

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **MOVING ON PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Croydon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 134048

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Welling

Lead inspector: David Bolton

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 November 2004

Inspection number: 269102

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Permanently excluded Year 11 students
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	15-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	38
School address:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Katharine Street Croydon
Postcode:	CR0 1NX
Telephone number:	020 8604 1414
Fax number:	020 8604 1295
Appropriate authority:	Croydon LEA
Responsible Officer:	Cheryl Butler
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

*Moving On* is a pupil referral unit (PRU) for Year 11 pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or have exhibited significant behaviour difficulties which have caused their attendance at school to break down. The PRU focuses on preparing pupils for transition to post-16 work, education and training. Pupils normally spend the remainder of their final year of schooling at the unit. The curriculum has been planned to enable pupils to develop the key skills of communication, application of number, and information and communication technology (ICT), as well as appropriate social skills. In addition to formal lessons on site, pupils have the opportunity to participate in work-related learning activities including courses provided by local further education colleges and training providers.

At the time of the inspection, there were 38 pupils on roll – 30 boys and 8 girls. Attainment on entry is below average. Pupils have special educational needs (emotional and behavioural difficulties), but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, just over half were white British; the remainder were black/black British (predominantly Caribbean) or mixed race. There were no pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. Two pupils were in public care. Pupils are referred to the unit with high levels of disaffection and disengagement; many face challenging personal circumstances; many have involvement with the Youth Offending Team.

Since opening in 2002, the unit has been accommodated in different premises each year. It moved to its current accommodation, in former commercial premises in the centre of Croydon, at the start of this term, again on a temporary basis.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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14070	Mrs J Tasker	Lay inspector	
2113	Mrs C Marsh	Team inspector	Science
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This pupil referral unit opened in 2002. At present, despite having some satisfactory features, **the unit provides an unsatisfactory standard of education**. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their personal development, but attendance is unsatisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory, largely because teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. There are also weaknesses in leadership and management that make both unsatisfactory. **The unit currently provides unsatisfactory value for money**. The unit faces two particular barriers to raising achievement and to bringing about improvement: firstly, the difficulty in appointing and retaining suitable qualified teaching staff is contributing to the unsatisfactory teaching and learning; secondly, the lack of permanent accommodation and the repeated changes of premises have taken up time and energy and make it difficult for the unit to plan longer term.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the Schools Inspection Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this unit.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is too much unsatisfactory and occasionally poor teaching, leading to underachievement.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the unit that are undermining its effectiveness.
- Problems in attendance and punctuality are seriously hindering pupils' progress.
- Weaknesses in accommodation and staffing constitute a barrier to improvement.
- The unit gets some pupils back into education who would otherwise be lost to the system and moves them on to the next stage in their lives – a key purpose of the unit.
- The unit's emphasis on providing a work-related curriculum that is flexible enough to meet individual needs and interests is well suited to the pupils it serves.
- Pupils' personal development is helped by the good level of care, support and guidance they receive and by the patience and respect they are shown by staff.
- The work of the inclusion team successfully builds relationships with parents and families.
- Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

This new unit has not been inspected before.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 11	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

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

**Achievement is unsatisfactory.** Standards of attainment are below average, reflecting pupils' disrupted history of education. But even taking into account their starting point and the significant difficulties they bring with them, too many pupils do not make enough progress in the work they do in the unit. Pupils can take tests in key skills and results have improved over the two years of the unit's existence. However, the pass rate needs to be improved further. The main reason why achievement is unsatisfactory is that there are too many lessons where weaknesses in the teaching prevent pupils from learning effectively and achieving enough. This is not restricted to a few subjects; it applies to lessons across the curriculum. The result is that pupils do not achieve enough in their work; in general, they make better progress in their personal development. Nevertheless, a significant number of pupils move on to further education, training or employment.

**The improvement in pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory.** Given their starting points, the improvement in their attitudes and behaviour is also satisfactory – although many still have a long way to go and there is

still a good deal of challenging behaviour. Attendance is unsatisfactory, as is punctuality (both to the unit and to individual lessons), and this is holding back achievement.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the unit is unsatisfactory.** This is because, although the unit works hard to get pupils back into education, **teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall.** There is a small amount of good teaching, but there is too much that is unsatisfactory. This applies to subjects across the curriculum. In too many lessons, dull work, low expectations and ineffective classroom control lead to underachievement. Too much teaching is in the hands of people who have not been trained to teach and who lack important skills.

