

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTBRIDGE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124528

Headteacher: David Siddall

Lead inspector: Hilary Gannaway

Dates of inspection: 11th -13th October 2004

Inspection number: 268721

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

Type of school:	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	14-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	27
School address:	London Road Ipswich Suffolk
Postcode:	IP1 2HE
Telephone number:	01473 251329
Fax number:	01243 231329
Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Responsible Officer	Georgina Green
Date of previous inspection:	29 th April 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

Westbridge is a 32-place referral unit for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. It takes up to 16 on site at any one time. No pupils are dual registered. All pupils have access to the equivalent of full time education spread between the unit, external providers and college. The unit has a Healthy Schools' award and significant partners include Suffolk and Otley Colleges, New Careers Training and Young Men's Training. The unit also has access to the Princes Trust XI Club through Connexions. Most pupils are white British with 7 being of mixed or minority ethnic heritage. There are no pupils in care.

At present, there are 27 on roll of whom 14 are in Year 11, and three only are girls. Ten have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Pupils have a long history of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and disrupted education that includes permanent exclusion, school transfer, time out between placements and home tuition. As a result, standards achieved by most pupils on entry are below those expected for their age due to gaps in learning and the nature of their needs.

Suffolk has no schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and the unit is an integral part of Education Otherwise provision in the Southern area of Suffolk. Pupils attend from this area with the local education authority providing transport.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21527	Hilary Gannaway	Lead inspector	English Science Citizenship Geography History Modern Foreign Language Religious Education
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
22178	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communication Technology Art and Design Design and Technology Music Physical Education Personal, Social and Health Education Special Educational Needs

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective unit. Good leadership by the head and deputy of the unit, along with valuable support from the local education authority (LEA), has ensured that the unit has made significant improvements in the last two years. Pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, due to good teaching and very effective relationships with staff. Pupils are very successfully cared for by committed staff and thoroughly prepared for the next stage in their life. The unit provides good value for money.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very effective focus on the educational needs of individual pupils by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has had a positive effect on raising standards.
- A very good range of supplementary activities is provided which, along with an effective range of vocational courses and work placements, successfully aids learning.
- Links with parents are very good.
- Teachers expect pupils to behave well and work productively; as a result they gain in self-esteem and achieve well in awards and certificates.
- The good improvement in provision for, and monitoring of, personal development has a positive effect on pupils' maturity and preparation for life.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to be involved in assessment of their own learning.
- Although the awards pupils take are appropriate, there are not a wide enough variety and few for vocational courses.
- Too few planned opportunities are provided for pupils to consolidate their numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills within other subjects.

Improvement since the last inspection in April 2002, when the unit was deemed to have serious weaknesses, is good overall. Attendance has improved, as has teaching and behaviour management, due to much improved monitoring and good support for training needs. The provision for personal development, which was unsatisfactory, has significantly improved. For example, support and guidance is now very good and spiritual and cultural development good. Leadership and management, which were unsatisfactory, have improved because the LEA has monitored improvements and ensured better resources. Provision for pupils with reading difficulties is better and the accommodation now effectively supports learning.

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.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. They progress well in relation to the targets set from initial assessment when they enter the unit because teachers use this information to set clear measurable targets for them to work towards. Achievement is good, and sometimes very good, in English and science where lessons are very effectively planned often with reference to pupils' individual education plan targets. In ICT, achievement is good due to very effective subject knowledge. Good achievement in mathematics is aided by initial work aimed at filling in gaps in pupils' learning. In personal, social, and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, good achievement benefits from a comprehensive taught programme as well as relevant activities throughout the day. In art, pupils often produce high quality and varied work. In most lessons, literacy skills are carefully promoted through the use of key vocabulary. However, opportunities to develop a variety of speaking and listening skills in a range of subjects are more limited due to the often very small groups.

Improvement in accreditation results means that by the time they leave most pupils achieve well, and sometimes attain results comparable with national averages in GCSE courses. Most achieve successfully in vocational and work related learning. As a result, the majority of the pupils are prepared effectively for their move to work, training or college.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well catered for. Pupils have good attitudes and behave well. There is a positive ethos in which they get on very well with adults and grow in confidence. Attendance is now satisfactory and punctuality to lessons is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the unit is good. Teaching and learning are good.

Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' needs and manage them well so no work time is lost. They generally explain tasks clearly so pupils know what is expected of them. Although planning is mainly effective, there are times when lessons are not as well organised as they could be and opportunities are lost to consolidate learning. Pupils are motivated to learn due to individual timetables matched to interests and needs. Assessment is good overall and used successfully to track pupils' gains in learning and to set further targets, although pupils are not always fully involved in this. Pupils are cared for very well and staff take their views into account. Pupils are closely supported and monitored when they go out on vocational courses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Statutory requirements are met and the LEA and to a lesser extent the management committee, now have a good overview and manage the unit well. This is due to careful and detailed monitoring and improved resources and support aimed at helping the unit to improve and raise standards. The effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported well by staff, has been crucial in ensuring that improvement plans have been implemented and standards raised. Management of the unit is good. There is now effective reviewing and evaluation and routines are understood and consistently applied.

