Incidents of challenging behaviour are usually well managed by staff, so that disruption to lessons is minimised as much as possible.
- The progress of individual pupils is assessed and recorded well.

Commentary

10. It was clear from detailed records, thorough assessment data and the good achievements of pupils, that the quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection, which in many instances related to the afore mentioned very negative reactions from pupils to the inspectors' presence, was not typical of normal times. Evidence shows that teaching is clearly consistently good, resulting in the obvious successful results.
11. There was sufficient evidence within lessons and in the comprehensive supportive documentation, to see that very good planning to meet individual needs provides a solid framework for teaching and learning. Both resources and teaching methods are adapted to ensure that pupils are given the best chance to engage successfully in the learning opportunities they are offered. Pupils are encouraged to work through the materials at their own pace and are given sensitive support by all staff to keep on task. The high quality of adult-pupil relationships is a very important factor in pupils' successful learning. All staff have high but realistic expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving. They are constantly encouraging pupils to work through their insecurities about whether or not they can do things, praising and celebrating every small piece of success and regularly adapting their planning to take account of minute to minute changes in classroom dynamics. In these situations, enthusiasm is an important contributor to effectiveness. The classroom teams work very successfully together, supporting and encouraging each other through difficult times and ensuring that all lessons have pace and variety. Teachers have solid experience of teaching primary aged pupils in mainstream settings and a thorough understanding of the different ways that children learn. Combining these insights with good knowledge of the subjects of the curriculum, they plan exciting lessons, which successfully engage pupils' interest and teach the necessary key skills well.
12. Staff cope very well with pupils' often challenging behaviour. In those lessons seen that were less than successful, it was clear that the flexibility necessary, which depends on fast appraisal of a situation and instant decision making, sometimes led to inconsistent application of the unit's agreed approaches. This was also seen, on occasion, in the more open general situations around the unit. The behaviour management policy, whilst good in its intentions and structure, is complex, requiring constant review and collective negotiation. This can sometimes lead to pupils manipulating the system or becoming confused. The impressive end of day reviews and weekly reflective sessions for all staff provide significant opportunities for analysis of such situations, and for individuals to express their views and feelings about particular incidents or more general issues of principle. The overall good improvements that are seen in pupils' behaviour, and consequently achievements, are testament to the overall

effectiveness of the policy, but the unit recognises the need to reappraise the detail of its content and application.

13. Teachers keep thorough and extensive records of the progress that all pupils make across a wide range of criteria. They are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do and this leads to well targeted activities and the development of pupils' self esteem as they see that they can be successful in their work and behaviour. Carefully gathered information about how well pupils are getting on is productively analysed to enable planning for improvement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

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

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. It provides a broad range of relevant opportunities to help pupils return to school. Staffing is **good**. The quality of accommodation and learning resources is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum helps pupils to benefit from integration opportunities and return to mainstream schools.
- There is a very appropriate focus on personal, social and health education.
- Visiting specialists provide additional expertise and broaden the curriculum.
- The provision for pupils with special needs is good.
- The accommodation is well maintained inside and used effectively.

Commentary

14. The unit is successful in its aim to provide a curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs. It complies fully with the local education authority's policy on the curriculum for pupils educated in pupil referral units. Pupils attend full time and are taught all National Curriculum subjects in an imaginative way. The unit operates a well structured and supervised day, in which breaks and lunchtimes are used successfully to promote the development of social and personal skills.
15. A comprehensive pastoral support programme ensures that pupils can benefit fully from their studies. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the important areas of English, mathematics and science and these are all given sufficient time on the timetable. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good and supports pupils' personal development very well. It is appropriate to pupils' ages, being particularly strong on reinforcing important issues such as looking after personal health, keeping safe and helping others. Elements of PSHE are incorporated well in the individual behaviour plans for each pupil.
16. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. These pupils have access to the full range of subjects that their statements entitle them to. The professionals that provide multi agency support for the unit make a very important contribution to the progress made by pupils with social and emotional difficulties.
17. There is a wide range of opportunities for enriching the curriculum and good chances for pupils to participate in sports and arts activities. These are incorporated well into the curriculum. The unit provides pupils with good opportunities for learning outside the classroom, including residential opportunities. Residential visits include a variety of exciting and challenging activities, which provide opportunities for pupils to live in a different social environment and experience a wide range of outdoor activities.