The unit provides a satisfactory curriculum. The care, support and guidance offered to pupils (including the unit's induction programme) are good and, together with the good work done to involve parents, help prepare pupils who attend regularly to move on to further education, training or employment. The good efforts the unit has made to forge links with the local community benefit pupils' learning and personal development. Difficulties in recruiting teachers and weaknesses in accommodation are hampering the unit's effectiveness.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the unit are unsatisfactory.** The leadership provided by the head and other staff with responsibilities is unsatisfactory, as is the management of the unit. The headteacher and staff have worked over the two years since the unit was opened to set up and run the provision that now exists. However, weaknesses in strategic planning and in monitoring and improving the quality of provision are undermining the unit's effectiveness. Governance by the local education authority is satisfactory. Statutory requirements have been met.

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

Parents are generally positive about the unit and what it does for their children. They value their relationship with the unit and the way it keeps them involved and informed. They agree that the unit seeks their views and takes account of their suggestions and concerns.

For the most part, pupils are supportive of the unit and appreciate the opportunities it offers them. They particularly like being treated as adults and being listened to, and the fact that the staff "are there for you". Most of them believe that behaviour is not good enough.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and clarifying roles and responsibilities.
- Work to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of assessment.
- The LEA should find appropriate permanent accommodation for the unit.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards of attainment are below average, reflecting pupils' disrupted history of education. However, even taking into account pupils' starting point and the significant difficulties they bring with them, achievement is unsatisfactory – too many pupils do not make enough progress in the work they do in the unit.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is too much underachievement in lessons, because of weaknesses in the teaching.
- Attendance problems undermine the achievement of many pupils.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take tests in key skills and results have improved over the two years of the unit's existence.
- A significant proportion of pupils move on to further education, training or employment.

#### Commentary

##### *Results in Key Skills tests (2003-04)*

	Percentage of the year group achieving a pass
Communication Level 1	57%
Application of Number Level 1	47%
ICT Level 1	43%
Application of Number Level 2	4%
Communication Level 2	12%
ICT Level 2	4%

1. Pupils have the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications in the key skills of communication, application of number, and information and communication technology (ICT). Last year, about a quarter of pupils gained a full Level One Key Skills award. Of those pupils who attended the unit on a regular basis, the majority passed a Level 1 test (and a few passed a Level 2 test) in at least one of the key skills. Given their starting points – and in particular the fact that most had turned their backs on education – this is an important step forward for the pupils concerned. The accreditation provides a useful stepping stone in pupils' transition to work, further education and training. However, the pass rate needs to be improved further, even though this year's key skills results showed a marked improvement over the previous year, when they were low. In addition, other aspects of pupils' wider achievements are recognised through the AQA unit awards scheme.

2. The main reason why achievement is unsatisfactory overall is that, when pupils are working in the unit, there are too many lessons where weaknesses in the teaching prevent them from learning effectively and making enough progress. This is not restricted to a few subjects; it applies to lessons across the curriculum. The result is that pupils do not achieve enough in their work; in general, they make better progress in terms of improved attitudes and personal development (in spite of their challenging behaviour). Sometimes, pupils simply do not do enough or take things through to a worthwhile conclusion; they do not have enough to show for the time invested. Sometimes, pupils are marking time because they are not being helped to go beyond what they already know, understand and can do, in order to improve their performance. They continue to produce work of the same standard, with a focus on "completing" tasks that may provide evidence of what they can already do, but that do not help them to tackle the things they need to do in order to bring about necessary improvement. Although at other times progress is adequate (and, occasionally, good), there is too much underachievement in all subjects.



3. For many pupils, attendance problems are the other key factor holding back their achievement, by causing them to miss what is going on and to lose the thread of the work they should be doing. Some of them are not there often enough to allow them to make worthwhile progress in their work. Even when they do attend the unit, pupils' late arrival (both to the unit and to individual lessons) compounds the problem. In some cases, pupils do not gain the key skills passes they are capable of because they are absent for the tests or fail to complete the work required.

4. In spite of these important shortcomings, a significant proportion of the unit's pupils move on to further education, training or employment. Given that pupils come with negative attitudes to education and with behavioural problems, this is a positive feature of the unit's work.

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

The improvement in pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Given their starting points, the improvement in their attitudes and behaviour is also satisfactory – although many still have a long way to go and there is still a good deal of challenging behaviour. Attendance is unsatisfactory, as is punctuality (both to the unit and to individual lessons), and this is holding back achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Not enough is being done to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, which are seriously hindering pupils' progress.
- Pupils learn to trust adults in authority and are helped to view their education and future prospects more positively.
- Staff of the unit are good at helping pupils develop self-confidence and self-esteem – to believe that they can achieve.
- There is a lack of consistency in managing challenging and inappropriate behaviour.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils come to the unit with a history of disaffection, rejection and in many cases violence towards staff and other pupils. The ethos and culture of the unit is built on acceptance of each pupil, on respect for them and on valuing them as individuals. Staff are committed to this and show patience in their interactions with pupils, even in very challenging circumstances. Pupils are shown that they matter, that their views and opinions are valued and that they will be listened to. Through this, pupils are slowly learning to trust adults in authority and to take a more positive view of how they can prepare for the next steps in their lives – as was seen during the inspection when pupils were visited on their vocational courses. Within the unit, pupils are gradually learning to apply themselves to work and are frequently reminded by staff that their learning and achievements in work matter and will make a difference to their future beyond the unit. Improvements in attitude and behaviour are slowly being won through the patient encouragement of staff and by the way in which they persevere with the pupils.

