

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TRIPLE CROWN CENTRE**

Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104038

Head teacher: Susan Maden

Lead inspector: Katharine Halifax

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 268722

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	42
School address:	Lode Lane Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B91 2HW
Telephone number:	0121 7090080
Fax number:	0121 7052617
Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer:	Jeanette Essex
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> May 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The unit caters for pupils in Years 1 to 6 who have been excluded, or who are the risk of being excluded, from mainstream schools, and for pupils in Years 7 to 11 who have school phobia, anxiety, depression and other mental health problems. The unit does not offer an outreach service as this is part of the role of another unit within the authority. Serving all primary and secondary schools in Solihull, and admitting pupils from the Birmingham area, it has a diverse population, though all pupils are of white ethnic origin. One pupil is in the care of the local authority. At over 60 per cent, the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. All pupils have identified social, emotional and behavioural needs. Five have a Statement of Special Educational Needs describing their learning difficulties. At the time of the inspection five pupils were in Years 3 to 5, ten pupils in Years 7 to 9 and 27 pupils in Years 10 and 11. Prior to attending the centre, many pupils have been out of school for long periods of time and have gaps in their learning. Many have a negative attitude to education and a real fear of being in school. As such, attainment on entry is well below that expected of pupils of this age. At the time of the last inspection, the unit was known as the Wooden Spoon Centre.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Lead inspector	Science Personal, social, health and citizenship education Physical education Religious education
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	
20165	Alan Lemon	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs
16722	Noreen Buckingham	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design French
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective unit.** Very good teaching and good learning opportunities have resulted in very good achievement. Pupils are helped to come to terms with their problems and improve their attendance. The unit is very well led, and management is good. The cost of educating each pupil is low for a provision of this type; value for money is very good.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The passion of the head teacher and the commitment by all staff to high achievement have resulted in a very effective learning environment where all pupils are valued.
- Year 11 pupils achieve very good results in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).
- Many pupils return successfully to mainstream schools or, in the case of Year 11 pupils, go on to suitable further education, training courses or employment.
- Very good relationships and very good support and guidance have given pupils renewed confidence in themselves and in their abilities.
- Further improvement is needed in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT).
- A few aspects of management need improvement.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 now have access to a wider range of nationally recognised awards. Furthermore, there has been a year-on-year increase in the number of pupils taking GCSE and in the number of certificates achieved, especially at grades A\* to C. The already very good teaching has improved even further with teaching and learning being very good in almost two-thirds of lessons seen. While there has been good improvement in the provision for personal, social and health education, provision for ICT has not kept pace with what is happening in schools and is affecting pupils' achievements.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 6	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 11	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

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

**Achievement is very good overall.** In Years 3 to 6, where the focus is on literacy and numeracy, achievement is very good in English, and good in science and in mathematics. Achievement in Years 7 and 8 is good in English and mathematics, and very good in science, art and design and French. The achievement of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 is very good in English, mathematics, science, art and design and French because of specialist teaching. Pupils in this age group working towards GCSE in physical education, history and religious education achieve very well. Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory because of a lack of resources. Pupils in all age groups achieve very well in personal, social, health and citizenship education because of the very relevant programme and Centre routines. Pupils have a very positive attitude to work. They are very well behaved and make good progress in their personal development because of the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. Attendance is good with many pupils making impressive progress in this aspect. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.** Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic work. They plan their work meticulously and carefully record pupils' achievements. Homework is used very well to support and extend learning. The curriculum is good and is carefully matched to individual needs. Particular strengths are in the range of nationally recognised awards for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in opportunities for sport. The accommodation is satisfactory but resources are limited. Members of staff regularly have to borrow equipment from colleagues in other schools. Links with parents are good. Pupils are very well supported. Systems to ensure their health and well-being are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The leadership of the head teacher is very good. She has built a very effective teaching team. However, though members of staff willingly support her, she has no deputy, no senior teachers and no subject managers. This means she has a very heavy workload. The work of the newly formed management committee is satisfactory. They are aware of the strengths of the centre and what needs to be done to make it even better. While the local education authority, as the appropriate authority, has a basic policy for pupils educated other than at school, this does not fulfil legal requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNIT**

Parents think well of the centre. They like the small numbers and how staff take time to telephone them about their son or daughter's activities. Pupils like the small groups and the relationships with staff. They report they feel safe and that people take time to listen to them. Older pupils especially appreciate having the opportunity to take GCSE courses.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve the provision for ICT;
- ensure that there is a properly funded management structure which supports the head teacher;

and to meet legal requirements,

- ensure that the local education authority has a suitable curriculum policy for the unit.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

All pupils have complex emotional needs. Many pupils have been out of school for a long time because of illness and a fear of school. As such they have many gaps in their learning, so their attainment is well below national averages. Nevertheless, taking account of previous learning and special educational needs and as the result of very good teaching and learning, achievement is very good. There is no significant difference by age, gender or need. Achievement in many subjects has improved since the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve highly in GCSE and other nationally recognised awards.
- Pupils of differing capabilities achieve equally well.
- Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good because topics are interesting and relevant to pupils' needs and prepare them well for life after school.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in ICT.

#### **Commentary**

1. Since the last inspection, there has been a year-on-year increase in the number of GCSE passes achieved by individual pupils, and in the range of subjects on offer. All pupils leave the centre with at least one graded GCSE. In 2004, well over half attained the higher tier grade C or above in at least one subject, with one quarter gaining these grades in five or more subjects. The highest national grade, A\*, was achieved on five occasions. It is not unusual for pupils to gain GCSE in between five and eight subjects. In addition to mathematics, English literature and language, science, a modern foreign language, history, and art and design, pupils have achieved GCSE in religious education and physical education for the first time this year. Lower attaining pupils in this age group achieve equally well. In addition to the lower grades of GCSE, they have gained Entry Level Certificates in a number of subjects. Taking account of the time out of school and the emotional difficulties experienced by many of these pupils, the results are remarkable. In addition to the very good teaching, the results are testimony to the quality of support and guidance pupils receive, enabling them to have confidence in themselves and in their abilities.
2. All pupils have an individual timetable designed to cover gaps in learning and meet individual interests and needs. Demanding targets have been set for individual pupils. Tasks are carefully matched to individual abilities so all pupils are equally well challenged. The adoption of the National Strategies for Numeracy and Literacy contribute significantly to pupils' achievements. In addition, teachers have adopted the three-part lesson format in other subjects so pupils are able to say what they have learned in each lesson and are involved in setting demanding targets for future work. The early identification of pupils with a particular gift or talent means they achieve equally well. The lack of suitable challenge has, on occasion, been the reason these pupils have not been able to cope in mainstream education. With support from the local education authority and with stimulating teaching, such pupils are now successfully re-integrated back into mainstream schools.
3. Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good because, in addition to the taught programme, daily routines and all aspects of centre life support work in this

important subject. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are in line with those expected of pupils of this age. Through their work they gain maturity and self-esteem, enabling a good rate of success in return to mainstream education or, in the case of Year 11 pupils, into suitable further education or training course or employment. Of the 28 pupils who attained school-leaving age in 2004, four gained open employment. Of the remainder, all but four went on either to sixth form to do advanced level certificates or to further education taking courses as diverse as drama, childcare, small animal welfare and hair and beauty. For pupils who have a history of as much as two years non-attendance, this is very good achievement.