18. There are sufficient well qualified and experienced teaching staff and most teachers and teaching assistants have suitable qualifications and experience for teaching the pupils in the unit. The number of support staff is very good and they work very closely with the teachers to provide good support to the pupils. Effective training programmes keep all staff up-to-date with national initiatives.
19. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The unit has been re-located into the spacious ground floor of the Lough Road building and, as a result, now has space for a dedicated ICT room and easy access to an outside play area.

Care, guidance and support

The unit takes **very good** care of all pupils. **Very good** attention is given by staff to ensure standards of welfare, health and safety are high. All pupils are given **clear** guidance and support. The unit takes **good** account of the wishes and views of all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- After thorough assessment of need and a careful induction into the unit many professionals from many agencies work together to provide what is best for each child.
- All the systems which guide the safety and well being of pupils are implemented on a daily basis to ensure standards of care and welfare are very good.
- Taking a lead from the head of centre, very effective arrangements are in place to promote racial awareness.
- Strong attention is paid to the views and feelings of pupils, not only when they reflect on each day's achievements and challenges, but also when they meet in the school council.

Commentary

20. The head of centre is successful in rapidly establishing all necessary arrangements for each pupil and their family when referrals are made. Valuable meetings are held with many professionals from outside agencies, together with staff from the referring mainstream school. Throughout this process families are kept well informed and involved in all decisions. Home visits help alleviate anxieties and in a short space of time pupils are thoroughly assessed and begin their placement at the centre. Parents are satisfied that their children are enabled to settle, relatively quickly, into what is a secure and safe environment, because they are treated as individuals. Throughout each pupil's time at the unit the commitment shown by the whole staff team continues, so that over time a significant number of pupils succeed in returning to a primary school within their own community. Key contributory factors are the very good sharing of information between all adults involved with each pupil at the debriefing meeting held on a daily basis and the very obvious hard work that is put in to promote pupil's personal and social development.
21. The head of centre keeps abreast of changes and requirements to ensure standards of health and safety are high. Although not in a bound book, the numbered records of restraint show what happened, when and why, as well as who was involved. Procedures for child protection are followed well, according to local guidelines and training for this as well as first aid is regularly revisited. Pupils, too, are taught how to keep safe, what is healthy to eat and how to avoid situations of conflict. Many come from very complicated home backgrounds and respond well to the structure and security which is planned for them at the unit.
22. Targets are regularly set and reviewed, which promotes not only academic goals but, inevitably, the behaviour of pupils. Time for regular reflection is built into daily routines, so that pupils can have more ownership of their targets and get more involved in self assessment. Pupils are regularly asked how they thought they achieved, and although there is scope to develop more consistency between staff on what is expected in these sessions, it is very apparent that they constantly seek the views of pupils. In addition, the school council meets

regularly with the head of centre to discuss what improvements they themselves want to make. The newly refurbished toilets were completed as a result of pupil discussion and they say they are much happier with the new facilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links, friendships and partnerships with parents and schools are **very good**. Links within the community are developing well and are now **good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school maintains very good, productive relationships with many schools in working towards returning pupils back to their mainstream school setting.
- Staff are successful in involving and informing parents and carers in their children's education.
- Time is always given to families when they seek support and advice.
- Links within the community are developing for the benefit of pupils and staff.