6. For many pupils, however, a serious barrier to improvement lies in their frequent absences. Pupils' attendance is too low and lack of information about prior attendance makes it difficult for the unit to chart improvements. A few pupils have good attendance; at the other extreme some attend rarely or not at all. Between these extremes, too many pupils attend irregularly and this is having a serious effect on their progress. For too many pupils, the strategies for following up non-attendance are not proving effective enough. The use of the automated *Truancy Call* system is not working in too many cases. The unit's policy of not instigating a home visit until a pupil has had 20 half-days of absence is ineffective. The unit has identified a difficulty in motivating white boys to value their education. During the inspection, the absence of white boys was significantly higher than that of other groups. However, the unit does not systematically analyze this aspect of attendance. During the inspection, pupils frequently arrived late to the unit and were late for most lessons. The unit is not doing enough to improve pupils' punctuality. Lateness to school – and, even more so, to lessons – is far too readily accepted. This is holding back achievement.

7. Records show that behaviour improves over time – even though, for many pupils, there is still a long way to go. While pupils have made progress in this respect over the relatively short time they have been at the unit, their behaviour can still be very challenging and frequently is so, with some pupils ignoring staff, showing lack of respect, and walking in and out of lessons at will. There are too many occasions when pupils make the running in the classroom, determining whether or not they will work or listen to the teacher, and even whether or not they will remain in the lesson. Although staff are consistent in showing patience and respect for pupils, there is no consistency of approach to managing or following up such inappropriate behaviour. The unit lacks an effective reward system, and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are not sufficiently staged, known and consistently implemented. This makes managing challenging behaviour difficult for staff, and particularly so for new, inexperienced and unqualified staff, when it can be destructive to their self-confidence.

8. Because staff are consistently positive in their relationships with pupils, and because they go out of their way to value their efforts, contributions and any signs of improvement, pupils are developing self-confidence and a belief in themselves. They are gradually learning to relate better to others and to respect their feelings, beliefs and interests. The range of opportunities outside the unit (both vocational courses and leisure or special interest activities) also boosts their personal development and helps them to recognise that they can be successful. This is preparing them to move more confidently into their next stage in life.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	16	School data	19
National data	n/a	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	18	4	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6		
Mixed – White and Black African	1	1	
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	2	
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	11	8	
Black or Black British – African	1		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	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 unsatisfactory. This is because, although the unit works hard to get pupils back into education, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. There is a small amount of good teaching, but there is too much that is unsatisfactory and occasionally poor, and this is leading to unsatisfactory achievement. This applies to all subjects inspected. Assessment is unsatisfactory. The unit provides a satisfactory curriculum. The care, support and guidance offered to pupils are good and, together with the good work done to involve parents, help prepare pupils to move on to further education, training or employment. Difficulties in recruiting teachers and weaknesses in accommodation are hampering the unit's effectiveness.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In too many lessons, dull work, low expectations and ineffective classroom control lead to underachievement.
- Too much teaching is in the hands of people who have not been trained to teach.
- There is nevertheless teaching that is satisfactory and some that is good.
- A good deal of work has been done recently to improve assessment – but there is still some way to go.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	4	15	8	1	0

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

9. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching, holding back pupils' learning and achievement. This is not restricted to a few subjects of the curriculum; there are instances of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in most subjects taught in the unit. Sometimes, this is because the work is not made interesting or relevant enough to gain and hold pupils' attention, with too much time spent completing rather dull, routine tasks and too little variety of activity. Not surprisingly, such work fails to motivate or engage these disaffected pupils and their efforts are at best half-hearted. Sometimes, the problem lies in expectations that are too low. Work is set at too low a level, lacking the necessary challenge to keep pupils on board; questioning is superficial and pupils are not helped to work things out for themselves or to develop their ideas; teaching is not geared to moving pupils on in their learning, or to helping them to improve on what they can already do. In such lessons, time is wasted, pupils do not learn enough and too little is achieved. One of the reasons for the mismatch of pupils' work to their needs is the unclear picture that some staff have of what pupils can already do, which stems from unsatisfactory assessment of their work (see paragraph 12). Another weakness in some of the teaching lies in behaviour management. Some staff deal skilfully but firmly with pupils' challenging behaviour, using the good relationship they have established with pupils to defuse potential confrontations and to reinforce clear boundaries. Others are less effective and less consistent, and at times greater effort is spent on managing behaviour than on learning. Occasionally, weaknesses in classroom control mean that little useful learning takes place at all.