4. Though money has been spent on equipment and new staff have been appointed, the unsatisfactory provision for ICT is affecting pupils' achievements. Machines that are incompatible, the siting of the provision in an open recreational area, and a lack of software have resulted in unsatisfactory achievement in all age groups other than in Year 10. In this year group, achievement is good because of very good teaching with pupils achieving level 1 in Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). However, this is not built upon in Year 11, though pupils in this age group do use computers to word-process their GCSE coursework.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good as is their behaviour, enabling maximum time to be spent on learning. Other aspects of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attendance is also good. Their punctuality is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The personal development of pupils is a strength of the centre which builds a supportive, orderly atmosphere and aids learning.
- There are very good initiatives to support attendance.
- Very good relationships contribute to very positive attitudes and very good behaviour.
- There are too few opportunities to promote awareness of cultural diversity in Britain today.

### **Commentary**

5. The personal development of pupils is a high priority and underpins all activities throughout the school day. Staff provide a very calm, supportive, secure environment where pupils are encouraged and supported to re-engage with learning. Staff have very effective means of raising the self-esteem of pupils who are lacking in confidence, and to enable pupils to better understand themselves. Clear strategies for enabling pupils to develop socially are followed consistently at all times. For those pupils whose behaviour is challenging and for whom concentration is difficult, the consistent approaches taken by staff encourage them to respond well. Staff work very well together as a team, consistently reinforcing good behaviour. They also work very well with pupils to reduce unacceptable responses. Pupils are encouraged to take some responsibility for their learning, both by making choices in their work and by assessing, for themselves, their response to the challenges set. This is a centre which encourages pupils to aim high and realise that they can achieve in adult life. Older pupils have opportunities to consider major moral and social issues beyond life in their own community. There are many examples of this, such as work on the apartheid regime in South Africa, the 'greenhouse effect', cloning, abortion and crime and punishment.
6. Staff monitor attendance very closely and have a number of effective systems to encourage continuing good attendance from the majority of pupils. They give high quality support to pupils who find regular attendance difficult to sustain. Pupils feel comfortable and secure in the centre and this contributes greatly to their levels of attendance. There has been significant progress in reducing the number of unauthorised absences. Punctuality is satisfactory. This is beyond the

control of the centre, because most pupils travel to the centre by taxi on roads which are subject to traffic hold-ups.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.7	School data	7.0

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

7. Staff take great care to understand the needs of their pupils. They learn quickly to recognise any behaviour that threatens to disrupt learning, and a noticeable bond develops between the adults and the pupils in their charge. This results in pupils developing very good attitudes to their learning. Older pupils of all capabilities are confident learners, with very good attitudes to their work. They are very interested in their lessons, work hard and behave very well at all times, in and out of class. Pupils try hard, concentrating well and are justifiably proud of the work they produce. Though there are occasions when the behaviour of some pupils could be very disruptive to their classmates, staff deal with these situations skilfully so as to minimise the disruption. In most cases, pupils not involved continue to concentrate on their work to the best of their ability. Pupils show pleasure in the achievements of others in their class, and work well together when paired for some activities. Throughout the inspection, levels of politeness and engagement with visitors were very good. There have been no exclusions for a number of years.
8. Pupils' cultural development is limited in their understanding the multi-cultural nature of life in Britain today. They have relatively few visits out of the centre and insufficient use is made of visitors to build rich cultural experiences. They have knowledge of other faiths and the associated cultures through their religious education lessons, but limited first hand experience of any of these cultures.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Very good teaching has resulted in very good learning and very good achievement. The curriculum is good and reflects that taught to pupils of a similar age in mainstream schools. Pupils are well cared for and receive very good support and guidance. Links with parents and other schools are good and contribute to learning.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is overall very good, as is the way teachers assess and record pupils' achievements.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching was seen in almost two-thirds of lessons.
- Very good planning and assessment contribute to learning and achievement.
- Homework is used very well to support and extend learning.
- Teaching to individual pupils is variable in quality.

### Commentary

9. The percentage of very good teaching has increased since the last inspection. Very good teaching was seen in all age groups. All members of staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of the amount and quality of work produced. They are skilful at using questions to make pupils think and

reason. Teachers are hard-working, dedicated and committed to high standards. They are very knowledgeable. In addition to an in-depth knowledge of their subject, they have a very good understanding of their pupils as individuals and of their needs, and, through very strong relationships, are highly skilled at getting the best out of them. Teachers of pupils working towards GCSE prepare them very well, ensuring that they understand examination requirements and that those with emotional difficulties are not overwhelmed by what is expected of them. Although the inspection took place early in the academic year, pupils were already acquiring examination technique and knew for example, that references to *assonance* and *alliteration* in their answers in the English examination will gain them additional marks.

10. Teachers plan their work in detail. Tasks are planned at different levels for pupils of differing abilities so all are challenged. Where appropriate, planning is shared with the skilled support assistant, so there is continuity in what is provided for pupils, and similar demands are made by different members of staff. Assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is of a high quality. Daily assessment by teachers guides learning, so gaps are covered and activities are challenging. In addition, pupils of all ages are expected to evaluate their own performance and set personal targets. This contributes to their achievement. In Years 7 to 11, further assessment at the end of each module of work suitably praises achievement and sets targets for further improvement. Individual education plans have improved considerably since the last inspection. All pupils now have a plan including literacy and social targets. Targets are generally matched to individual needs, and are used in lesson planning. However, in a few instances the targets are not easily measurable and not so effective.
  