PARENTS AND PUPILS VIEW OF THE UNIT

Views expressed by parents and carers indicate high levels of satisfaction with the unit and widespread pleasure at the improvements they see their children making. Pupils feel that they can talk to staff and that their views are valued.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Involve pupils at all stages in setting targets and assessing improvement in academic and personal skills.
- Widen the range of external awards and certificates so they represent all areas of the curriculum, including vocational courses.
- Plan opportunities in all subjects for pupils to use and reinforce numeracy and ICT skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below average due to pupils having gaps in their learning. Nevertheless, in the two years they are in the unit most of them, including the few girls, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils with additional special needs make good progress against their initial assessments and achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and sometimes very good in English, science and art and good in mathematics, PSHE and ICT.
- The good monitoring and support for vocational subjects, work experience and college help pupils achieve well when learning off site.
- Although pupils presently achieve good results in GCSE courses and Entry Level, there is little in the way of other awards and certificates for those less able, or for vocational work.
- Some opportunities to build on and reinforce numeracy skills in other subjects are lost and ICT is not always used to support learning.
- Basic skills work comprehensively supports the achievement of pupils with additional special needs.

Commentary

1. Achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is especially so in science and art where achievement was satisfactory and PSHE which was unsatisfactory. More pupils now attend regularly due to well-organised attendance procedures, good provision for personal development and very good care. They settle down quickly and behave better because they are supported by clear, consistent routines. They rapidly benefit from the wide range of activities provided in the unit and off site and make good progress.

2. In English, detailed lesson planning and the teachers' very good knowledge of pupils' needs means that pupils feel confident to join in lessons. They listen, take turns and state their views sensibly, as they did in a very mature discussion on euthanasia. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to get involved in lessons by reading aloud and answering questions, as well as writing coherently at length. The spoken aspects of English are managed sensitively because teachers know some pupils have a lack of self-esteem when reading and discussing. Pupils appreciate this and try their best. Gaps in learning, particularly in reading, are well catered for in one to one work with learning support assistants. This, along with effective support for literacy in other subjects, helps pupils' achieve well. However, chances for pupils to engage in discussions in other subjects are sometimes limited due to the small numbers in a group.

3. In science, pupils' achievement has improved due to very good subject knowledge of teachers and an emphasis on key vocabulary. Where investigations are carried out pupils are enthusiastic and achieve very well, such as in a lesson studying the effects of alcohol and coffee on small water insects. The high standards pupils achieve in art reflect the good teaching and the use of a wide range of resources. They investigate and use a wide variety of media and techniques to produce varied and individual two and three-dimensional work. In mathematics, many pupils start with few basic skills and low levels of confidence. By the end of Year 11, they achieve well due to careful groundwork in Year 10 planned to fill the gaps in knowledge and understanding of basic mathematics. Improvement in achievement in PSHE is due to the unit now having a scheme of work, which is effectively taught, vastly improved provision for personal development and supportive activities and experiences throughout the day. In ICT, very good subject knowledge by staff means that subject vocabulary is used very well. Pupils are encouraged to try tasks before asking for help

and this effectively promotes their independent learning. However, they are sometimes left to their own devices for too long and when this happens pupils do not improve their skills as well as they could.

4. Pupils have many opportunities to progress in a variety of vocational skills relevant to their needs. They spend nearly half their week off site at a range of vocational activities, college and work experience. These are carefully chosen so that they meet pupils' individual needs and are of good quality so pupils are keen to go and have the best chances to progress and be successful. These placements are supported by careful monitoring by both the provider and the unit so that if a problem arises it can be picked up early and pupils' lose little work time. As a result, pupils are motivated, do well and gain in confidence. They work hard learning a range of useful skills. They often go on to college when they leave or follow further accredited courses put on by vocational providers for 16 to 19 years olds, such as car mechanics.

5. Accreditation results have improved year on year. Overall, pupils now achieve well in Entry Level, where it is taught, and GCSE. This is due to good subject knowledge on the part of teachers and an understanding of pupils' needs based on initial assessment and careful tracking of progress. Staff are now far more experienced at challenging pupils to do better and in predicting their results which has aided improvement in achievement. However, apart from college, few opportunities are provided for pupils to take courses leading to certificates and awards in vocational work. Further awards would help emphasise to pupils the importance of skills gained during these activities, further boost their self esteem and motivate them to sustain and further improve achievement.

6. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Needs, effectively aids their progress. This is due to an emphasis on basic skills work in English and mathematics. Consequently, the majority of these pupils make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education and behaviour plans. These pupils achieve as well as others due to the good understanding teachers have of individual abilities and the good support they receive in lessons. However, while it is right for the unit to concentrate on GCSEs, a few pupils struggle with these courses and would benefit from access to a wider range of accreditation.

7. While good strides have been made in literacy across the curriculum, this is not so with numeracy and ICT. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they have learnt in mathematics and ICT within other subjects of the curriculum. This is because they are rarely planned for in other subjects. This means pupils get few opportunities to reinforce skills gained and to use ICT programs which would effectively support learning in specific subjects. As a result, opportunities are sometimes missed to make progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Their attitudes to work and learning and their behaviour are consistently good. The provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good and many pupils become more socially aware and self-confident.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Rigorous monitoring and the effective use of initiatives have successfully enabled most pupils to considerably increase their attendance.
- Very good relationships with staff help pupils to behave well and to develop constructive attitudes to work.
- There is a positive environment which enhances pupils' self confidence and provides good opportunities for personal development in preparation for life in the wider community.