10. As a result of difficulties in recruitment and decisions about staff deployment, a significant amount of teaching is done by people who have not been trained as teachers – including members of staff employed not as teachers, but in other roles. Some of their teaching is satisfactory, and occasionally good (helped, in the case of mentors and inclusion workers, by the strengths they bring in terms of relationships and their ability to deal with challenging attitudes and behaviour). But, in

spite of their best efforts, there are too many occasions when the lack of training in teaching shows through. It helps to explain why many lessons are either no better than satisfactory or are not good enough. It leads, for example, to lessons where teachers are not clear enough about what needs to be taught, exactly what they intend pupils to learn, where to pitch the work, what methods to use, or how to structure the lesson so that pupils make effective progress. The result is that pupils do not learn or achieve enough.

11. Although the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, there are nevertheless lessons where teaching is adequate, and a few where it is good. In the best lessons, work is well planned and expectations of what pupils can achieve are challenging but realistic. For example, in an effective, business-like ICT lesson where pupils were working on spreadsheets, there was “no spoon-feeding”. Pupils were expected to think things through for themselves – superficial answers were not accepted – and they were helped to do so by the teacher’s probing questioning. In spite of their behavioural problems, they maintained interest, worked well and achieved a good deal. Similarly, in a well structured, well paced dance lesson led by a teaching assistant, pupils were left in no doubt about what was expected of them, both in terms of performance and in terms of punctuality, behaviour and effort. These clear expectations paid off and pupils rose to the occasion. They were pleased with the good progress they made. At present, however, there is too little teaching of this calibre, and training and development to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not had a high enough priority in the unit.

12. Assessment of pupils’ work is an area that the unit has rightly ear-marked for further development. Work has been done recently to improve the way pupils’ progress is tracked during their stay, and this is proving useful in logging key “milestones” (such as initial assessment, results in key skills tests, unit awards). However, between these “milestones”, ongoing assessment of pupils’ attainment is generally weak. The emphasis tends to be on how well pupils participate and whether they complete pieces of work, rather than how well they actually perform. Often, teachers do not know enough about what individual pupils know and can do, or, importantly, about what they need to focus on next in order to improve. As a result, some work is not well enough planned to meet individual needs and pupils themselves are not clear enough about how they can improve.

## **The curriculum**

The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory, and constitute a barrier to improvement

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The unit’s intention to provide a work-related curriculum that is flexible enough to meet individual needs and interests is a good one – it helps get pupils back into education.
- A good deal is done to promote pupils’ personal development.
- Difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff have resulted in an unsatisfactory match of staff to the curriculum.
- The lack of permanent accommodation and the annual moves this entails are having an adverse effect on the development of the unit

### **Commentary**

13. A strength of the curriculum is that it has been planned with the aim of preparing pupils for employment, training and further education. It has been designed to allow pupils to gain some accreditation in key skills, whilst combining attendance at the unit with work experience and vocational placements organized by local training providers and by the local further education college. This “mix” provides a fresh start and – combined with the unit’s real effort to tailor a package of courses to suit the individual interests of each pupil – is a key factor in getting these disaffected pupils back into learning and in giving them more positive attitudes to their future. For

most pupils, adequate weighting is given to the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT, although more needs to be done to identify and target specific weaknesses.

14. This curriculum, whilst entirely appropriate in intention, is, however, hampered by a difficulty in finding enough suitable providers of vocational courses and because college courses have not yet started this academic year. It further suffers because the flow of information between the unit and the external providers about pupils' ongoing progress is not yet well enough managed. In one case, for example, a provider working to develop pupils' key skills in a systematic way was unaware of the key skills work being done in the unit itself.

15. A high priority is given to pupils' personal development. Given the prior experiences and attitudes of pupils joining the unit, this is particularly appropriate. There are a good number of opportunities, both timetabled and outside of the classroom, which seek to tackle pupils' personal needs, both in groups and individually. Sessions such as "Opening Minds", personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, careers, "Listen Up" and individual tutorials cover a wide range of topics. They include sex and health education, including drugs education, and touch on religious and cultural issues. Because curriculum planning lacks detail (both in individual subjects and overall), it is not easy for staff to see how the learning opportunities they want to include will fit together over the course of the year. Nevertheless, pupils have opportunities to explore moral and social issues, to think about the importance of self-image, role models and making choices. Key messages of trust, responsibility, inter-dependence, and cooperation are regularly reinforced by staff – even when pupils' response shows that they still have some way to go in terms of their own maturity. Because all staff are committed to the pupils, informal conversations (for example at break times with mentors and teaching assistants) have an important positive influence on pupils' personal development, backing up what is taught more formally in lessons. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal development, linked to the good levels of care and guidance, is instrumental in getting pupils back on track.