11. As the inspection took place at the start of the school year, numbers at the centre were low, so the staff to pupil ratio was very good. This led to individual tuition for many pupils, particularly those who were the only one in a year group. Individual work with pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 was lively and had a sense of urgency. It was in the individual lessons for pupils in other years that much of the less successful, though still satisfactory, teaching and learning occurred. While tasks were at the appropriate level, the activities were sometimes repetitive and lacked sparkle. Though pupils endeavoured to concentrate, their rate of learning slowed. The loss of pace on occasions, coupled with the lack of opportunity to share and respond to the ideas of classmates, reduced the rate of progress in, for example, creative writing and practical mathematics. Nevertheless, suitable attention was paid to targets in individual education plans so, for example, pupils increased the amount of written work produced.
  
12. Parents expressed concern about the amount of homework their son or daughter is set, but inspection findings show pupils receive a good amount of homework which most complete conscientiously. Those working towards GCSE have produced a very good volume of high quality coursework in their own time, and this contributes to the grades they attain. In addition to completing worksheets, younger pupils undertake personal research which, in addition to extending their knowledge, increases their capacity to study independently.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	25 (63 %)	7 (17%)	8 (20%)	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**

Overall, the curriculum is good. While it provides pupils with a broad range of learning opportunities well suited to their capabilities and individual needs, statutory requirements are not met.

Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. However, there is good provision for many pupils to continue studying outside their school day and very good opportunities for them to participate in sports. Overall the accommodation and resources are satisfactory. A good team of well-qualified and experienced teachers and satisfactory accommodation ensure that the curriculum is taught very effectively. Resources, however, are unsatisfactory, as several subjects do not have the range of materials they need to support the curriculum.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The statutory requirement for a curriculum policy has not been met.
- The curriculum for each pupil and for most subjects is well planned though this is not the case for ICT.
- The range of nationally recognised awards contributes to the high achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- A good number of pupils make a successful return to mainstream schools.

## Commentary

13. By law, the local authority is required to make a statement of curriculum policy for the unit so that the head teacher may write a policy on curriculum aims which reflects the local authority's aims. However, there is no such statement and, therefore, this legal requirement is not met. The centre has three separate but very similar policies on curriculum without an essential link to the local authority's guidance. None of the policies describe the arrangements for handling complaints about the curriculum, and this is a requirement.
14. In most cases, plans setting out what pupils are taught are effectively aligned to what they would be learning in a mainstream school. Plans are especially thorough in English, art and design and geography and history. A very good programme of personal, social and health education is planned well and gives pupils self-confidence as well as encouraging greater independence in managing their lives. This is supported well by centre routines. The opportunities for sports are very good, and many pupils take part keenly in activities such as golf, swimming, tennis and skiing. Pupils taking GCSE courses also use extra sessions in the centre to complete coursework. However, there are not many occasions when pupils go out to visit places of interest, pursue wider interests in the arts or take part in courses provided, by colleges for example. The quality of provision in ICT is mixed. Though the plans of what is taught in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 are detailed, some key elements are not planned for or taught. Planning for ICT is weak in Years 3 to 6 and in Year 11. Poor accommodation and inadequate resources exacerbate this situation.
15. Overall, all pupils have good access to appropriate opportunities to fill any gaps in learning, as well as a good preparation for a successful return to a mainstream school. While there is a clear expectation that a pupil's host school provides the centre with guidance on the programmes of learning for that pupil, this is seldom done. Nevertheless, very effective assessments are carried out by centre staff to establish each pupil's needs. There is also an expert application of strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, especially for pupils between Year 3 and 6. Together with assessments, these are most successful in ensuring the work each pupil is given to do closely matches their learning needs. Similarly, the special educational needs of pupils are clearly recorded and are well addressed through the high quality of individual attention each pupil receives.
16. The numbers in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 7 to 9 are small and while this militates against group teaching, the good number of expert teachers and the well-planned individual programmes lead to most pupils making very good progress both academically and in self-confidence. Sometimes this is in spite of the fact that some subjects, for instance science and personal, social and health education, are inadequately resourced. Most pupils attending the centre are in Years 9, 10 and 11, and staff resources are more than sufficient to provide good courses in a range of GCSE subjects, Entry Level Certificates and, recently, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Silver/Bronze course. Teachers are specialists in their subjects, and they know intimately the requirements of GCSE, and, in planning what to teach, they ensure they meet

fully the demands of these courses. As a result, most pupils are able to make up lost ground and achieve largely what they would have done otherwise. There are many good opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to undertake work experience and receive the guidance that prepares them well for future options.

17. Many pupils are well placed to return to school as a result of the opportunities they have in the centre. A reasonable number of pupils return successfully to school, but this achievement is greater in terms of the many pupils who have overcome significant psychological barriers and learnt to cope with the demands of school. The return to school is a priority and is arranged carefully. The pupil, parents, teachers and other support agencies are fully included in planning. In this respect, partnerships with many schools are well developed and constructive. The centre has earned the confidence of these schools, which makes the likelihood of successful re-integration greater. They all give positive reports of their working relationship with the centre and hold its work with their pupils in high regard. During the process of phased return, the re-integration officer based at the centre maintains effective liaison with schools and provides direct support for pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Staff provide a good standard of care, welfare, health and safety. Very good support, advice and guidance are provided for all pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The extent to which pupils' views are taken into account is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is very good, adding to the pupils' self-confidence and trust in staff and enabling them to develop well.
- Pupils of all ages receive very good support to help them make progress in their personal development, which leads to progress in their learning.
- All pupils receive good advice to help them make progress in their education.
- The care and welfare of pupils are given high priority although formal assessment of risk is insufficiently rigorous.

### **Commentary**

18. All through the centre there are clear indications of very good relationships between pupils and adults. Adults are patient, kind and very supportive which means pupils feel very secure and willing to contribute ideas in lessons. This has a very positive effect on pupils' feelings of self-worth, and their attitudes to their learning and to school life in general. The consistent, supportive way in which the pupils are dealt with underpins the quality of these relationships and enables pupils to make very good progress.
19. Pupils are very well known by all members of staff. Adults have an in-depth knowledge of the individual needs of all pupils, the strategies being employed to address these needs and a comprehensive knowledge of the pupils' responses to all opportunities presented to them. There is a consistent focus on meeting the specific needs of every pupil, enabling each to make progress as individuals, significantly developing their social skills and re-engaging in the process of learning. Staff work hard to seek and take account of the views of all pupils. All adults listen to pupils, valuing and supporting their ideas wherever possible.
20. The very high quality of the assessment procedures, and the very good use which is made of the information, enables all pupils to benefit from very focused, targeted teaching. It also enables early identification of any difficulties, or talents, pupils may have and the implementation of appropriate



strategies to address them. Specific initiatives have been created to ensure pupils obtain maximum benefit from their time in the centre. As a result, pupils receive very good individual advice and tailored support throughout the school day and over their time in the centre. Formal advice and support for the next stage in their education is not quite so well developed for pupils after the age of 14, although it is still satisfactory. This is because advice from Connexions staff has not been consistently available to pupils. This is beyond the control of the centre.

