

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHESSBROOK EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTRE**

Watford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 130349

Headteacher: Mrs P Hawkes

Lead inspector: Jacque Cook

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 February 2005

Inspection number: 270814

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

Type of school:	For pupils permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	22
Centre address:	Tolpits Lane Watford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD18 6LJ
Telephone number:	01923 212025
Fax number:	01923 225774
Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer	Justin Donovan
Date of previous inspection:	29 November 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CENTRE

Chessbrook Education Support Centre is a mixed pupil referral unit for pupils aged 5 to 16 who are permanently excluded, at risk of exclusion, on a long term fixed exclusion or have attendance difficulties. There are 24 places at the centre. Eight places are purchased by the Youth Programmes Unit to provide ten hours a week tuition in GCSE and Entry Level awards. At the time of the inspection there were 22 pupils on roll, five girls and 17 boys in Years 7 to 11. Year 10 pupils had just left at half term. Three of the pupils attend the centre for two days a week and are dual registered with their school. A further two pupils are dual registered because they are in a trial period in their new schools while they are being reintegrated. The pupils are mainly of white British ethnicity and there are no pupils speaking English as an additional language at present. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs and one is in the process of assessment. There are no pupils in public care. Attainment on entry is usually low because many of the pupils have literacy difficulties and also pupils may have missed significant parts of their education due to their behaviour difficulties. Pupils are from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, slightly less favourable than average overall.

There is a range of other provision including nurture groups for primary, which also includes parents, and secondary age pupils and transition groups to help vulnerable pupils. An extensive outreach service provides support to primary and secondary schools in the area, working mainly with pupils but also with staff and with parents. During the inspection 134 pupils were supported, 24 in primary 110 in secondary.

The centre has IIP status. Significant partners include the Youth Programmes Unit, the Alcohol Advice Centre and local schools. The centre serves schools in the South West Quadrant area of Hertfordshire based in and around Watford.

A significant change since the last inspection is the requirement for pupils to receive 25 hours of provision.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2351	Jacque Cook	Lead inspector	Modern foreign languages Design and technology English as an Additional Language
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
15600	Colin Richardson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science PSHE and citizenship Religious education
20622	Ann Sydney	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Chessbrook is a good and overall an effective centre** offering a broad range of provision, on and off site, to support pupils with behaviour difficulties. The quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of almost all pupils are good and their behaviour improves very well. The leadership and management of the centre are good and it provides good value for money.

The centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' behaviour improves very well because there are effective strategies. As a result, last year, a good number of pupils were reintegrated into schools.
- Very good progress is made in personal, social, health and citizenship education and particularly in pupils' understanding of moral issues.
- There is a significant amount of very good teaching and learning and assessment procedures are very good.
- Links with other schools are very good, particularly through the outreach provision. The community is used very well for the very good offsite provision.
- Pupils are very well supported and guided and very good attention is paid to their health and safety.
- Pupils do not all have the required 25 hours and provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is unsatisfactory and this slows their learning.
- There are not enough opportunities for accreditation.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Middle management has improved considerably, there are plans for what is to be taught and attendance has increased and truancy decreased. There remain issues regarding the provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Pupils' care, guidance and support and assessment procedures have improved very well. Other areas have improved well or have maintained good standards.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils' achievement and progress are good.** They make very good progress in improving their behaviour. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in PSHCE, English in Year 11 and mathematics in Years 7 to 9. They also make very good progress in art and design. Pupils' achievement and progress are good in science, English in Years 7 to 9, mathematics in Year 11 and in most other subjects. A few pupils, including those pupils with statements of special educational needs who are on reduced timetables, or have been at the centre too long, do not make the progress they should.

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.** Staff have very good relationships with the pupils and set very high standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils learn well. Most teachers plan lessons very well; this results in pupils' interest being

sustained and they work hard. The reason that pupils achieve very well in English in Year 11 and mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and PSHCE is because they are taught very well. The curriculum is good overall. It provides well for those returning to school but does not meet with the requirements on the statements of special educational needs. There is very good provision for offsite activities which build confidence as well as providing a physical activity. Additional activities such as nurture groups and transition groups are effective. There are very good arrangements to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The guidance and support they receive is very good. Partnerships with parents are good and links with schools and the community are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The effectiveness of leadership and of management is good. The good leadership of the headteacher enables strong teams of staff to be formed. Leadership of primary outreach is very good and good for secondary outreach. The management committee are supportive and well informed about the work of the centre. The effectiveness of the appropriate authority is unsatisfactory in that it does not ensure that the requirements of statements of special educational needs are met or that the centre provides 25 hours provision for the pupils.