Commentary

8. Attendance at the unit has improved significantly since the last inspection. Whilst there is still scope for further improvement, statistics show that most pupils now attend and that many have managed to transform previously poor records. The unit works hard and sensitively in collaboration with the Education Welfare Service to promote and encourage attendance. There is an effective same day contact system. This along with rigorous tracking and monitoring of individual pupils enables support to be provided quickly for any parents or pupils experiencing problems. Close personal support and gradually increasing individual timetables are effectively used to encourage the most disaffected and troubled pupils to attend more regularly. Regular attendance is then encouraged through incentive points with pupils valuing the opportunity to increase these and gain rewards.

9. The relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the unit. Interactions are often characterised by humour and the vast majority of pupils are uninhibited in their questioning and discussion. The consistently open approach of adults contributes significantly to contacts with pupils and successfully encourages them to develop an interest in their work and improve. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour have improved since the last inspection. Pupils now benefit from the many opportunities they are given to reflect on their own behaviour and effort, both at the end of lessons and during their weekly tutorial sessions with their own tutor. For instance, tutorial time is used effectively to discuss the previous day and issue reward vouchers.

10. Pupils know and understand the behaviour expectations, which are clearly explained by staff and follow routines in a positive manner. Records show that troubled pupils are difficult from time to time but also show that incidents are effectively handled with minimum disruption to learning. No incidents of unacceptable behaviour occurred during the inspection. Isolated examples of silly and childish behaviour in lessons were quickly and effectively dealt with so there was minimum disruption to other pupils.

11. A strong ethos of care and support at the unit has helped the improvement in personal development. Good quality teamwork ensures that provision for personal development pervades all that is offered on and off site. Staff work consistently to help pupils overcome their previous difficulties and to become more aware of themselves and others in the community. This has been effectively supported by the well-planned PSHE and citizenship programme, tutorial time and vocational courses. As a result, most pupils show increasing levels of self-esteem and confidence and an understanding of how to act appropriately in different circumstances. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop personal and social skills during break and lunchtime. During afternoon activities, for example, sporting activities such as football help pupils develop an understanding of fair play, turn taking and how to work as a team. Most pupils show a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and a growing awareness of values such as trust and respect. In PSHE lessons, and also across other subjects, pupils are given time to reflect on issues, which help them consider alternative values and beliefs. They become more aware of others' feelings and are better prepared for life in the wider community. A good example occurred in a Year 11 English lesson where initially firm views on euthanasia became less certain as pupils developed a much broader understanding of the issues involved through very tolerant debate and discussion.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	15%
National data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data	4%
National data	N/A

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

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	20	6	
Mixed – any other mixed background	5		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	1		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the unit is good. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' needs, most planning is effective and staff generally explain tasks clearly so pupils know what is expected of them. Assessment is good overall and used successfully to track pupils' gains in learning and to set targets. A very good range of supplementary activities supports the curriculum. Pupils are cared for very well and staff take their views into account. Pupils are well supported and monitored when they go out on vocational courses, work experience and college. Links with parents are very good and help to support learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good because teachers have very good subject knowledge and know pupils' needs well.
- Well-managed lessons, in which staff expect high standards of behaviour and work, encourage pupils to concentrate successfully and learn effectively.
- While most planning successfully supports learning, this is not always so in mathematics and ICT.
- Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress and set further targets but pupils are not consistently involved in this.

Commentary

12. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Increased monitoring by senior managers and the LEA has resulted in the professional needs of staff being better identified. It has led to a range of valuable training in subjects and behaviour management for both teachers and learning support assistants. Support includes links with a secondary school for science and art. As a result, subject teaching is more confident and pupils better understand what is expected during the lesson. Subject vocabulary is frequently explained and pointed out so that pupils begin to use it as they discuss their work, such as in English when working on punctuation and grammar. Key words are also used effectively, for example, in science to differentiate reactions while carrying out investigations. This successfully challenges pupils, enhancing their learning. Pupils confidently ask questions and are not afraid to try out new experiences because they know that staff have the expertise to support and encourage them.

13. Pupils' individual needs are carefully taken into account and work is planned to match this. This is especially so in English and science, where references are made to individual education plan targets and in basic skills work in mathematics. Good, consistent, expectations by staff of what pupils can do, and how they will behave, ensures they settle quickly into work routines that they often lack. Pupils concentrate well because teachers work with them in small groups on tasks effectively organised to match their age, interest and needs. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs, remain calm, use humour and praise very well to help pupils relax and keep them effectively on task. Throughout the unit, both the activities that teachers plan within lessons and the manner in which they talk to pupils show that they have a good understanding of how to successfully motivate pupils who have often not been interested in learning. This motivation is further supported by the well chosen vocational courses where pupils learn effectively.

14. Pupils are generally punctual to lessons and so little lesson time is lost. This is important as most pupils do not have much time before they leave school to make up gaps in learning. The very good relationships that staff quickly establish means that pupils respond well and begin to make progress. This results in teachers having the confidence to plan a range of interesting and practical tasks for pupils to be involved in. The very few occasions where pupils misbehave are managed well and do not impinge on the learning of others.

15. In the best lessons, learning objectives are clear and aspects of the national strategy are used. This helps to give a clear shape to the lesson so that objectives can be met allowing pupils to successfully make gains in their skills. Clear introductions ensure pupils know what they need to do both in the lesson and for examination requirements. Resources are effectively planned into lessons, such as the use of the computer microscope in science and programs in ICT to support pupils developing a presentation. This helps pupils remain interested, although there is a weakness in board writing by teachers, which pupils cannot always read. Teachers organise their lessons so that pupils have every chance to try things out for themselves and gain in independence. However, there are times, particularly in mathematics and ICT where a lack of suitable planning means that work is not challenging enough. Sometimes, objectives for what is expected during the lesson are not clear and not conveyed to pupils. As a result, pupils are not always sure what they are expected to do, producing little work and opportunities to extend learning are missed.