21. By ensuring that the care and welfare of pupils are given a very high priority, the centre maximises the benefit pupils can gain from the educational opportunities offered. Effective child protection arrangements are in place and all adults working in the centre are aware of them. All incidents and accidents are recorded thoroughly and parents are informed immediately. All statutory checks are undertaken and health and safety is given high priority in lessons and throughout the school day. However, the area of risk assessment is too informal. Although all visits out of the centre are fully vetted by staff before being undertaken, there is no formal documentation to support this. Similarly, areas of risk in the building are not recorded formally, although they are well known by staff. In addition, there are no written risk assessments relating to particular individuals, or groups of pupils.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Members of staff have established good links with parents and other schools and colleges. Links with the local community are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff support parents well, and value their views.
- Links with other schools enhance opportunities for pupils.
- There is insufficient standard information for parents.
- Information for parents about their child's progress is very good.

### **Commentary**

22. Staff value the views of parents and actively work to identify them. Parents' views form an important part of the initial meeting before their child attends the centre. Thereafter, parents have the opportunity to contribute further at regular reviews which may be as frequent as each term. Parents are involved immediately if their child is experiencing particular behavioural difficulties, to try to ensure a consistency of approach at the centre and in the home. This further ensures that all parties are fully informed of any factors which may be contributing to the difficulties. Parents are also contacted if their child has had a particularly good experience so that the relationship, which develops between home and the centre, is rounded and not purely negative. All parents who expressed a view during the inspection process were very supportive of the centre. They find it very open and approachable, and they feel valued. Inspectors endorse these views.
23. Because the centre serves a very wide area, there is very little opportunity for parents to have casual, informal contact with staff. To address this, staff will always attempt to meet a parent's request to come in for any reason affecting their child's progress or well-being, or for more general support. If necessary, members of staff visit parents in their home to provide information and support. The formal channels of communication are very good. Annual reports for parents about children's progress are very good in all age groups, giving detailed information about what the pupil can do and the standards they are achieving. Frequent review meetings further keep parents fully informed about their child's progress.
24. Good links have been developed with a number of mainstream schools, both primary and secondary; these links contribute to the number of pupils who return to mainstream education each year. Re-integration is made possible by the quality, and extent, of the support given by the centre to the re-integration programmes for the nominated pupils. In addition, members of staff at the centre provide

advice and expertise to benefit individual pupils in the mainstream school who have never been on the roll of the centre. This is a measure of the regard schools have for the expertise at the centre.

25. Although information about the progress being made by pupils is very good, parents receive insufficient day-to-day information about the work of the centre. For instance, they do not know the names of the staff, or their responsibilities. They have not received a curriculum statement, and are not informed as to how to make an official complaint. In addition, they are not fully informed about external agencies involved with their children, such as Connexions. As a result, some parents feel ill-informed about the opportunities available to their child after the age of 16.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Taken together, leadership and management are good. The leadership of the head teacher is very good and management is good. Governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The experience and commitment of the head teacher are instrumental in the success of the centre.
- Other than the head teacher, there are no paid posts of responsibility in the management structure and no subject co-ordination.
- Self-evaluation systems and performance management procedures are very good in identifying targets for development.
- The management committee understands the strengths and weaknesses of the centre well.

### **Commentary**

26. Over the years the head teacher has very successfully established a learning environment based on high academic expectations within a secure and caring atmosphere. She inspires confidence and respect not only in staff and pupils in the centre but also in staff in other schools within the local authority. They speak highly of her expertise and understanding of the pupils' needs and of the ongoing support they receive not only to pupils who re-integrate, but also advice on other pupils giving cause for concern in their school. She is held in high esteem amongst her own staff and within the wider school community. The continued strong management of the centre is testimony to the head teacher's commitment and her ability to motivate and maintain the goodwill of staff and pupils.

27. The current management structure means that the head teacher has sole responsibility for every aspect of the centre, including finance, the curriculum, school improvement planning and performance management. Finance has not been available for a management structure. This has been a long-standing situation, even though two teachers informally take charge in the head's absence. Most of the teaching staff work part-time, and though they have responsibility for what they teach, and lead their subjects in having high aspirations, they have little input into co-ordinating subjects. While some specialists informally advise colleagues, they do not have any management responsibilities regarding monitoring the curriculum or pupils' achievements. In addition, since there are no identified subject budgets or development plans, finances for resources are not focused on specific priorities. However, due to the commitment and management of the head teacher and teaching staff, this has not had any negative impact on pupils' achievements other than in ICT.

## **Financial information**

*Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	242,860
Total expenditure	242,860
Expenditure per pupil	5923

Balance from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to the next	0

28. Systems to gauge the centre's effectiveness are well established and, along with the performance management procedures which include all staff, ensure that the centre's performance is secure. The head teacher monitors teachers' curriculum planning, pupils' record sheets, academic results and re-integration successes, and follows up any issues. However, the gap in the system is the lack of staff involvement, especially in specific subject evaluation where the expertise of specialist staff is not used effectively. The school improvement plan identifies the need for a wider management base to share the current heavy workload.
29. The management committee is in its infancy and small in number. However, the knowledgeable and influential members have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and of their priorities to move the centre even further forward through a good understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses. Individually, in their professional capacity, they know the centre very well and have provided support and a 'listening ear' to the head teacher. They recognise the need to formalise support for the head teacher through an improved management structure so that responsibilities can be delegated and shared, giving more ownership and accountability to staff. Appropriately trained members have set performance management targets for the head teacher, and the school improvement plan is monitored each term. All statutory requirements are met, with the exception of a local authority curriculum statement for the centre. Day-to-day administration is efficient and finances are monitored by the head teacher and the local authority finance department. Administrative staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the centre.
30. The most significant aids to raising achievement are the very strong leadership by the head teacher and the commitment of staff to enable pupils to achieve very well. The management committee and the head teacher understand the need to widen the management structure of the centre to give a broader base from which to develop further.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

### KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 AND 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 are taught expertly and, as a result, they achieve very well.
- Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are taught very effectively and most achieve very well.
- Good leadership and satisfactory management are an enormous benefit to most, but not all, pupils.