16. The unit has had a number of staff changes since it opened. It has experienced on-going difficulties in recruiting suitable qualified teachers. The current staff team (comprising qualified and unqualified teachers, teaching assistants, mentors and inclusion workers) is strongly committed to helping pupils develop as people. However, there is a shortage of appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of its curriculum. Whilst non-teaching staff are working hard to fill the gap, the overall effect is that pupils are not achieving enough in their work. This is unsatisfactory and some staff in non-teaching roles are frustrated that they are being deflected from their main roles.

17. The unit still has no permanent accommodation and has just completed its third move since it first opened two years ago this September. Some of the unit's funds have had to be diverted into the costly business of making the current premises fit for use, even though these premises are available only short-term. The LEA recognizes that this is unsatisfactory and states that it has been continually searching for permanent premises. It has so far been unsuccessful for the next academic year. This is clearly affecting the life and work of the unit. Though the current accommodation, in former commercial premises, provides enough space and can be said to offer a more "adult" environment than school, it is far from ideal. For example, there is no disabled access, there is no water in the art room, room sizes are not ideal, and the recreational area is rather bleak. Staff have done their best to make the building welcoming, but there are limits to what can be done in accommodation that is only for one year. More seriously, the distraction of repeated changes of accommodation and uncertainty about future premises have deflected time and energy from more important things, have made it difficult to plan and have sapped good will.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils' care, welfare and safety are good. The unit provides good support, advice and guidance for pupils. The involvement of pupils in the work and development of the unit is satisfactory

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff put a good deal of effort into providing personal care and support – although tracking of pupils' progress is undermined by weaknesses in assessment.
- Well thought out, systematic induction arrangements help pupils move into the unit.
- Access to appropriate advice and support from a wide range of agencies gives pupils a better prospect for their future.

## **Commentary**

18. The unit puts great emphasis on pupils' well-being. Pupils and their individual circumstances are well understood, helped by the time set aside for discussion with them and their families before they arrive in the unit. Individual risk assessments are carried out with each pupil and then used to determine appropriate ways of handling situations. Monitoring of incidents and accidents, including bullying and racist incidents, is good. There have been a number of racist incidents, but these have been dealt with swiftly and in an open and honest way. With support from a designated mentor as well as a tutor, and continuing access to their inclusion workers, pupils receive a good level of personal care. They have a choice of whom they want to confide in and do so with confidence. The unit makes use of its links with other organisations to extend the range of care it offers – as with the weekly drop-in session that is run on site by a nurse from the primary health care trust. Staff know their pupils well and routinely track their progress in attitudes and behaviour, using this in regular reviews. Guidance and advice are properly based on this information. On the other hand, tracking of pupils' progress in their learning (including identifying what needs to be done to raise standards of achievement) is not effective enough, because of weaknesses in assessment.

19. Induction arrangements are a strong feature of the unit. Before pupils start at *Moving On*, the unit's inclusion workers make home visits that reassure parents that their child is starting with a level playing field. As well as gathering information, they invest a good deal into working with the family to create a positive climate. In many cases, this work is crucial in getting pupils back into education at all. It also forms the basis for the continuing support given to pupils and their families. The induction programme for pupils once they start at the unit is well planned – and the inclusion of outdoor pursuits and team-building activities helps build a sense of belonging. During the induction, pupils are encouraged to show what they can do and staff make every effort to draw up a future timetable that matches the needs and interests of each individual. Pupils are fully involved in setting their own plans and targets at this stage. All of this gets pupils off to a good start.

20. The unit works well with partner organisations to give pupils the support and guidance they need, in order to prepare them for the next stage in their lives. Ongoing liaison and work with Connexions is particularly effective, with all pupils receiving careers guidance and help to gain work placements, as well as more targeted, individual support. This is an important factor that has made possible the take-up of post-16 education and training by a significant number of pupils leaving the unit. Connexions are also involved in funding and supporting the unit's *Moving On Plus* initiative. The project worker's persistence and resourcefulness in reaching a group of pupils who would otherwise be lost to the system, working with them and their families on an individual basis, has paid dividends. Without this targeted support, it is unlikely that the pupils concerned last year would have been adequately prepared to take advantage of the opportunities available to them beyond school leaving age. As one parent said of the unit's commitment to supporting its pupils, "they never give up on them."

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

The school has good links with parents and good links with the community. Links with schools and colleges are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are positive about their relationship with the unit and what it does to keep them involved and informed.
- The work of the inclusion team successfully builds relationships with families.
- The good efforts the unit has made to forge links with the local community benefit pupils' learning and personal development.