Commentary

23. Staff from other schools praise the work done by the head of centre when she gives training on, for example, the safe physical handling of pupils. More importantly, however, very good working links are established with nearly every school when pupils transfer, and this continues throughout their time at the unit. Flexible arrangements are established to best meet pupils' needs, and the views of staff at mainstream schools are taken on board when planning each step ahead for every pupil. It is clear that these partnerships are continually being actively promoted by the head of centre, who is outward looking and innovative in her commitment for each pupil to succeed.
24. Staff are always looking at new ways in which they can involve parents, so that they can together share information about pupils, which will help them with all their difficulties. Arrangements for the parents' Friday 'drop in' session have been reviewed and now include transport for families, many of whom live some distance from the centre. It is early days, but this is having a positive impact on the numbers who are attending. Parents say they appreciate the work done by staff and notice sometimes dramatic improvements in the behaviour of their children while at home. Links with parents are very good, because relationships are secure and parents themselves say they would approach staff for support. The head of centre always seeks their views before deciding how best to plan for the future.
25. Very difficult and often sensitive issues are worked through with families, often in conjunction with outside agencies under the guidance and leadership of the head of centre. Realistic solutions and honest information are sought in partnership. The phone is very well used by all staff to keep parents informed. They are invited to and many attend extra events such as special assemblies or breakfasts. There is a very high turn out at review meetings. These are very often organised to suit parents who may be working. Patience and a sympathetic ear are always available for parents who need any help and advice. It is only a very small number of parents who fail to properly communicate with the unit on a regular basis, and this is not through want of trying. Parents expressed very positive views at the pre meeting with inspectors and in the response to the regular unit questionnaires undertaken.
26. Community links have been harder to maintain, but, again it is only through the sensible yet dynamic lead given by the head of centre that these are now at such a promising level. There is a well established link with the nearby city farm, and pupils and their achievements are becoming more understood within the locality. Sponsorship from a bank has been received for playground equipment and each pupil has a bank account into which they can save their rewards for good behaviour on a regular basis. Links with the police are now beginning to be much more effective. A local community group is currently consulting with the unit in a joint project called *Listen Up* to decide on the development of Paradise Park. Pupils are getting

involved in a local recycling project. In addition, there have been productive links with the local estate, from which a few pupils come, on how best to tackle bullying within the community. Taking into account the inevitable challenge facing the unit in maintaining its links within its community and the consistent successes it is achieving, links are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is **good** overall. The head of centre provides **very good** leadership. Governance of the unit is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of centre provides very effective and caring leadership.
- All staff feel highly valued.
- The Management Advisory Group is very supportive and is aware of the unit's strengths and weaknesses.
- Arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff are good.

Commentary

27. The head of centre has a deep sense of commitment and a clear sense of direction. She inspires loyalty and respect from her colleagues and provides a very good role model for all staff and pupils. There is a strong sense of teamwork, with all adults working very well together successfully to provide for pupils who are especially demanding. The rigorous targets that the unit has set for itself result from a continuous and open dialogue about the challenges that staff face in their work, and this motivates the whole team to continue raising standards further.
28. The Management Advisory Group is highly effective, and plays an important role in supporting the head of centre in further developing the unit, particularly in light of the increasingly complex needs of pupils referred. They are well briefed by the head of centre, who shares both positive developments and any difficulties being encountered. As a result, they have a good understanding of the unit's activities and they properly hold the unit to account for the quality of education it delivers. The unit's financial affairs are managed well, principles of best value are applied and resources are well targeted.
29. The unit is managed well. At the time of the inspection, the deputy post was vacant, but it was hoped that an appointment would be made in the near future. The head of centre and her capable administrator work well together, within well structured systems. Thorough procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the unit's operation, including the effectiveness of any initiatives, and assess their impact on raising standards. The unit's improvement planning is effective because it has a clear focus on areas of identified weakness and sets out in comprehensive detail clear targets for action, and the procedures processes and resources required to effect improvements.
30. Leadership of subjects is satisfactory overall. The new co-ordinators are continuing to develop existing subject plans and have targeted subject monitoring as an area for development. They do, however, recognise the need to develop the ability and opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their subjects. There is a comprehensive range of meetings, regularly held to support the work of all staff at the unit. For example, class teachers brief support staff each morning to clarify the individual learning and social targets for the day. There are effective procedures in place for supporting the professional development of staff. Priority areas for development are identified through performance management reviews and these are linked well to the unit improvement plan. The induction of new staff is particularly sensitive and successful.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Four lessons were seen in both classes and discussions were held with pupils as well as a scrutiny of their written work in books and files and on display, reports and records.