16. Assessment has improved since the last inspection. Assessments completed in subjects when pupils enter the unit, and a behaviour profile, gives staff a good starting point from which to set targets and plan work. This is particularly good in English where all aspects are comprehensively assessed to help target those pupils who need extra support. Good use is made of ICT to record assessment. It shows progress over time and staff are now able to track pupils and make increasingly accurate accreditation predictions. While some opportunities are provided for pupils to comment on their progress, the practice is not consistent. Pupils do not regularly spend time with staff discussing what skills they have and how to develop them further. They are not regularly involved in the setting of their targets or reviewing them, although staff do give pupils a good idea of where they are in relation to gaining accreditation.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	10	5	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is good, and is well supported by a very good range of additional activities. Accommodation and resources are good and have a positive impact on learning, especially in practical subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum, both in the unit and off site, effectively supports the needs of pupils.
- The range of accreditation offered is limited.
- Pupils are involved in a very good range of enrichment activities.
- The improved accommodation has had a significant impact on teaching and learning.

Commentary

17. The unit's management team has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of its pupils and improvements have been made since the last inspection. The unit now offers a good broad and balanced full time curriculum, not all of which is taught in the unit. Individual and special educational needs are effectively met and this ensures all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. This is accomplished by all pupils having individual timetables matched to their needs which include academic work, a negotiated choice of activities with the unit staff and vocational courses with other providers. In the unit, an emphasis is placed on basic literacy and numeracy skills within English and mathematics to increase pupils' confidence. This also means they get more out of their work in science, ICT, art, PSHE and citizenship. For nearly half the week, pupils attend vocational courses off site which are work related and matched to their interest and needs, such as life skills, further ICT, motor mechanics, and carpentry. A design and technology course is put on by a local secondary school, and there is access to college courses, which can be accredited, including art. There is also a variety of work experience such as hairdressing, working at the local garden centre or in a garage. The unit is always looking to find vocational experiences that pupils will find interesting and useful to help them decide what they wish to do when they leave. Individual learning and behavioural needs are well supported and all the pupils are fully included in the lessons, courses and activities they attend.

18. Pupils benefit from, and enjoy, a very wide range of very good, well co-ordinated additional curriculum opportunities from which they can choose. A range of afternoon activities such as 'DJ-ing' and mixing music, fishing, cookery, swimming, kick boxing and football supplement and extend the curriculum very successfully. This provides pupils with a range of additional skills and chances to mix with other pupils and people outside the unit. Community sports and recreation facilities are used very well to support learning, for instance the use of fitness equipment. Links with Positive Futures has extended the unit's sports and music opportunities.

19. Although pupils have the opportunity to gain accreditation through, for instance, GCSE's, the unit is aware that the range of accreditation currently offered is insufficient to reflect individual potential. It inhibits some pupils' opportunities to attain basic qualifications to support applications for further education and provide evidence of their range of competencies for a prospective employer or trainer. Plans are already in hand to extend the range of possible accreditation in the future.

20. The accommodation is spacious, well furnished, bright and welcoming which results in a good learning environment for the pupils and helps raise their self esteem. Good specialist rooms are provided for science, ICT, art and design and food technology. These facilities extend the range of curricular opportunities for pupils. Accommodation is very well maintained and all areas are enhanced by displays of students' work, most notably of high quality art and design. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection and gives secondary age pupils a more appropriate environment.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for pupil's care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Support, advice and guidance are very effective, help pupils make progress and have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils' views and opinions are routinely sought and always valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The unit looks after pupils very effectively.
- Pupils trust staff and know they will support them.
- Thorough observation and tracking of pupils' achievements and development ensures that they receive the right help to support their personal and social development.

Commentary

21. Good arrangements for child protection are in place and the unit is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. All staff are very effectively involved in pupil's well being. Meticulous procedures ensure that the unit is a safe environment conducive to learning and development. In lessons and at breaks appropriate supervision is always provided and off site activities are well monitored. Staff are effectively trained to diffuse potentially difficult situations which they do calmly. Safety for pupils and staff is a priority because staff understand that, given the needs of these pupils, it is important to make sure activities are carefully planned. Very good systems ensure that identified hazards and safety concerns are quickly eliminated and risk assessments covering all on and off site activities are routinely carried out.

22. The vast majority of pupils respond positively to the consistently caring approach shown by adults and develop valuable relationships during their time at the unit. These are crucial in helping staff provide the individual targeted support and guidance to help the pupils work towards achieving their personal targets. Staff work hard to develop and maintain the very good relationships that evolve with pupils and pupils appreciate this. This starts with effective procedures to ensure pupils settle in, including some work with pupils at the end of Year 9. The good knowledge of pupils by staff means that they are all treated as individuals and support is tailored well to their needs. This is further enhanced by the tutorial system and access to counsellors. As relationships develop, pupils become less inhibited, more confident and more inclined to seek help and advice with any concerns or worries that develop as they prepare for life after Westbridge.