#### Commentary

31. The teacher for pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 is an English specialist with a high degree of expertise in teaching the subject. This is particularly strong in preparing pupils for GCSE. The teacher uses her knowledge and skills to considerable effect in planning what pupils should learn. This is accomplished in splendid detail and results in very clearly structured and highly focused lessons. Expectations are exceptionally high and the pace is brisk; once settled at the centre, most pupils rediscover their motivation and produce substantial quantities of work. GCSE results have been consistently good over many years. Pupils learn very well especially in reaching GCSE standards, particularly for the few on course to achieve high grades; they read with a very well developed understanding of poems, plays and novels. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, in English language, all pupils achieved a graded pass with almost half attaining the higher grades. Two pupils achieved the highest grade A\*. Twelve pupils were entered for English literature. All achieved a graded pass with 10 attaining grades A to C, one of which was A\*.
32. The connections between speaking and listening, reading and writing are made very strong. Pupils have achieved considerable depth to the analysis of language and critical understanding of how this creates mood, sets the scene or portrays character. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on *Romeo and Juliet*, video excerpts and very well prepared written information stimulated a penetrating discussion of the combat between the Montagues and the Capulets. This contributed significantly to pupils' appreciation, and showed sophisticated observation and complexity of argument. In Year 11, pupils showed that they understand *assonance*, *alliteration* and *onomatopoeia*; they recognised examples in a poem, and engaged in an animated discussion on how these supported the poet's intentions. The depth of understanding pupils achieve from the broad and diverse range of themes on which they work contributes well to their cultural development. This was so when pupils in Year 11 related, with a profound level of understanding, the conflict expressed in Tatamkhulu Afrika's poem on post-apartheid South Africa.
33. The few pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are often taught as one group. The centre is very well staffed for this group which means pupils are given a high level of individual attention. This is very beneficial to making progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Each pupil's work is planned very well in relation to his or her learning needs, and plans reflect the National Curriculum. The good assessment carried out when pupils are admitted is used effectively when planning. As a result, the work each pupil does is often different but is a very good match to his or her attainments. Approaches to teaching English profit from good use of the national strategy.

Lessons are interesting and varied, which, together with the very good relationships with staff, positively changes pupils' attitudes to learning. In one lesson, pupils played a game, which they thoroughly enjoyed, about imagining and describing what might be in a collection of different sized and shaped packages. This was a stimulus for very good speaking and listening; teachers pressed the pupils to explain their reasons for a package containing what they thought and this challenged them very effectively to examine and share their thinking. During individual reading time, staff interact with pupils very effectively to improve fluency, accuracy and expression. Pupils increase their skill in using the sounds of letters and blending sounds to decipher new and difficult words. They learn about verbs and adjectives and how the use of these words strengthens the meaning in sentences and enlivens them for the reader. As a result, they make rapid progress in writing; highly structured teaching ensures that spelling and handwriting develop at an equal pace.

34. There is no overall co-ordination of English and this gives rise to some unevenness in achievement across the centre. Nevertheless, compared with achievement at the time of the last inspection, there has been a good improvement. Provision for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 and for those in Years 9, 10 and 11 benefits from very good leadership and management. This arises because the staff for Years 3, 4 and 5 work as a very effective team and the teacher for Years 9, 10 and 11 is extremely committed to pupils achieving high standards. While the provision for the small number of pupils in Years 7 and 8 is good and they achieve well in all areas of English, the subject is not as well co-ordinated here, and pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils. In individual reading, for example, a Year 8 pupil was being closely helped to accurately read and understand a story. The level of support matched the help given to much younger pupils. The Year 8 pupil was being over-helped and not challenged sufficiently.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

35. Language and literacy are promoted well. Reading and writing are prominent in many subjects. In geography and history, pupils produce written work on a regular basis and this shows them to have read extensively. Redrafting writing is quite common, particularly in English, and pupils very often present final drafts of coursework as word-processed scripts.

### **French**

Provision in French is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Consistently very good teaching has resulted in very good learning and very good achievement.
- Lessons are well planned with a good balance of activities.
- Pupils who choose to do GCSE achieve high grades.

### **Commentary**

36. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are able to study a language. In addition to French, members of staff have the expertise to teach other languages. In the recent past, teachers have taught Spanish and Latin when necessary. German classes have recently commenced with a Year 9 pupil though these were not observed. There has been good improvement in the provision since the last inspection with improved teaching, learning and achievement. An experienced and knowledgeable teacher teaches all the French lessons. She knows the pupils well and has established very good relationships with them, which has a positive effect on the quality of learning. Lessons are

purposeful, and conducted with a sense of urgency; there is good use of praise and support, which give pupils confidence.

37. For all pupils, the curriculum and lessons are very well planned, with units that ensure pupils are taught the required elements. In every lesson there is a good balance of activities that give them opportunities to practise and develop all of the skills necessary when learning a language, including speaking, listening and responding, reading and writing. This results in most pupils making very good gains in all of the skills. Though some pupils lack confidence when speaking French, especially when using newly introduced vocabulary, repetition by the teacher and role-play, for example booking accommodation in a youth hostel, make learning more relevant and enable pupils to acquire a secure grasp of the new vocabulary. Pupils achieve particularly well in this aspect as the activity is very challenging because some find it difficult to speak in front of others. Homework is used well to extend work pupils have undertaken in lessons.
38. The teacher of French is very aware of the various examination requirements and is able to help pupils in examination technique. Though pupils in some groups are working towards different examination styles and boards, she ensures all the required elements are covered in each piece of work. Pupils enjoy the subject and strive to meet their teacher's high expectations. In the 2004 examination pupils achieved grades A and B. Subject management is satisfactory. The one teacher is clear about strengths and areas that need improving. Assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are appropriate and the information is used to make sure that work is effectively planned for pupils of different capabilities. Leadership and management are, overall, satisfactory. The subject is well led with high expectations and clear educational direction. Management is less so, with the teacher not having a delegated budget or plans for improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good overall, but in Years 9, 10 and 11 both are very good.
- Assessment procedures are good and the information is used well in planning further work.
- The lack of a subject co-ordinator means management is an area for improvement.
- Mathematics across the curriculum is unplanned.

### **Commentary**

39. The subject specialist teaching pupils in Years 9 to 11 ensures that pupils cover the appropriate curriculum needed to gain externally accredited examinations. She uses her very good subject knowledge well to provide pupils with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to pass the examinations. Lessons are very well paced and pupils are given a range of examples to work through. She also provides them with hints when they find the work tough, giving them the confidence to try. The very positive relationships between teacher and pupils means that the high expectations and challenging work are taken on board willingly and pupils work hard. They learn about interior and exterior angles of different shapes, how to deal with compound interest increases and decreases, repeated interest changes, powers, roots and equations as well as algebraic formulae. The calm and businesslike manner of the teacher helps pupils to concentrate and remain on task. The good achievement identified in the last inspection has been improved and is now very good. Over 80 per cent of pupils entered for GCSE achieved a graded pass; of these, one third attained A to C grades.

40. Younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 have opportunities to work individually as well as in a group with different teachers and they are given good opportunities to cover gaps and consolidate prior learning. The very good relationships and the good understanding staff have of pupils' problems means that they understand the way they respond to learning and work is planned individually to meet their particular needs. They understand about probability and ratios and have interpreted information on bar charts, pictograms and straight-line graphs. Building on prior learning about time, money and measures increases their knowledge and understanding of these concepts and they achieve well, making good progress.
41. Much of the work of the youngest pupils in Years 3 to 5 is through commercial worksheets, which hinders their ability to set work out neatly in readiness for re-integration into mainstream school. However, they learn how to count in 2, 3, 5, and 10s and calculate simple money problems. They begin to learn the time and recognise basic shapes. As they move on, they learn how to set out their work independently and improve their skills in solving problems, telling the time and presenting and interpreting information from a variety of graphs. Teaching is on an individual basis or in small groups, and pupils respond well to the attention and focused learning. Occasionally there is a reluctance to concentrate but they can usually be persuaded to return to the task in hand quite quickly.
42. Pupils' work is regularly assessed both verbally in lessons, and by more formal written means; the information is used well to plan future lessons. Teachers use questions effectively to monitor understanding. The regular homework makes a significant contribution to their learning. Pupils generally have a positive attitude to taking work home and understand the need to work through examples that consolidate their learning and contribute well to the progress they make. Homework is checked at the start of lessons. Pupils appreciate the interest teachers have in their learning.
43. Though leadership and management are satisfactory overall, management is unsatisfactory because there is no co-ordinator so teachers tend to work in isolation. Although the subject specialist in Years 9 to 11 informally supports teachers in Years 7 and 8, overall co-ordination is lacking. There is no formal monitoring of achievement and no development plan to identify priorities and take the subject forward. Nevertheless, the sense of purpose, and the commitment to high standards by the head teacher and specialist teacher have resulted in raised achievement since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

44. The lack of overall co-ordination of mathematics means that it is not clear where or how numeracy is used in other subjects. Nevertheless, in science, pupils measure temperatures at specified intervals and work out electricity bills. Others have demonstrated the absorption rate of materials using a bar chart. In ICT pupils generated a pie chart to present their findings.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good** despite poor resources.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are outstanding.
- In Years 7 to 11 achievement is very good.

- Pupils in Years 3 to 5 achieve well because of good teaching and a good programme.
- Resources, including those for ICT, are poor.
- There is no subject co-ordinator.

## Commentary

45. Despite poor resources and accommodation, teaching for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good and has resulted in high achievement. In the 2004 examinations, two thirds of those entered achieved a grade A to C, with four of these being grade A. Furthermore, two additional pupils were entered for 'double science', one achieving grade B for both elements, the second grade C. This is exceptional, as many of these pupils have had long periods out of school and have huge gaps in their learning. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher is knowledgeable and ensures understanding by targeting questions at individuals to check they are keeping up with the demanding pace. Though most of the work is theoretical, she provides a variety of activities, alternating reading, discussion and written work to maintain high levels of concentration. In addition to very good teaching, the results are partly due to the determination of pupils to succeed, with one commenting, "I have a second chance. I want to succeed and make something of myself". All in Years 10 and 11 work towards national awards with lower attaining pupils being challenged and attaining Entry Level Certificate.
46. Teaching for all pupils in Years 7 to 11 is tailored to individual needs so all acquire new knowledge and skills at a very good rate. Teaching is lively, humorous and built on very good relationships. The key skills of communication, literacy and numeracy are incorporated whenever possible, for example building up new vocabulary phonetically or by a swift game of 'hangman'. Pupils increase their skills in numeracy by working out the cost of electricity, or drawing on their knowledge of data handling to construct graphs showing range and frequency of different types of nasturtium leaves when studying inheritance and selection. Resources from home, or borrowed from other schools, are used effectively to make learning meaningful, as was the case when a simple camera was used to demonstrate how a lens worked. Regular homework backs up work done in lessons, and contributes well to learning.
47. The programme offered to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 is good and reflects that taught in mainstream schools, enabling a smooth return. Good attention is paid to all aspects of the subject. Though limited by inadequate facilities, the focus is on practical science, mostly using borrowed equipment and making creative use of the centre kitchen, so pupils learn how to set up an investigation, to sensibly predict what might happen and to record their findings. Furthermore, they understand that their tests need to be fair. For example, when planning an investigation to find out whether chocolate, sugar and butter were reversible or irreversible materials, pupils knew they should use the same weight of materials. Activities are well planned so that pupils improve their knowledge of numeracy by, for instance, timing their investigations or producing bar charts to show the absorption rate of materials.
48. While there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection, facilities to teach the subject are poor. The rooms where science is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 11 are unsatisfactory and teachers have to make do with insufficient resources. The equipment the centre has is of poor quality, so most learning resources have to be borrowed from the adjacent secondary school. Both members of staff do this willingly even though it is very time consuming and they both work part-time. Other than the Internet, there are no computer resources to support the subject. There is no suitable software, for example to sense changes in materials, nor is there an electronic microscope. Televisions and video recorders are old and often broken.



Nevertheless, not to be deterred, teachers use the kitchen in the centre and are creatively making up for some of the deficiencies.

49. Though both teachers are very capable and are determined to give of their best, neither is managing the subject. While they give some support to the teachers in Years 3 to 5, insufficient use is made of their subject knowledge. There is no subject development plan and though there has been an audit, the request for resources has not been met because of a limited budget. However, as in most other subjects the high aspirations of the head teacher and key staff make leadership and management satisfactory overall.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the lessons observed, teaching, learning and achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 were good.
- The computer area for ICT lessons provides poor accommodation for teaching the subject.
- ICT is not resourced sufficiently or co-ordinated effectively enough throughout the centre in order that all pupils achieve the same high standards they reach in their other subjects.