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

Parents responding to the questionnaire and those contacted during the inspection were very positive about the work of the centre. They felt their children made progress and improved their attitudes and behaviour.

Pupils are also very positive. They feel as if they are welcome at the centre and expected to work hard. Those in Year 11 comment that they are learning a great deal more than their schools and prefer to work at the centre.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Work with the Local Education Authority to ensure all pupils have 25 hours provision either in the centre or elsewhere.
- Improve the opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation in a broader range of subjects and areas of learning.

The appropriate authority should:

- Plan ahead to ensure Year 10 pupils with statements have provision when they leave the centre. and, to meet statutory requirements:
- Ensure pupils with statements of special educational needs have appropriate provision finalising proposed statements within the timescale specified.
- Ensure all pupils have 25 hours a week provision.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. There are a significant number of instances where pupils are making very good progress in their lessons.

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

- Pupils achieve very well in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).
- Pupils' behaviour improves very well.
- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in English in Year 11 and in mathematics in Years 7 to 9.
- Progress is very good in art and design.
- Opportunities for pupils to gain awards are not broad enough.
- A few pupils lose their enthusiasm for their work and do not do as well as they should.

#### **Commentary**

1. There were no Year 10 pupils at the centre during the inspection as they had left a week previously at half term.
2. The overall good progress and achievement made by pupils are an improvement since the last inspection and are a reflection of the quality of the teaching they receive. It is very noticeable, that in those subjects where teaching and learning are very good, pupils make the best progress. The improvement in pupils' behaviour is considerable and contributes towards the progress made. Pupils flourish because behaviour guidelines and consequences for infringements are crystal clear and staff are understanding of problems pupils may have. Most sustain this improvement which leads to successful reintegration into school. Last year, a good number of pupils, 11 out of 16, maintained their place in their new school. However, behaviour deteriorates for a few pupils who fail in their reintegration or have no designated school or attend the centre for a long period because they lose their motivation to succeed.
3. There are no measurable differences between the progress of boys and girls, and pupils from ethnic minorities make similar progress to their peers. The achievement of pupils with statements of special educational needs is, in the curriculum provided, on the whole, satisfactory particularly for those who attend for a significant number of hours each week. Their achievements are unsatisfactory where the curriculum specified on statements cannot be provided and where pupils have a reduced timetable.
4. Last year all Year 11 pupils from the Youth Programmes Unit were entered for either the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations or the Entry Level awards in English, mathematics and science. The four pupils taking GCSE examinations achieved ten grades between them and the four taking Entry Level achieved level 3 passes in all but one instance where a level 2 was awarded. Pupils are able to gain Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Unit Awards in art and design and up to three units of the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (New CLAIT). There are few arrangements for pupils in Years 7 to 10 to gain awards. At present pupils gain the Sainsbury Taste of Success in their food lessons and there are Unit Awards in religious education, PSHCE and science. Opportunities to boost pupils' confidence through gaining recognition by examination success are missed.
5. Pupils work well towards individual targets on their plans. There are no whole centre targets for progress and achievement.



6. Many have significant literacy difficulties when they join the centre, which have impeded their progress in their schools. At the centre, due to the quality of the teaching, in English, they make good progress and achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very good progress and achievement in Year 11. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' speaking and listening and reading skills develop well whereas they make satisfactory progress in improving their writing skills. In Year 11, pupils develop very well in speaking and listening and reading and make good progress in writing. In mathematics, the higher quality teaching is in Years 7 to 9, so these pupils make very good progress, whereas, those in Year 11 make good progress. Pupils' progress and achievement in science are good.
7. The curriculum for PSHCE is very well planned and citizenship is taught through all subjects and during times when pupils are not in lessons, such as break and lunchtime. Due to this, and the very high quality of the teaching and learning, pupils do very well. This helps to improve pupils' behaviour. In art and design, pupils are making good progress, although there is insufficient time to gain appropriate awards. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT). It is a part of the centre improvement plan to improve pupils' work in this subject.
8. Reports from schools where the centre's outreach staff work indicate that pupils that work with centre staff make at least good and often very good progress in solving difficulties that would put them at risk of exclusion.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The centre monitors and promotes good attendance very well.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour help them to achieve well.
- Staff have very high expectations regarding behaviour and conduct.
- Relationships between pupils are very good.
- Pupils' moral development stands out and is very good.