23. All pupils have formal targets for behaviour and social development, which are regularly reviewed. The very effective and highly valued reward system provides frequent monitoring of pupils' performance through a daily points system for good behaviour. How pupils are doing, and whether there could be improvement, are regularly discussed in tutorial. This information is well used to help set targets at formal reviews. However, the close day to day contact with teachers ensures that each pupil's well being and personal development are under constant observation. Any pupils experiencing difficulties are quickly identified and the unit is very flexible and effective in tailoring short term improvement targets to overcome problems. The unit enjoys very good relationships with a range of external agencies. They provide effective support and guidance in their direct dealings with pupils and the unit values and uses their professional input in determining individual pupil's development programmes. This contributes well to the very good day-to-day care and support that pupils receive.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The unit enjoys a very supportive partnership with parents and carers. Good links with the local community enrich learning opportunities. Links with colleges and other schools are good and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about the unit.
- The partnership with parents and carers is enhanced by the effective encouragement provided to help parents support their children's learning and development.
- Links with other schools, colleges and the community are starting to provide extended learning and development opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

24. The unit has built well on the links with parents noted at the last inspection and these are now strong. Views expressed by parents and carers indicate high levels of satisfaction with the unit and pleasure with the progress they see their children making. They consider that their children enjoy Westbridge, agree that all staff provide a consistently high level of care and support and are happy that the unit is effectively encouraging maturity and self confidence. The unit carefully maintains regular contact with home, values parents' views and opinions and ensures parental involvement in all decisions relating to their children. Regular phone calls with good news are particularly welcomed by both parents and pupils. Very good quality reports on progress are backed up with opportunities for discussion at evening meetings and the unit is quick to involve parents if particular concerns arise.

25. The unit works hard and effectively to involve parents and carers in their children's education and development. Many parents, for the first time, feel comfortable approaching an educational establishment for advice on a wide range of concerns and worries. There was a particularly high attendance at a recent parents' evening, which included an independent speaker talking about drug and alcohol issues. Another successful initiative enhancing the partnership has been the organisation of positive parenting programmes. Two courses have been completed and a third is currently being organised. These courses require a significant personal commitment by parents and are spoken of highly by those who have attended.

26. The unit is outward looking. Links that exist with colleges, mainstream schools and other education and training providers are being well used to provide access to a wider range of courses. They enable pupils to experience the best available facilities and to broaden social and personal development opportunities. The unit is particularly developing links, such as that with design technology workshops, at local secondary schools. Interaction with specialist teachers in a mainstream school, to exchange skills and share expertise, is growing. This is having a positive impact on the quality of provision at Westbridge. The unit is planning to build on the links with mainstream schools to enhance further learning and development opportunities for all pupils. Opportunities exist for pupils to take part in a range of useful community based projects for instance the Princes Trust garden project, which help to develop their abilities to work in a team.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The local education authority and the management committee have a good understanding of the unit. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is good and the unit is effectively managed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is much improved oversight of the unit through effective monitoring and evaluation by the LEA and the management committee.
- The leadership is committed to ensuring that all pupils have the best chances of succeeding.
- Effective evaluation of development planning and the setting of further priorities have successfully led to improvement.
- The leadership has worked hard to bring about change through motivating and supporting staff in raising standards.

Commentary

27. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection when the management of the unit, particularly by the LEA and management committee, was considered to be unsatisfactory. Since then, the Core Action Group (CAG) made up of LEA and management committee personnel as well as the headteacher have overseen a significant range of improvements. The LEA now

regularly monitors the unit, mainly through the link advisor, but also through a range of other advisory staff and the CAG. Detailed reports on how the key issues are being tackled and the progress made towards them have led to resources being focused where needed to bring about improvement. As a result, the LEA and management committee have a very good idea of the strengths, areas for development and what needs to happen next. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are now both full time and this has had a positive effect on attendance, behaviour management and the raising of standards.

28. The management committee is beginning to be more effective, helped by a clear scheme of delegation so they know what their responsibilities are. Relevant committees have been set up and the chair, along with the senior education officer and headteacher, monitor the finances effectively. The chair of the management committee visits regularly as does the mentor headteacher who is also a member. Along with the LEA's monitoring information and the unit's self-evaluation, this is giving them a comprehensive understanding of how the unit works and any important issues. This has helped the management committee begin to challenge the LEA over issues, for instance finance and support for the headteacher in the way of a mentor. However, at present, the LEA is heavily represented on the management committee and there are few lay members to bring another perspective to meetings.

29. The leadership and a committed staff have responded well to bring about effective change. The head of unit and deputy head work effectively together and this contributes greatly to the smooth running of the unit and the utilisation of support for staff. An alteration, by the LEA, in the job description for those in charge of units has brought their posts more in line with those of school headteachers. In response, the head of the unit has had a high level of support from a headteacher of a secondary school acting as mentor. This has resulted in a positive link from which both sets of staff are beginning to benefit and is having a good effect on the pupils' education. Overall, staff development aids staff well and has led to significant improvements. This is because it is effectively based on development planning objectives, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and professional needs. While priorities have been behaviour and the key issues from the last inspection, the unit is now concentrating more on learning so pupils gain the best from their education and teachers feel confident teaching and managing them.

30. The leadership understands that for some pupils this is their last chance to gain a suitable education before they leave school. They have worked hard to make sure pupils' needs are met and that the education they have is realistic and relevant to their needs. This is accomplished through careful individual timetabling, which covers all aspects of pupils' needs. As a result, the management of additional special educational needs is good. The staff and leadership together have a very strong commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils through their individual timetables. They ensure many opportunities to experience vocational activities off site and this gives pupils the best chance of success.