### **Commentary**

50. A teacher who works part time at the centre and is a subject specialist teaches ICT to pupils in Years 9 and 10. Pupils in Year 11 do not have ICT lessons, although some have entered for the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) course and there is the expectation they will use ICT to support work in their other courses. Pupils, mostly Year 10, who completed the CLAIT course in 2004 achieved Level 1 passes in word processing, spreadsheets, graphs and charts and using a computer.
51. Teaching and learning in the group of Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils were good and would have been at least very good but for the poor accommodation in which the lesson was taught. The teacher's expert grasp of spreadsheets meant the lesson was very well planned to lead pupils clearly through the steps of entering data and then creating charts. Support materials, in the form of illustrated information sheets provided for pupils, reinforced effectively the teacher's explanations and demonstrations. As a result, pupils learnt well. They worked with a good degree of independence and avoided immediate barriers to their progress. By the end of the lessons, pupils demonstrated they could alter the size of their charts and the colours of the bar graphs. They created a legend showing what colours represented and could move this to different positions in relation to the chart, making judgements on the best presentation of their spreadsheet data.
52. The space in the computer area is inadequate, even for the small group of Years 7, 8, and 9 pupils. Computers are housed in a tight corner of the large open plan central space around which the classrooms are arranged. When pupils are seated there is barely room for the teacher to move between them and for pupils to see the teacher's board. There are not enough computers for the Years 7, 8 and 9 group, so one pupil was sent to another classroom. While there, there was a second adult to support him, he was away from the teacher for most of the lesson. The lack of space and its arrangement prevented the teacher from explaining and demonstrating spreadsheets to the group as a whole, which meant having to do this individually, and taking longer than it should.

53. The programs on all the available computers have different standards, which mean they respond to different sets of commands when performing spreadsheet presentations. This makes teaching the use of these programs unnecessarily complicated and slows pupils' progress. In addition, resources are inadequate for teaching the applications of automation with modern technology, the use of databases and desktop publishing. As a result, while pupils between Years 7 and 11 are achieving at least satisfactorily in what is taught, what they are learning lacks sufficient breadth for them to be achieving as much as they could.
54. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. ICT is not co-ordinated effectively throughout the unit. The scheme of what is taught to pupils at different stages follows the National Curriculum to the extent resources permit, but it is not extensive enough for pupils between Years 7 and 11, particularly since some of these pupils will stay in the centre for an extended time. The teacher for these pupils is prepared to train for and develop a higher level CLAIT course, which pupils who have achieved Level 1 could go onto, possibly in Year 11. However, there has been no action taken as yet. There has also been a recent request for the resources to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 but no decision has yet been reached. The subject was judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and while there have been changes to resources and teaching these have not had sufficient impact. As a result, improvement is unsatisfactory.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

55. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is satisfactory. Word processing features strongly in several subjects such as English, geography and history. It is a standard approach for pupils to present their English coursework and it is used very effectively in re-drafting writing. In geography and science, pupils use computers to present data in tables, as well as in charts and graphs. One Year 11 pupil designed a high quality information sheet for an ASDAN assignment. This included text in columns, a variety of fonts, borders and shading.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

56. Two lessons were seen in geography and, although inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and curriculum plans, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision.
57. Curriculum planning is well structured and very detailed. Its benefits are seen in pupils' work. Year 8 pupils undertook a challenging and interesting investigation of water infiltration rates by comparing results from two points in an area of parkland. Their work shows close adherence to research methods, which resulted in detailed recording and graphical representations of their data such as a computer-generated pie chart. The teaching and learning seen were satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 suitably increase their specialist vocabulary as when describing different volcanoes and their characteristics or, following a recent field trip to Wales, the features of glaciation.

### **History**

58. Two lessons were seen in history and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work. However, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision.
59. The history curriculum is well planned in relation to the National Curriculum programme of study. There is a very good emphasis from an early stage upon pupils learning the skills of

enquiry and interpretation as the key means of developing historical knowledge and understanding. Pupils' work stresses the identification and interpretation of historical evidence. Based on sources available, Year 8 pupils examined the causes and attitudes towards poverty in Tudor times. Their research was extensive; for example, they considered how religious beliefs affected the way poverty is understood. Pupils learnt in detail about the lives of common people as well as the significant changes made by the powerful in shaping England at that time. Writing is extensive and is well-structured historical narrative.

60. In the two lessons seen, the very good teaching in Year 11 was based on an extremely good knowledge of history leading to a detailed and challenging discussion on Russia in the Stalinist era. Pupils concentrated very well on making well-founded arguments and keeping these related to interpretation of the historical evidence available. The exploration of working conditions of children in the Victorian era with pupils in Years 3 and 4 was less successful but still satisfactory.

### **Religious education**

Two lessons were seen in religious education and, although inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and curriculum plans, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision.

61. Committed teaching ensures that pupils take the subject seriously and develop both understanding and insight into the importance of religion and belief in the lives of people from many faiths. This contributes very well to pupils' personal development. One lesson in Years 4 and 5 was very short because of transport difficulties. Nevertheless, pupils made suitable progress in their understanding of special places and in their awareness that all the major world faiths have special places. However, while the teacher gave pupils a lot of information, there was little opportunity for them to discuss or record their knowledge. Conversely, a fruitful discussion on crime and punishment with pupils working towards GCSE contributed significantly to their achievement. In this very good lesson, pupils considered the arguments for and against capital punishment. Pupils freely volunteered that they should not make snap decisions and through skilful questioning, explored all aspects of the argument, confidently expressing their opinions. A thought-provoking worksheet further challenged their point of view.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning is very good in Years 7 to 11 and so pupils achieve very well
- The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- Pupils are encouraged to experiment and modify their initial ideas well.
- A strong link with design and technology supports the production of objects.

#### **Commentary**

62. The very good knowledge of the teacher coupled with her experience and enthusiasm for the subject means that teaching is interesting and captures pupils' attention, enabling them to achieve very well. Very good relationships between the teacher and pupils mean that they listen and respond positively, showing a willingness to work hard and give of their best. This can be seen in the care and pride they take in their work. As they move from Year 7 to Year 11 pupils gain in

confidence and many have a good understanding of composition and the use of line. Drawing from observation is developed very well and they produce well-finished work. Pupils are given experience of working with pencils, crayons, chalks and watercolours and develop skills using these media very well. They use colour very well to create atmosphere and their projects, developed from initial thoughts and visual ideas, result in a high level of sophistication in their finished work. Staff work individually with pupils, who receive very focused feedback and encouragement and have opportunities to critically evaluate their own work in a secure environment. Written assessments of pupils' work and how it can be improved are meticulously maintained and used to support pupils' learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Achievement has improved, with two thirds of those entered attaining grades A\* to C in the 2004 GCSE examinations. One pupil achieved an A\* grade and a further three achieved grade A.