### **Commentary**

9. The centre has maintained good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development since the last inspection. There are good improvements regarding attendance and moral development.
10. Although the overall rate of attendance in the last academic year was low, it hides many good improvements in individual cases. It is clear that the majority of pupils attend better than they did at their mainstream schools. A close examination of the rates of attendance from the start of this school year, up to the end of spring half term reveals that many pupils improve their attendance as time goes on. The centre has a very good system of reward for pupils to act as an incentive. An attendance officer telephones parents promptly regarding any unexplained absence and the educational welfare service also gives very good support to families. Truancy has reduced very much since the last inspection.

### **Attendance**

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

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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Centre data	12.0
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Centre data	13.0
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*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

11. Attitudes in lessons and the range of activities provided are good. For example, during a religious education lesson, Years 8 and 9 pupils listened attentively as they learned about common factors between religious commandments, laws and codes of conduct. Even when pupils find work very difficult, they still do their best and persevere.
  
12. The centre is an orderly community and behaviour is generally good. Recorded incidents of misbehaviour often include those pupils who have been at the centre for a long time and their interest in their work has deteriorated. Also included are incidents involving pupils with statements of special educational needs who have complex behaviour difficulties. The whole premises are free from damage and graffiti - reflecting the respect towards property. All staff frequently praise pupils for their effort and achievements. A 'pupil of the week' and a 'citizen of the week' are nominated by staff and their names published each week in the newsletter. Staff manage any difficult behaviour at the centre very skilfully. There is an effective four level scheme where at level C pupils work away from their group in the 'foster' room and level D which is reserved for very serious misbehaviour, they are sent home. Pupils say that bullying is not a significant issue and staff deals with any problems very well. Several temporary short period exclusions occurred in the last school year for unacceptable behaviour. A further 15 transfers to alternative provision for behaviour-related or disciplinary reasons are recorded.

## Exclusions

### ***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	50	7	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	2	0

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

13. The centre promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, very well. Pupils show respect towards others because staff always treat them with respect. Pupils listen to each other's views in lessons and value each other's efforts and achievements.
  
14. Staff deserve much credit for all that is done to raise self-esteem and confidence. Pupils develop a good awareness of their own situation and their spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities are made in tutorial time enable pupils to consider and reflect on many important aspects of their lives. The pastor in assembly time encourages reflection also, for example on the beauty of fresh untrodden snow. Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong. They often consider how people and property ought to be treated. For instance, they examine people's rights and responsibilities. Much work is done on rules for the centre and for society generally. This enables pupils to think through why rules are necessary and the advantages and the consequences of breaking them. The way that sex education and education in drug and alcohol misuse are taught also make a very good contribution to moral development.

15. Social development is good. Pupils know that they have an important role to play in the community. They fundraise regularly for charities and good causes and recently made good efforts to raise money for the tsunami catastrophe. While there are times when pupils are skilfully encouraged to tackle activities independently, such as chopping an onion, there are instances where pupils have so much support that they do not work on their own, when they could do so. Pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions is satisfactory. Although there are several chances for trips in the community to places such as art galleries and museums, the range is limited, for instance, there is little by way of theatre and music.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE

The quality of education is good. Pupils' support care and guidance and the partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a significant amount of teaching and learning that is very good and occasionally excellent.
- Most lessons are planned very well, although there are occasions when time is not managed well and important end of session activities are too rushed.
- Staff have very strong relationships with the pupils and use praise and encouragement very effectively so pupils become more confident and work hard.
- Staff insist on high standards of behaviour and have a very good range of strategies to ensure pupils comply.
- While in many lessons pupils are given work that is suitably challenging, there are instances where it is not hard enough.