31. Monitoring and evaluation by the senior management team is good and is an improvement on the last inspection when little time was devoted to it. Self-evaluation is included and this has helped the unit to see where most improvements have been made and what still needs to be done. However, this is less so for co-ordinators, where it is just developing, although they do have clear development plans and good subject expertise. Monitoring covers all aspects, including off site vocational work, and has significantly contributed to moving the unit forward. It has helped shape the development plan because development planning objectives clearly follow on from evaluation. The unit has a high quality plan with most objectives related to improving pupil achievement. This has been instrumental in moving the unit on and raising standards. Although it has been important to have a high level of monitoring and reviewing and to ensure rapid improvements, the unit now needs to prioritise more in order to continue to make improvements in key areas.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	380333	Balance from previous year	3225

Total expenditure	369047
Expenditure per pupil	13,180

Balance carried forward to the next	14511
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OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision for the work related curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of work related activities to prepare Year 10 and 11 for leaving school.
- There are good links with local training organisations.

Commentary

32. The work-related curriculum is developing well. A good range of resources is available in the unit together with dedicated computer access to the Internet and careers information. Good quality careers education prepares pupils effectively for the transition to further education or training, the world of work and for adult life. Pupils are also well supported by the use of a range of other good quality provision such as courses at local colleges and links with Connexions, who have recently introduced The Prince's Trust XI Award, accredited by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Links with organisations such as New Careers Training and Young Men's Training provide relevant work related learning opportunities such as woodwork, car mechanics, life skills, ICT, and arts activities for pupils. All these activities help develop the key skills for the transition from the unit to work or college.

33. Work placements are very well organised and as a result the majority of the pupils complete their placements successfully. A pupil that is currently working in a local 'light and sound' shop is very well integrated into the work setting describing his placement as '*brilliant*'. Some pupils find it very difficult to work with others but the staff try hard to provide the pupils with a positive and real experience of work. The work-related curriculum is well led and managed by the senior management team who are working hard to develop the vocational programme with appropriate accreditation. As a result pupils currently complete a work experience folder based on the National Open College Network (NOCN), work based learning module at Level One and leave with a National Record of Achievement file. A good emphasis is placed on the recognition and celebration of the pupils' achievements and many of them are justifiably proud of the progress that they are making in this area. As a result the majority of the pupils are prepared well for their move to work or college.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING,

SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 4

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good lesson planning with clear objectives gives pupils the confidence to concentrate and achieve well.
- Very effective subject knowledge is used to make sure pupils do well in external accreditation.
- There has been a good improvement in English.
- There are good opportunities for literacy across the curriculum.

Commentary

34. Teaching in English is good with some very good features. This is because pupils are assessed well on entry and work is then matched to their individual needs so gaps in learning can be made up. Lessons are organised so that an introduction makes clear what the work is about and a starter activity gets pupils interested from the word go. For example, in a lesson introducing creative writing, pupils enjoyed describing objects they could not see, but could feel, using as much description as possible. Effective management of lessons means that different methods, as well as time, are used effectively and pupils remain motivated. Plans often refer to pupils' individual education plan targets so these can be focused on while pupils are working and this successfully aids progress. Lessons are planned so pupils are given every chance to participate by discussing, reading aloud and answering questions. As a result, by Year 11, they are able to take part in a mature and sensible discussion on euthanasia and complete stories, letters, factual writing and written work, for example on the theme of loneliness, at length with good punctuation and grammar. Resources are mainly used well, although board writing is not always clear and some pupils have difficulty reading it.

35. Pupils in Year 10, as well as starting GCSE, complete Entry Level accreditation, often in one year. Last year all pupils gained Level 3, of which they were proud. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem as it gives them a clear understanding of what they can achieve. Skills are transferable and this gives them the confidence and drive to complete their GCSE work. GCSE results have improved due to very confident specialist teaching which covers all aspects of English and challenges pupils to do their best. Good working with the learning support assistant means that pupils get the support they need to succeed. Key words such as 'noun' and 'verb' are used and explained so that pupils know them, for example, when engaged in punctuation and grammar exercises necessary for GCSE work. Some pupils find these parts of English difficult but are encouraged at all times and praised. They appreciate this and respond by working hard. Altogether a good purposeful working relationship means pupils settle well, produce good quantities of work and gain GCSEs, sometimes attaining in line with national averages.

36. Improvement since the last inspection has been particularly effective in helping pupils with reading difficulties. Initial assessment is used to check who will need help and a trained learning support assistant works with the pupil on an individual basis. As a result, they make progress and complete accreditation. Leadership is good and the co-ordinator has worked effectively with other staff to ensure a good focus on literacy targets and literacy across other subjects. A good development plan has been used to bring about improvements. Visits are organised to theatres and drama groups come into the unit so giving pupils a wider understanding of aspects of English. The

use of ICT is improving as pupils often word process their redrafted work and use art programs to illustrate it. Successmaker is beginning to be used with those who need reading support.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

37. Literacy is well integrated into lessons across the other subjects to support learning. It is particularly good in science where the use of key subject vocabulary, along with a range of descriptive words and writing frames, are always built into the lesson. This reinforces both literacy and pupils' ability to accurately describe reaction in investigations. In art, sketch books are very well used for pupils to put down their thoughts, often in detail. Key words are used in mathematics and ICT while in PSHE vocabulary on feelings, for example, is extended.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills work completed in Year 10 helps pupils achieve good success in nationally accredited examinations.
- Although planning is at times unclear, pupils are helped to feel more confident in their ability in the subject.
- Numeracy across other subjects of the curriculum is limited.