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and reading.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to write at length in other subjects.
- Teachers' planning takes good account of the National Literacy Strategy.
- Teachers and their assistants work effectively together.
- The curriculum makes an effective contribution to supporting the return of pupils back into mainstream schools.

Commentary

31. Pupils' achievements are good overall.
32. Pupils make good gains in their ability to express themselves verbally and in developing their listening skills. Teachers and their assistants create good opportunities for pupils to talk to each other and develop their ideas, and they refer regularly to individual targets and the learning objectives of lessons. Pupils are willing to contribute to discussions and they are not afraid to make mistakes, because they know that their attempts will be valued. For example, they are usually happy to discuss aspects of racism and equal rights in assembly and openly contribute to the evaluation of their behaviour and effort at the end of lessons.
33. Pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory overall. They receive a high level of individual support from teachers and support staff when carrying out writing tasks. A range of sequencing and other activities are used to help pupils organise their own writing. Year 3 and 4 pupils are beginning to spell simple words, and can suggest words that begin with particular letters. Older pupils develop their writing skills using a variety of styles, such as letters, descriptions and poems. By the end of Year 6, the writing of higher attaining pupils' is developing well. Teachers provide pupils with different ways of how to record information, for example by asking them to write a "postcard from London" to a young person living in Rio di Janeiro, describing hobbies and pastimes. However, sometimes opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. The development of handwriting skills is supported effectively through progressive copying activities.
34. Improving pupils' reading skills is given a high priority by the unit and, consequently, pupils achieve well. They are given the opportunity to read to an adult every day and are encouraged to take books home. Each pupil has an individual reading record book to track their achievements, which they are proud to show to visitors. Even those who find reading difficult are prepared to read aloud because of the acceptance and support they receive from staff. When they read aloud, pupils in the early stages of reading try hard to make use of the pictures and the repetition within the story to help them. Higher attaining pupils are able to read fluently with good expression and show good levels of understanding when describing the main characters and events from books they have read.
35. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lesson objectives are displayed and discussed, giving a good focus to each lesson, and encouraging pupils to meet the challenge presented. Teachers maintain a good pace and display firm, calm management, which contributes to keeping the pupils on task. Staff know their pupils well and use this knowledge effectively in lesson planning and in assessing and recording the progress pupils make. Each pupil has a

specific literacy target in their IEPs and they make good progress towards achieving these. Appropriate plans are in place for teachers to collaborate in order to ensure that assessments of written work are accurate and to retain regular samples of pupils' completed work so that progress can be checked more systematically. However, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, and does not always indicate how they can improve their work.

36. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only been in place since the beginning of term and has not yet had the opportunity to develop any plans for improvement. The curriculum closely follows that of mainstream primary schools to which pupils will return if, and when, it is appropriate.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

37. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum. They use a wide range of books in lessons and pupils are encouraged to find information from different sources, including the Internet. The display of key words in classrooms helps pupils develop the vocabulary needed for a range of subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Four lessons were seen in both classes and discussions were held with pupils as well as a scrutiny of their written work in books and files and on display, reports and records.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and their assistants work well together to make the subject interesting and accessible.
- There has been good analysis of present strengths and weaknesses in planning for teaching and learning of the subject and thorough planning for developing the subject further.
- Pupils are well prepared for eventual return to mainstream schools.