### Commentary

16. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. No longer are there lessons where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and the number where the quality is very good or excellent has increased fourfold. This is largely due to the improved monitoring programme and specific staff training. As a result, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are now taught as well as others in the centre.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	11	9	4	0	0	0

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

17. In lessons where there is a very high quality of teaching and learning, teachers present work in such a way that it will engage the pupils' interest. This, with the prompting and praise and encouragement of staff helps often previously reluctant learners to tackle difficult work successfully. As a result, their learning is greater and, at times, very creative. For example, in an English lesson a pupil was rightly praised for reading an extract from a book by Brian Keenan. This led to written work, to describe a room, including a remarkable piece about 'perfect spaces' in a classroom. Conversely, there are incidents where activities are not pitched at the right level. A more able pupil in a mathematics lesson found the work on angles too easy and needed a great deal of encouragement to complete the work.

18. Almost all teachers plan lessons very well and in detail using a format which is outlined to the pupils at the start of the session. This ensures the pupils know what they will be expected to learn and how it links with their previous learning. Objectives are very clear and key words are emphasised at the beginning, during the lesson and then in the recap at the end. This is very effective particularly if there are any pupils who are from homes where the first language is not English. Elements from the Key Stage 3 Strategy have been used very well to improve planning and, more recently, to focus on the end of lessons to increase their effectiveness. In a few instances, timing was not right: too long was spent on the main part of the session and the ending was rushed. This meant that pupils did not consolidate what they had learnt and revisit the lesson objectives effectively. Where lesson planning is not so detailed, activities are less structured for example, an initial lesson on designing a website involved the pupil evaluating sites but did not have a proforma to complete. This meant that the teacher had constantly to prompt with ideas rather than allowing the pupil to work independently.
19. The very positive relationships that staff build with the pupils are based on a clear understanding of needs and a mutual respect develops. This enables staff to use a broad range of strategies to boost pupils' self-confidence and help them to learn rather than give up at the first obstacle. Humour is particularly effective. One member of staff, following a reference to cooking in the past, commented to a pupil "and before you ask, no I am not that old!" The pupil smiled and concentrated on preparing his ingredients.
20. There is a clear expectation that pupils will behave well in lessons. Staff are very good at praising pupils when they comply and reminding about, rather than making an issue of, any non compliance. For example, a girl who was almost lying on two chairs was reminded about SOLAR: she was able to explain the acronym for demonstrating good listening, sitting square on, open armed, leaning forward, attentive and responsive, although it took several reminders before she complied. The range of rewards and sanctions is used very well by staff and in most instances it is very effective.
21. A good range of teaching methods is used and activities are changed often in lessons so pupils do not have opportunities to get bored. Resources are used well to give a variety and because time is not wasted, pupils improve their knowledge and understanding well.
22. Teachers consistently use a broad range of strategies, including self-assessment by the pupils, which are very effective to assess pupils' work and to support improvements in behaviour. Because lesson objectives and personal targets are clear it is very easy for staff to check the progress pupils have made. This information is used very well to plan the next stage of learning. For example, pupils completed a word search at the start of a science lesson to remind them of the words related to digestion so they could make progress in learning about the digestive system. Assessment of the work of pupils with special educational needs is very good within lessons. It is satisfactory when measured against the targets set on their individual education plans. Although these targets are related to their statements of special educational needs, they are not always broken down into small steps sufficiently so as to be easily measurable
23. Homework is often set and is well matched to the content of lessons or provides a lead into the next topic. This prepares pupils well for returning to school and helps those in Year 11 prepare for their examinations effectively. However, it is not always completed.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good. It is suitable and prepares pupils well for their next stage of education or life beyond school. Accommodation and resources are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Innovative opportunities such as nurture groups support vulnerable pupils and reduce the risk of exclusion.

- There are very good opportunities for pupils to broaden their learning.
- Provision for PSHCE is very good.
- Pupils are very well prepared for returning to school or entering the world of work.
- The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- Too many pupils are on reduced timetables.
- There are opportunities missed to increase the number of awards for pupils.