Commentary

38. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in mathematics despite starting with few skills and low levels of confidence. This is because effective early assessment is carried out and teaching is well focused on pupils' needs. Work in their books shows that much of the content of Year 10 is planned to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the basic mathematical processes. As a result, by Year 11, work shows pupils are more confident when using their knowledge to solve problems. They work carefully on their GCSE course and show consistent knowledge of the elements covered. Their files show work completed with care and accuracy and data presented through using a range of charts and types of graphs. They develop good knowledge of number and space, shape and measurement. They also carry out investigative work on topics such as travelling to the unit and are beginning to use computers to enter data on spreadsheets and compile graphs.

39. By the time they leave the unit, achievement is good. For instance, in 2004 ten Year 11 students achieved GCSE grades, one being a grade D. Additionally, eight Year 10 students gained passes in the module for which they were entered.

40. Although teaching and learning are currently satisfactory overall, lessons have good features and the capacity for improvement is good. Teaching is sensitive and supportive building pupils' confidence in the subject very well. Relationships with pupils are positive and encouraging and show a genuine respect, letting pupils know that their achievements are valued. However, some aspects of short term planning are weak. On occasions, planning is brief, the level of work set is not demanding enough, and, as a result, the pace of pupils' learning is restricted. A wide range of software is available to support skills development, but this was not seen in use during the inspection.

41. The subject co-ordinator is new to the school and leadership is presently satisfactory with suitable plans for development. Very good support by the LEA mathematics adviser has helped in establishing an effective mathematics curriculum within a relatively short space of time. The co-ordinator recognises the need to plan mathematical skills within other subjects of the curriculum such as science and ICT. This should ensure that mathematics teaching at the unit retains its standards and credibility and should support pupils towards accreditation.

Mathematics across the curriculum

42. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Some mathematical skills are used incidentally within subjects such as science and cookery to measure and in ICT on spreadsheets. However, such opportunities are not planned systematically, to ensure that all students practice, consolidate and improve their mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is carefully planned and matched to needs so pupils are motivated and make good progress.
- Pupils concentrate, are enthusiastic and work hard during practical work, although some opportunities are missed to build on this.
- Better accommodation supports learning well.

Commentary

43. Science has improved well since the last inspection with teaching and achievement now being good and sometimes very good. This is because lesson planning is detailed, takes account of the national strategies and is well organised so that pupils are kept interested and working. Introductions are clear, include pupil participation, and learning objectives are reiterated so pupils know what is expected of them. Planning very effectively takes account of opportunities to reinforce literacy and pupils' individual education plans so that previous work is effectively built on. This helps pupils gain a good range of scientific skills, unhindered by any gaps in basic skills. Although lessons generally proceed at a good pace, opportunities are occasionally lost for discussion because of the small nature of the groups.

44. Confident subject knowledge means that teaching provides pupils with a range of good opportunities to complete practical work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are motivated by this and keen to participate. Good opportunities are provided for them to predict, observe and draw conclusions. They know what a fair test is. During this work, questioning is very effectively used to get pupils to do activities for themselves, so encouraging thinking skills and independence. For example, in a lesson on depressants and stimulants, pupils learnt a number of skills including how to use the computer microscope. Scientific words are used and explained carefully so pupils have the confidence to use them. Pupils are regularly reminded of what they need to do to improve, praised and produce comprehensive quantities of relevant work. This has led to an improvement in GCSE results with some pupils attaining well. However, no other accreditation is used to meet the needs of pupils who may find GCSE difficult.

45. There has been an improvement in accommodation with the unit now having a fully equipped science room and more storage for resources. This has had a positive effect on the breadth of work undertaken, the variety of practical work completed, and pupils' self esteem. However, some lack of appropriate facilities still limits a few investigations. For example, pupils were not able to do an experiment on the rates of reaction of lithium, potassium and sodium due to the absence of safe storage for these chemicals. As a result, some opportunities to extend learning were lost although the co-ordinator works hard to find ways round problems such as this.

46. The subject is well led and managed with detailed medium term planning in place, effective assessment and the beginnings of links with a secondary school science department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relevant external accreditation is available, but requires further development.
- Although teaching is effective, there is some lack of coherent short term planning.
- The subject co-ordinator has very good ICT skills so pupils learn to use a wide range of
- tools and applications.

Commentary

47. Pupils come to the unit with varying previous experience of using ICT and varying levels of attainment in the subject but with standards that are overall below average. Pupils have good opportunities to use ICT, enabling them to make good progress during their relatively short stay. Their achievement is good overall; four students achieving the computer literacy and ICT award (CLAIT) in 2004 and two gaining passes at GCSE level. However, accreditation does not yet meet the needs of a number of pupils with more diverse needs. For some, a lack of meaningful accreditation means they do not always achieve as well as they could. Nonetheless, the co-ordinator has had considerable support from the LEA in developing ICT and has recently introduced a more accessible form of accreditation. The co-ordinator clearly understands the need to extend and develop the range of external awards.

48. Pupils are taught to use an effective range of ICT resources and to combine sources, for example, images imported from scanners and digital cameras, and data from the Internet. They use word processing and desktop publishing tools with greater proficiency. They learn to make multi-media presentations for specific audiences and improve their ability to use spreadsheets to handle information, producing and interpreting tables and charts.