## **Commentary**

21. Parents appreciate what the unit does to keep them informed and to involve them with their child's education. The induction process itself helps to get families on board and once pupils are in the unit there is a regular flow of information through weekly newsletters and progress reports. The induction pack provides useful information and helpfully outlines responsibilities and expectations. There is regular telephone contact with tutors and the administration officer, and the unit reports good attendance at transition meetings. The high profile annual "graduation" ceremony (this year held in the Mayor's Parlour) is well attended by parents and families who welcome the opportunity to celebrate their child's success. Although it does not work in all cases – as pupils' attendance record shows – the positive relationship established with families is an important factor in getting pupils back into education.

22. The work of the unit's inclusion team has been central to developing partnership with parents and this has made a real difference for pupils coming to the unit. They have been able to promote family learning, liaise with support agencies and encourage parents to access help and advice. Families are helped to feel they are not alone. This work with families is also a strong feature of the *Moving On Plus* project. Staff from the unit have been accepted by pupils and their families and it is reported that their influence has been found helpful, for example, in reducing offending behaviour.

23. Creative use is made of links with the community to provide opportunities for pupils that they would otherwise not get. In addition to the pattern of inter-agency working that underpins the good support and guidance given to pupils, the unit's links with a number of providers make possible the range of vocational and special interest courses that are held off-site, tapping effectively into local expertise. These schemes have credibility with pupils. Visits made during the inspection show that pupils who attend on a regular basis (and by no means all do) are eager, pay good attention and show respect for their tutors. Sadly, this year pupils have been disadvantaged by a delay in the availability of college placements. Productive links with the local radio, initially on the issue of gun crime, have led to several successful spin-offs, including pupils being invited to take part in radio discussions and work placements.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Governance by the local education authority (LEA) is satisfactory, in spite of having some weaknesses. Leadership by the headteacher and others with responsibilities is unsatisfactory, as is management.

The unit faces two particular barriers to improvement and to raising achievement. Firstly, difficulties in recruiting suitable qualified teachers is contributing to the unsatisfactory teaching and learning, itself holding back pupils' achievement. Secondly, the lack of permanent accommodation and the repeated changes of premises make it difficult for the unit to plan for the longer term and adversely affect the workload and morale of staff.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The LEA has a clear and appropriate vision for the unit and its development and has provided good financial support.
- Monitoring and evaluation, including the monitoring of teaching, are not rigorous enough and have not led to action to bring about necessary improvements.
- Weaknesses in strategic planning mean that staff are not clear about overall priorities for improvement.

- A lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities prevents staff from working as effectively as they should.
- Day-to-day administration of the unit is effective.

## **Commentary**

24. The LEA has set up the unit with a clear remit and an appropriate focus on providing a work-related curriculum with a strong emphasis on personal development for disaffected Year 11 pupils, for whom traditional education and a traditional curriculum have not worked. It has resourced the unit well, particularly in terms of the number of adults working with pupils. It has laid out clear terms of reference for the unit's advisory committee, which provides a good level of support and brings together many of the partners involved in the work of the unit. However, the LEA has not been able to find permanent accommodation for the unit, which has had to move to different premises each year. In spite of this, and in spite of a period of unstable staffing, the head and staff have worked over the two years since the unit was opened to set up and run the provision that now exists. However, there are weaknesses in important aspects of the leadership and management of the unit that are undermining its effectiveness.

25. The unit has not yet developed a systematic approach to self-evaluation or to planning improvement based on the findings. As a result, strengths and weaknesses are not well enough known or acted upon. Although the unit has amassed a range of data, this is not systematically analyzed to see what light it can throw on the unit's performance – or indeed the performance of different groups of pupils within it. Similarly, while there has been some joint observation of teaching by the link inspector and the headteacher, the weaknesses identified have not been adequately followed up and consequently still remain. In addition, not all staff have been observed teaching, with the result that strengths and weaknesses in teaching are not known, nor is there a clear plan of action for improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement.

26. Although the unit is now in its third year of existence, there is no strategic plan for the unit's development. Each of the staff teams has drawn up its own development plan, but this has not been within the context of an overall plan giving them direction and setting clear priorities for improvement for the unit as a whole. There is no overall, concerted strategy, for example, for raising pupils' achievement, for promoting consistency in managing challenging behaviour, or for dealing effectively with lateness and unsatisfactory attendance by pupils.

27. While there are role descriptions for staff, there is in practice some lack of clarity about responsibilities and how they are to be carried out. There are no satisfactory arrangements for the leadership and management of subjects – and subject leaders are not clear what is expected of them. Although staff talk informally to one another, the lack of guidance and clear structures for their work prevents them from being as effective as they should be in developing the subject and improving pupils' learning and achievement. In practice, there is also some overlapping of the roles and responsibilities of tutors, mentors and inclusion workers. This sometimes results in confusion as to who should follow things through (as, for example, with attendance problems). Changes in responsibilities without proper training and support – for example when non-teaching staff are expected to teach – are leading to dissatisfaction among some staff and a lowering of morale.