63. Pupils study the work of a wide range of artists and of art from other countries. This can be seen in their work, from Van Gogh to Tracey Emin. Pupils in Year 8 consider the concept of 'Self' by looking at Egyptian art, Klimt and personal articles which say something about themselves. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 have been inspired by African animals, with the shapes and colours of various animal skins used skilfully to demonstrate pattern. A project about 'Nature and Surrealism' looks at the work of Dali and Anthony Goldsworthy and involves images of dreams, fairies and leaves. Pupils' interpretation of their ideas results in some very interesting high quality displays.
64. Sketchbooks are used extensively by pupils for initial ideas and to further modify these designs. They experiment and investigate different ways of presenting and developing themes and some pupils use the Internet for research purposes. Their sketchbooks are full of ideas and are used very well. Pupils take them home and are keen to discuss what they have produced, such is their interest in the subject. Pupils respect the teacher's encouragement and advice. She is skilled at supporting pupils to find inspiration and extend their thinking, demonstrating techniques when needed. The use of textiles to present work is very good and adds an exciting dimension to their work; it results in finished products of a high quality.
65. There is a strong link between art and design and design and technology in that pupils use resistant materials such as wood, glass and clay to present their projects, for example when framing a picture, making a three-dimensional design, making masks or painting glass. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The subject is well led by a highly effective teacher. While management is satisfactory, there is no overall co-ordination.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in all age groups achieve well. The achievement of those working towards GCSE is very good.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of physical activities through good links with the community.
- Assessment is very good.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## Commentary

66. Many pupils are unfit when they arrive, having done little exercise prior to attending the centre. Through generally good teaching they increase their fitness, stamina and skills at a good rate. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 demonstrate an increased confidence in water. Some swim confidently on their front and back while others need support. Records show they are making good progress in stroke technique and in gaining Solihull Borough awards. When observed playing golf, they improved their stroke and the distance they hit the ball through very good coaching by the club professional. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well in karate and in indoor exercise and games. However, in one lesson observed pupils were not kept active for the whole of the session so their achievement was no better than satisfactory. The achievement of pupils studying for GCSE is very good. Through expert coaching by a karate professional, pupils are quickly understanding and responding to the Japanese terms and reaching a good standard. In the theoretical element, they are suitably increasing their understanding of factors affecting performance and participation in sport. Pupils with a particular talent are identified and helped to contact sporting clubs, such as the Solihull Ladies Football team.
67. Unusually for a provision of this type, pupils in all age groups take part in a number of sporting activities. In addition to the acquisition of skills, most activities necessitate pupils meeting members of the public, something which many find difficult because of their mental health problems. Nevertheless, pupils take part in courses at Shirley Golf Club, the adjacent secondary school and the local leisure centre, playing racket ball, using weights and undertaking fitness training. During these activities, they make good progress in aspects such as hand-eye co-ordination, in their general health and well-being and in working with others.
68. As with other subjects, assessment is very good. Performance during each session is recorded on a checklist of skills. At the end of each module, skills are evaluated and new targets set, including social targets such as 'to join a sports club out of school' which, in addition to increasing competence in a particular sport, aids confidence and helps pupils in their return to 'the real world'. In addition, pupils achieve nationally recognised awards such as the Junior Golf Passport.
69. When with members of the public and in the centre, pupils become more aware of their personal qualities through sport. They understand the need to listen carefully to instructions, to follow the etiquette required, for example at the golf club, and to cope with winning or losing. Through sport, pupils are interacting with an increased number of adults. Records show how pupils' confidence has grown, from being unable to communicate with others and unable to undress to go into a sports hall, to being the centre of attention when using a trampoline.
70. This is one subject that is led and managed well by two enthusiastic, knowledgeable members of staff. They have produced a suitable programme that is reviewed regularly to meet the needs of the pupils. The subject was not reported in the previous inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgement on improvement.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in all age groups.
- Centre routines and work in other subjects make a significant contribution to achievement.

- The subject promotes pupils' personal development very well.
- There are too few resources.

## Commentary

71. Most pupils arrive at the centre with very low self-esteem and very little confidence. Many have severe mental health needs and have experienced great difficulties being in a classroom and interacting with others. As a result of the taught programme and daily routines they make very good progress in these very important aspects of life. Through very good relationships they become more able to discuss their problems, and to understand those of others. For example, through topics such as crime and punishment they gain a deeper understanding of what it is to be a victim.
72. Pupils learn and achieve very well because of generally very good teaching and topics that are very relevant to their young lives. The majority of pupils have difficulty forming relationships, so great emphasis is placed on forming and maintaining friendships. Through drama, pupils learn how to engage with others, how to respond and how to become assertive. Recognising some have issues with eating, topics such as 'body matters' enable pupils to consider self-image through discussions on cosmetic surgery and anorexia. Daily routines and social targets in individual education plans contribute significantly to progress in this area. Adults at the centre are very good role models, taking time to listen to pupils and demonstrating how to act appropriately. During break, they make time to talk to pupils, praising their successes and listening to their concerns. Most pupils in Years 3 to 5 have a history of inappropriate behaviour. To address this, teachers play table games with pupils, so they learn to take turns and cope with both winning and losing. However, pupils do not have the chance to transfer these skills to playing outside.
73. A good awareness of citizenship is gained through the planned programme and very well reinforced in other subjects. For example, in English, pupils studying poems from other cultures demonstrated a deep understanding of apartheid, terrorism and the work of freedom fighters as they discussed the South African poem 'Nothing's changed'. Similarly in history, pupils increased their understanding of different societies as they considered the impact of collectivism in Stalinist Russia. An awareness of race and disability is fostered in physical education as pupils consider the attributes and determination of sports men and women such as Kelly Holmes, Mohammed Ali and Tanni Grey-Thompson. Older pupils are encouraged to undertake personal research and, in science, have considered the morality of cloning and the impact of the greenhouse effect.
74. Improvement to address the criticisms of the last inspection is good. However, much of this has taken place over the past year as staff changes prior to this meant nothing was done for a while. Nevertheless, over the past 12 months rapid progress has been made. The long-term plan reflects pupils' needs and the scheme of work ensures legal requirements for substance misuse and sex education are met. Teachers in Years 7 to 11 work very well together. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory with management being the weaker of the two elements as there is no overall co-ordinator for this important subject to monitor what is happening in other age groups, to plan for the future and to keep a check on resources. While teachers make very good use of video and newspaper articles, they regularly have to borrow materials from colleagues in other schools.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

*Inspection judgement*

*Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	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 school such as this, standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not against national standards.*