### **Commentary**

24. Improvement since the last inspection is good and pupils are provided with a worthwhile curriculum which is based on the National Curriculum and prepares them for GCSE and Entry Level examinations. This rigour increases the likelihood of pupils returning to mainstream education or moving on to college or employment and is a factor in their improving behaviour. Detailed planning of the curriculum by subject leaders now ensures that areas of study are not repeated for most pupils. This often includes close and productive liaison with mainstream colleagues. Individual learning programmes detail clearly the provision that pupils will have and the lessons they will attend. For pupils in Years 7 to 9 and for a few pupils in Year 10, there is a very appropriate concentration on preparing them for returning to school and courses are planned accordingly. The longer term planning does not always cover the necessary additional time for those few pupils who are not successful and return to the centre.
25. Classes are small, so although there are fewer girls than boys, this does not become a problem. Courses are designed to interest all pupils and work is very focussed on progress made by individual pupils.
26. There is a lack of continuity in the curriculum for Year 10 pupils who all leave at the February half term to join the Youth Programmes Unit (YPU). These pupils return to the centre in Year 11 to study English, mathematics, science and ICT and a range of enrichment activities but they do not have sufficient time to complete work in subjects such as art and design and religious education. This means that opportunities for accreditation are lost. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough opportunities to gain awards.
27. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is unsatisfactory and remains an issue, as at the last inspection. It is not possible for the centre to meet the requirements of their statements in the long term, particularly as only two of these pupils are attending close to the twenty-five hours at twenty-two and a half and twenty-three and a half hours each. One attends for only six hours and five minutes a week. One of the two pupils in Year 10 with statements of special educational needs that left the centre this half term was excluded in Year 8. Due to extreme behaviour difficulties, this pupil attended just over seven hours a week and the other Year 10 pupil for just over six. A few pupils need a reduced timetable because of personal circumstances and this is gradually built up by the centre. However, other pupils are on reduced timetables for too long, when they should be attending full time.
28. The curriculum is broadened very well through a range of very well organised activities. The very good offsite programme of outdoor pursuits includes abseiling and dry slope skiing and coaching by experts in a range of games. It provides physical, challenging and character building elements where pupils have targets successfully linked to citizenship. Sharing breaks and eating lunch with staff then relaxing with them for example, playing games or reading newspapers works very well in the shared common room. This is part of the very good and well planned curriculum for PSHCE and enhances pupils' social skills effectively. Pupils also benefit from specialist advice such as that provided by the Alcohol Advice Centre. This and the support from other agencies ensures there is appropriate provision for sex education and alcohol and drug misuse. For those who need it, there are also sessions with the centre's counsellor. This not only supports pupils' personal development but also helps provide them with strategies to deal with strong emotions, thus increasing their chance of a successful return to mainstream education. Very good advice from Connexions and very good careers

education including visits to colleges, the Job Centre and places of work help prepare pupils well for when they leave the centre.

29. The centre has been particularly imaginative in using staff expertise to provide innovative activities that are supporting vulnerable pupils and enabling them to remain in mainstream education. The six-weekly primary nurture group enables a number of pupils, already exhibiting difficult behaviour, to work effectively at the centre with their parents or carers on structured activities linked to different areas of the curriculum. Time is given to parents' exploration of concerns or experiences with each other and a member of staff before rejoining their children for tea and games' activities. The secondary group follows a similar format although no parents are present. The transition group enables a small number of pupils who have been identified as at risk of exclusion to work for a day a week at the centre.
30. The outreach service is aimed at keeping pupils in school by providing a very good range of interventions. This can involve working on behaviour strategies with parents, training school staff, counselling, or working with individual children and groups in their schools. Primary schools can point to a reduced exclusion rate, improved attendance and improved achievement of pupils as a result of the team's very effective work. While the pattern of working is similar across primary schools, in secondary schools staff fit in with the existing provision, for example some schools have their own reintegration unit and the outreach teacher may be used for counselling. There is effective and successful provision in secondary schools where staff training is provided and there are good links with parents. Primary schools visited by the inspection team were very complimentary about the service and felt that they had maintained pupils in school who would otherwise have been excluded. While secondary schools were also complimentary, there was a wide variety in the role given to the outreach teacher, and their effectiveness often depends on other factors in the school.
31. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. Where there are gaps in expertise, for example in physical education, alternative solutions such as the offsite provision are arranged. There is a great deal of space at the centre which is used very effectively so that at times there are twelve different sessions. The range of specialist facilities is very good: a very large art space, a food technology, as well as a large communal room for relaxation, eating and meetings. Resources are of a high quality and plentiful, supporting all areas of the curriculum very well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

There is very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils have very good support and guidance and they are involved well in aspects of the centre's development.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The induction for new pupils is very good.
- Guidance on further study and careers opportunities is good.
- Pupils are very confident in the support of staff and develop very good relationships with them.