49. Teaching and learning overall are good. This is because of the very good relationships in lessons and the teachers' very good subject knowledge, which enhance the progress pupils, including those with additional special needs, make. Subject vocabulary is used very well so that pupils begin to use it as they discuss their work. Pupils are encouraged to attempt tasks before asking for help and this effectively promotes their independent learning. There are clear expectations that pupils will behave in lessons and that they should use equipment with care. However, unclear planning in some lessons leads to objectives for some pupils being unclear and a consequent lack of challenge. For instance, pupils, on occasion, do not have targets for completion of work and therefore, a sense of urgency is missing. As a result, they make little progress during the lesson.

50. The subject leader has very good knowledge of the subject and leads and manages it satisfactorily. Improvement has been satisfactory, learning resources having been comprehensively developed over the last two years and the co-ordinator is looking at further development of assessment procedures to improve pupils' achievements. A well-equipped ICT suite enables discrete skills lessons to be taught.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

51. ICT is not used consistently in all subject areas, although the unit is well resourced in this respect and every classroom has at least one computer. Very little use is made of ICT in art and design and the use in science is mainly incidental rather than planned. In English, it is used effectively with pupils word-processing their work in order to present it as well as they can. In mathematics it is beginning to be used more consistently to reinforce basic ideas and skills and in work on tables and graphs.

OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

52. In **art and design**, displays of completed work, many of which show imagination and flair, are impressive and reflect the very good standards pupils achieve over a range of procedures and in the use of different media. They investigate and apply a wide variety of techniques to produce varied and individual work. They use watercolours, acrylic paints, pastels, collage, charcoal and plaster effectively. Pupils' sketchbooks demonstrate how they strive to improve their work, for example, to create the right shade and texture to represent denim. Lessons are very well planned to ensure pupils gain a wide range of experiences. These include three-dimensional pieces such as clay figures and masks although, as yet, the use of ICT is limited. As a result of the very good subject knowledge of the specialist teacher and the consistently good well-targeted teaching, in 2004 ten students gained GCSE passes, three of whom received grades between A and D.

53. Although **design and technology** is not taught at the unit, pupils do have opportunities to work in wood and design and make objects during vocational courses and at a local secondary school. The learning support assistants effectively teach food technology as part of the unit's afternoon activities. Pupils learn to weigh and cook simple dishes such as Spaghetti Bolognese and make sausage rolls, cakes and biscuits. They enjoy these tasks because at every stage the emphasis is on them doing it for themselves. Clear step by step instructions by knowledgeable staff support this and pupils are proud of what they achieve.

54. The unit is beginning to develop some **humanities** work during afternoon activities. For example, several pupils used the Internet to find places of interest in Ipswich they would like others to visit and looked at maps of the town. Other pupils used digital cameras to try and replicate pictures of old Ipswich viewed earlier, understanding that with the increased amounts of traffic it would be difficult as some had been taken from the middle of the road.

55. A specialist teacher provides a **music** option each week. Pupils in the unit are learning to use mixing decks and how to compose using specialist software. For instance, during the inspection pupils were observed singing and recording tracks with confidence and using the decks to 'rap'. Resources are highly suitable and used well.

56. Well-planned and well-organised opportunities for **physical education** are accessed through activities such as swimming, kickboxing, and football. Local facilities are used such as a gym for fitness training, skiing on a nearby dry ski slope and the pupils benefit from coaching at Ipswich Town Football Club. These activities provide good opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities, as a break from their academic lessons in the unit, as well as providing valuable opportunities for them to co-operate and compete with each other.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant improvement in the planned curriculum with good opportunities for pupils to achieve well.
- A good range of citizenship activities are being developed.
- Good leadership and management have brought about significant improvement.

Commentary

57. Provision for PSHE and citizenship is good and has improved since the last inspection when there was no programme in place. A well-planned programme achieves a good balance between all areas. Careers education and guidance, sex and health education, including work on substance abuse, are effectively incorporated. Opportunities are provided for personal and social education throughout the school day, positively supporting pupil's achievement. In addition to the discrete

lessons in the subject, tutor periods, breaks and lunchtimes are well used to promote PSHE and there are effective links with individual education plans. In PSHE, teaching and learning are good and students make good progress. Pupils' initial reluctance to participate is well managed by the teacher who works hard to involve all pupils and invariably succeeds. Relationships are good and pupils respond well to the firm but sensitive approach. The success of the PSHE curriculum is due to staff knowing the pupils very well and identifying the areas that they need to improve. Good use is made of specialists to support the expertise of staff.

58. Personal, social and health education is presently being developed to include those elements of citizenship which are not already covered, making use of national guidance in selecting topics which are relevant and practical, and which encourage thinking and discussion about wider issues. Citizenship is considered an important part of the curriculum and is also taught in tutorials, where it is well planned to meet pupils' needs as young adults. Pupils take part in work on feelings, visit the community with mentors who help them practice different social skills in real life settings, work on relevant issues during Princes Trust XL time and participate in a school council onto which they vote representatives. By the time they are in Year 11, pupils are beginning to have a good understanding of, rights and responsibilities, the law and democracy and voting. Earlier this year, this was very well supported by a visit from the local Member of Parliament who took part in a question and answer session which pupils found very useful. Although most important areas of citizenship are covered, at present there are few ways of checking that all aspects are comprehensively covered, especially those that are taught through other subjects.

59. Effective leadership and management have meant that provision which was unsatisfactory is now good and has significantly improved. The subject co-ordinator, with the support of the advisor, has put in place appropriate planning for the subject. Assessment is developing well and, in addition, the subject leader has identified the necessary training programmes she needs to attend in order to improve provision further. The subject contributes very effectively to pupils' social and moral development.

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

*In a special unit such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*