Commentary

38. Pupils' achievements are good overall because teachers are successful in involving them in their learning. Lessons are thoughtfully structured to engage pupils' interest from the start and all activities are designed with a practical focus. This was evident when Year 6 pupils were invited to be 'measuring detectives'. Staff sensitively supported them to understand the activity and to achieve its successful completion. During the lesson they learned how to estimate, use rulers and measuring tapes and to understand the relationship between centimetres and metres. The review at the end of the lesson was typical of the careful approach to ensuring that all pupils had understood the purpose of their learning and to celebrate their achievements. Similarly successful lessons explored the characteristics of two dimensional shapes, and obtuse and acute angles.
39. Teaching and learning are good. Thorough planning of lessons is a strong feature in ensuring that each pupil's learning needs are recognised, so that materials and teaching approaches are properly adapted to meet them. Pupils' achievements and the amount of support they required are efficiently recorded in order to ensure that future work plans are presented at the right level. Consequently, pupils make good overall progress in understanding and applying mathematical principles. Teachers are good at explaining challenging ideas, always using concrete illustrations to bring the ideas alive. Pupils take care in the presentation of their work and staff are skilled at giving positive feedback when they mark work. This gives pupils confidence to use mathematics and helps to build successfully on earlier learning.
40. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has used information from the new assessment approaches well to analyse pupils' learning across all aspects of mathematics,

and is developing structures to ensure that, for example, appropriate time and effort is focused on shape, space and measurement to bring pupils' learning up to the level of other aspects of the subject. By the same token, there has been good implementation and adaptation of the National Numeracy Strategy to take account of individual learning needs. This ensures that pupils learn the same things as their mainstream peers, so that they are well equipped to return successfully to mainstream settings if, and when, this is considered appropriate.

Mathematics across the curriculum

41. Pupils have good opportunities to practice and apply the skills they have learned in mathematics lessons in other subjects of the curriculum, such as science and design and technology, particularly in relation to handling numbers confidently. This is because teachers think carefully about the structure of lessons in those subjects, and how best to provide appropriate challenges.

SCIENCE

One lesson was seen for science, discussions were held with pupils, as well as a scrutiny of their written work in books and files and on display, reports and records.

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils study a wide range of suitable topics.
- Lessons are always planned to ensure that pupils learn through practical activities.

Commentary

42. As with other subjects of the curriculum, science is not just taught through discrete identified lessons, but is woven imaginatively into other subjects and activities. This successful topic approach aims to bring the subject alive and relate pupils' learning to their day to day experiences. Visits to the neighbouring city farm, for example, provide opportunities to study life processes and living things. By the same token, lessons on how sounds are made have natural links with music, when discussing the concept of pitch. A conscious focus on providing opportunities to explore ideas through first hand experience introduces pupils effectively to the challenge of investigation and helps them to explore the principles of prediction, fair testing and forming conclusions.
43. Through careful planning and very sensitive support by all staff, difficult ideas are made into exciting and engaging experiences. This encourages pupils to ask questions, begin to use scientific vocabulary accurately and promotes their learning well. Good quality displays in classrooms and corridors consolidate messages effectively and celebrate pupils' work. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well, assuring their ability to participate in, and contribute confidently, to science lessons during their mainstream integration.
44. There are good systems to check how well pupils are learning, through standard assessment activities, marking of their work and careful questioning to test their understanding. This information is then well used by teachers to plan future learning that reflects the individual abilities of pupils. It is also profitably analysed by the co-ordinator to inform wider planning of the subject, ensuring that all aspects are covered appropriately over time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

One lesson was seen for information and communication technology (ICT), inspectors looked at its use in different subject lessons and scrutinised evidence in planning records and samples of pupils' work.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT lessons provide pupils with the skills necessary to return to mainstream schools.
- The Internet is well used for research.
- Teachers assistants provide good support for teachers and pupils.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress have only recently been established.

Commentary

45. Pupils' achievement in ICT is satisfactory. The subject is taught in separate lessons so that pupils can acquire new skills in a systematic way and this, in turn, makes it easier for pupils who are ready to return to mainstream schools.
46. Teaching and learning throughout the unit are satisfactory. Whilst records do not provide detailed information about pupils' achievements, conversations with pupils and examples of their work show they are confident in using the Internet for research, recording data and presenting text. They are keen to use ICT and work well individually and with support in ICT lessons. Younger pupils are able to identify the difference between computer software and computer hardware. By Year 6, pupils can reliably use a word processing package to edit, organise and redraft text. Higher attaining pupils are able to organise, display and interpret information in a database.
47. Teaching assistants are confident in the use of ICT and are well briefed by teachers about pupils' individual learning objectives. They work very well with pupils, giving them support and guidance but being very careful to avoid 'doing it' for them.
48. Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory, ensuring staff have improved their expertise through relevant training. There is a good strategic plan, which outlines the unit's needs to improve provision. It identifies necessary improvements such as the need for improving assessment to enable more effective tracking of pupils' individual progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