28. The day-to-day administration of the unit is effective and frees staff to go about their work. Staff are provided with a comprehensive pack of the different forms that are used in the unit, relating to both staff and pupils, and clear guidance is given as to their completion. There is careful monitoring of expenditure and the administrative staff attend staff briefings, to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to enable the day-to-day running of the unit to go smoothly.



## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGE 4**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English (communication) is **unsatisfactory** overall.

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

- Weaknesses in teaching are leading to underachievement.
- Pupils have the chance to gain a key skills qualification in communication.

#### **Commentary**

29. Although attainment is below average for their age, pupils are encouraged to produce work for their portfolios and to take key skills tests so that their competence can be recognised in a national award. Last year over half of the pupils on the unit's roll passed the Level 1 test in communication and a few passed the Level 2 test. For those who are successful, as well as providing a useful stepping stone to further education or training, this also proves to pupils themselves that their attainment is worthwhile. However, in many instances, teachers focus more on getting pupils to provide evidence of what they can already do than on actually improving pupils' performance and developing this key skill. Some pupils have made little real progress and have too little to show for their time in the unit (in some cases, because of attendance problems).

30. Even taking account of their starting point, and in particular their disaffection before coming to the unit, pupils overall do not achieve enough in their lessons in this subject. This is largely down to weaknesses in some of the teaching. Where teaching and learning are effective, pupils make adequate – and on occasion good – progress. In one effective lesson, for example, a brisk starter activity set the scene and involved all the pupils, and was followed by suitably sequenced activities that gave pupils practical experience of scanning, skimming and reading to identify main points and ideas. Discussion was handled well and helped pupils to realise how misunderstandings arise. Pupils worked well and even the more reluctant were drawn in. They covered a good amount in the time, and learning and achievement were good. Too often, however, work is dull and fails to engage pupils' interest; as a result, teachers are not able to motivate pupils and too little is learned or achieved in the lesson. The pace of work is too slow and too much time is wasted. Some work is pitched at too low a level, and expectations of what pupils can achieve (and in what time scale) are not high enough. This is linked to weaknesses in assessment. In general, the teaching does not do enough to help pupils improve their performance – for example, teaching them how to improve the structure of their writing, showing them how to match the language to the purpose of the task, or identifying and tackling the particular weaknesses in literacy of individual pupils. As a result, many pupils continue to produce work of much the same standard and are not made aware of what they need to do to improve. Some of the teaching is done by a member of the non-teaching staff and, although there are strengths in positive relationships, the lessons lack the skills that a trained teacher of the subject might be expected to bring to the planning and teaching.

31. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. As with other subjects in the unit, there are no clear arrangements for co-ordination and leadership of the subject, for shaping curriculum planning, or for monitoring and developing the quality of what is provided.

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

32. Other teachers are aware of the pieces of "evidence" that pupils need in order to complete their key skills portfolio and they provide opportunities for work in their subjects to contribute to this – work done in ICT, careers or PSHE, for instance. This is satisfactory. What is lacking is a

coordinated, planned approach across the curriculum to raising pupils' achievement in the key skill of communication.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics (application of number) is **unsatisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Supportive relationships help pupils to take mathematics seriously and become more confident in the subject.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work rate are too low.

### **Commentary**

33. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Even recognising that a significant number of the pupils have been out of education for considerable lengths of time and that they have a history of disaffection, they still achieve too little when in the unit. Standards are low and, although the baseline assessment usefully identifies gaps in pupils' knowledge of number, not enough account is taken of what pupils do actually know and not enough is done to tackle individual needs. This is, in part, due to the weaknesses in assessment referred to elsewhere. In many cases, pupils get through too little work. Poor attendance of many pupils, coupled with the culture within the unit of accepting late arrivals in lessons, prevents pupils from achieving as they should. In some instances, weaknesses in managing challenging and inappropriate behaviour result in pupils determining whether or when they will work. This inevitably leads to underachievement.

34. On the other hand, the positive way in which staff relate to pupils is the key strength of the teaching and underpins the success in helping pupils to become more confident about the subject. This is an important step forward. Staff are unfailingly patient and respectful to pupils, sometimes even in the face of provocation and lack of respect. There is a good emphasis on trying to make the work relevant to pupils' everyday life, which helps them see value in the lesson. In some lessons, the trust that pupils have in their teachers helps them to persevere with aspects they are finding difficult. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' ability to arrive on time, remain in the lesson and apply themselves to the work are too low. It is too readily accepted that pupils cannot work for a whole lesson and pupils are allowed to engage in activities that are not related to the planned learning.