49. Overall, the use of computers in other subjects is satisfactory. ICT is used to help pupils locate information and record their findings in other subjects of the curriculum. Good use was made of the interactive whiteboard during a music lesson to demonstrate how to use a basic music composition programme.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons were seen in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Inspectors were able to look at evidence in planning records and samples of pupils' work.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and this contributes very successfully to their return to mainstream school.

- The topics covered are supported very effectively by all staff in other curriculum areas.
- Personal development is regularly assessed, so that pupils know exactly how well they are progressing.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Planned links with other subjects is good.

Commentary

50. The unit has rightly identified the development of pupils' personal and social skills as a crucial part of their learning and eventual successful return to mainstream education. Staff accurately identify important areas in which pupils need to improve and, as a result of very effective intervention and support, pupils make very good progress against targets set for their personal development in their individual education plans.
51. Pupils learn about the difference between right and wrong, which is taught effectively through class discussions and circle time. They know about rights and responsibilities and why different rules are needed in different settings. This important focus on flexibility and adaptability also helps older pupils to learn how to prepare to play an active role in society during their citizenship studies. They increase their understanding of the consequences of racism on individuals and communities. All pupils learn about healthy eating and dangers to health.
52. Leadership and management of the subject are good and there is a comprehensive plan for its further development. The programme for citizenship has been imaginatively incorporated into the overall planning for personal, social and health education. There is a good system for assessment of pupils' progress and this involves checking each half term to make sure that targets have been achieved. Planning is good and productive cross curricular links are identified. PSHE is also embedded very successfully in other subjects across the curriculum and in the day to day activities of the unit, including breaks and assemblies, thereby supporting pupils' social and moral development very well.

OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about teaching, learning and achievement in other subjects. In all, only one lesson was seen for art and design, one for music and one for physical education, but samples of pupils' work, records of their achievements and teachers' planning provided materials to make the following observations.

53. In art and design, pupils use a range of media well to explore and learn about the work of famous artists and people from other cultures. In the same way, they develop good craft skills in design and technology lessons, when they design and make, for example, musical instruments, whose effectiveness they evaluate, exploring the implications of size and length on the quality of sound produced. There are many examples of pupils' good quality work on display, celebrating their achievements and encouraging others to try harder and think creatively.
54. In music, pupils have opportunities to use computer programmes to compose and play their own electronic dance music and work with visiting musicians to participate in valuable live performances. Music is used imaginatively and effectively in assemblies and during lessons to set a mood, teach pupils about different forms and styles and help them to learn about the power and importance of music in people's lives. In this way, they gain experience and understanding of a very wide range musical experience.
55. Teachers work hard to provide meaningful and productive experience of a range of physical activities, through football and basketball in the unit's yard, swimming in a local pool and other athletic activities in the nearby park. Pupils also benefit considerably from the wide ranging outdoor activities, in which they participate, during their residential educational visits.

56. In humanities, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 were studying the countries of South America during the inspection and this was well linked to literacy lessons. They have investigated the origins of the Olympic movement and the reasons why we still celebrate them today. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 have learned about sports and pastimes in Greece and have contrasted them with the present day. They have also looked at the similarities and differences of living in St Lucia and London.
57. In religious education, Years 3 and 4 pupils have looked at the importance of signs and symbols in other religions such as Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have looked at the meaning behind the celebration of special occasion and their importance for people of various faiths. They begin to understand how people learn values and develop attitudes and behaviour through the example of faith leaders and stories from sacred books.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the unit	3
How inclusive the unit is	2
How the unit's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the unit	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the unit	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-unit activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the unit seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the unit's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The unit's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the unit	3
The leadership of the head of centre	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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

* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.