35. The responsibilities involved in leading the subject have not been adequately spelled out. Consequently, there is no clear leadership of the subject.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

36. There is no planned approach to developing application of number across the curriculum and little evidence of it in practice within the unit.

## **SCIENCE**

Science is not taught in the unit.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is best for pupils who take additional ICT courses over and above key skills lessons.
- Overall, however, achievement is unsatisfactory, because of some pupils' frequent absences and weaknesses in some of the teaching.
- Pupils have good access to ICT equipment and opportunities to follow up their interest in the subject.

## **Commentary**

37. Although attainment in ICT is below average, some pupils make sound progress in the subject; the achievement of these pupils is satisfactory, and in a few cases good. Overall, however, achievement is unsatisfactory.

38. The pupils who achieve best in the subject are those who attend fairly regularly and who, in addition to their key skills lessons in ICT, are taking other ICT courses, such as the "New CLAIT" Level 1 Certificate for IT Users and the "On Line On Track" project. Some of these pupils arrived with adequate basic skills in ICT, but they have covered a good amount since coming to the unit. They have improved their ability to find different types of information from ICT sources, learning to become more discriminating in selecting what is relevant to their purpose. They are improving their skills in developing, structuring and presenting information, using suitable software, including word-processing, desk-top publishing and spreadsheets. For other pupils, progress is too slow and achievement unsatisfactory. Too many have missed work because of absences. In some lessons, too, pupils do not achieve enough because they are not prepared to apply themselves or are too reliant on spoon-feeding by the teacher.

39. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory. There is some good teaching – as, for example, in one lesson where, encouraged by the business-like pace, pupils applied themselves and were pleased with what they achieved. Explanations and demonstrations were clear and pitched at the right level, and probing questioning helped pupils to think for themselves. The work was suitably challenging and interesting, and it was clear that pupils were expected to work hard and succeed. Not surprisingly, achievement was good. In other lessons, however, teaching and learning are no better than sound and sometimes they are unsatisfactory. Sometimes, not enough is expected of pupils, either in terms of what they might be expected to learn or in terms of effort and work rate. Sometimes, pupils' interest is not held and they are allowed to opt out of work, wasting too much time and achieving little.

40. The unit is suitably resourced with up-to-date ICT equipment. Teething problems with the network (following the move to new premises) have now been resolved. Pupils have good access to the right sort of hardware and software. Those with an interest in the subject have good opportunities to extend their learning beyond the requirements of the key skills tests, thanks to the range of courses offered – which even includes a special interest session when they are able to build their own PC.

41. There are good arrangements for managing the network and for developing ICT resources and their use; but as with other subjects in the unit, there is no formal arrangement for subject leadership and co-ordination.

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

42. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to aid learning in other subjects, and work tackled in ICT lessons is often related to work in other lessons, providing pupils with a "real" context for their work.

## **OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

43. Work was sampled in other subjects. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards and achievement.

44. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in **art/graphics** lessons, although the course had been interrupted by the previous external provider suddenly withdrawing part way through the first half term. Consequently there was little of pupils' work to see; what there was on display shows that pupils have been encouraged to extend their observational and drawing skills, including, for example, perspective. The two lessons seen were the first with a new provider, who had to work hard to establish a positive relationship, setting aims for the course which was about to get under way.

45. In the one lesson of **dance** seen, the teaching was good. Pupils were left in no doubt what was expected of them in terms of performance, punctuality, behaviour and effort. The session was well structured and sequenced. Good attention was paid to warming-up routines and to revising basic moves. Pupils showed that they could listen, follow instructions and demonstrations, and were improving their ability to move in time to the music. They were learning to accept, and act upon, constructive criticism and were pleased with the good progress they had made. They are looking forward to their public performance.

46. A number of different lessons were seen that contribute to the teaching of **personal, social and health education**, including sessions in PSHE, citizenship, careers, "Opening Minds", and "Listen Up". In most lessons, staff successfully cajoled pupils into taking part, and gentle humour and sensitivity avoided some potentially confrontational situations. Whilst in many of these lessons teaching and learning were satisfactory, there was some unsatisfactory teaching, where pupils did not learn or achieve enough. In some lessons, teachers were not clear or specific enough about what they expected pupils to learn or to gain from the session. Some of the tasks were not interesting enough to motivate the pupils and lacked variety – with over-reliance on worksheets or on teachers talking without adequately engaging the pupils. In spite of this, the work done overall makes an important contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem and to developing their understanding of right and wrong and of their responsibilities in society. Satisfactory careers education is appropriately linked to good careers guidance and a sound program of work-related learning. A significant number of lessons were taught by unqualified staff who are nevertheless doing a sterling job in holding the subject together and providing essential support for pupils' personal development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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