## **Commentary**

32. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Very good assessments are made of new pupils' learning needs by the special educational needs coordinator and how best to teach them. New pupils are gradually and sensitively introduced to the centre. Staff take time to listen to them and ensure they have a clear understanding of the rules and routines. Consequently, they settle into the learning routines quickly.
33. Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are very good. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out as required. There are clear procedures in place regarding activities at the centre and trips in the community. They are particularly good for activities that are part of the offsite sport and leisure provision. Staff are very vigilant

regarding child protection and the designated officer deals with any issues effectively. There is only one fully trained member of staff and the centre is looking to train more staff extensively as soon as the Local Education Authority can accommodate this.

34. Staff know pupils very well. Very good personal and academic records enable teachers to monitor progress and provide very good advice, support and guidance to all pupils. Pupils are very well involved in assessing their own progress. This includes self-evaluation and setting future learning targets. A very effective pastoral care system has been developed based on a very high level of tutor support. A counsellor is also available for pupils in case they want independent advice on any matter. Through the strong relationships they develop with staff, pupils feel that they can turn to adults at the centre if they have any worries or concerns.
35. The reintegration process is very well supported. The deputy headteacher and the reintegration officer attend initial meetings with the designated school and teaching assistants provide a fairly intensive and level of support during the first month. This is appropriately flexible according to the pupils' needs. Thereafter, the outreach teacher monitors progress.
36. The Connexions adviser attends the centre frequently and works constructively with older pupils regarding further study and careers. Year 11 has informative careers lessons as part of their curriculum. Also, a theatre group attends the centre each year and performs plays to stress the importance of career planning to pupils.
37. There are many formal and informal opportunities for pupils to give their views and opinions on teaching, learning and other issues. A questionnaire is completed by pupils annually. Responses are considered carefully and action plans are established when significant issues are highlighted. However, answers to questions are, at times, clearly related to school rather than centre experiences because this is a generic questionnaire used by all schools in the authority. It is pleasing to see how much the centre values pupils' views, for example lunchtime sports provision, lockers and the logo on pupils' uniforms all originated from pupils' ideas.

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

The centre has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools, colleges and the wider community are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents' suggestions and views are valued highly by the centre.
- Parents receive good information about the centre and their children's progress.
- The centre has established very productive links with mainstream schools.
- The outreach provision to primary schools is very good.
- Very good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and support learning.

### **Commentary**

38. A questionnaire is sent to parents regularly and this helps to identify issues and enables parents to influence the work of the centre. Clear changes to homework provision were made recently following parents' suggestions. Parents attending 'nurture group' sessions with their children wanted more information on how they could support learning and the centre responded very well by developing a handy credit card sized aide-memoir.
39. Information to parents about the centre and their children's standards and progress is good. Bright and attractive newsletters give good information about pupils' work and achievements. Annual reports from the management committee are well presented. Parents have three chances for consultation with staff in the academic year to check their children's progress.

Pupils' end-of-year reports provide a good pen picture of how well they are doing, together with future learning targets.

40. Parents' involvement with the centre and in their children's learning at home is satisfactory. Achievement celebrations at the centre are well attended by parents and parents work positively with staff regarding any difficulties with their children.
41. Outreach work with primary schools is very effective. The centre provides 'nurture groups' for parents and their children to work through attendance, attitude and behaviour problems that may lead to exclusion. This is organised very well with a separate entrance to the 'primary room' where the session takes place. Primary schools are very pleased about the success of these groups and the many positive outcomes. To use this successful strategy further a secondary nurture group has been established recently. This meets without parents. The centre has also established very good links with secondary schools through the 'transition' initiative whereby staff work with small groups of pupils for a day a week encouraging them to work together and be supportive of each other.
42. Staff work very effectively with the community to support personal development. For instance, voluntary and other agencies give very good support in lessons such as social skills and often lead sessions on drug misuse and sex education. Other visitors to the centre include the pastor from a local church who supports religious education and personal development very well. The police regularly give talks for pupils about crime and the law, making a significant contribution to citizenship education. Sporting links are excellent. For instance, pupils can take part in many different activities at lunchtimes at the centre and also fishing, skiing, kayaking and sports centre based activities in the community. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the centre are good. Governance provided by the appropriate authority is unsatisfactory in that the requirements of statements of special educational needs are not being met and not all pupils receive 25 hours provision.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has very successfully made changes at the centre and introduced a number of innovations.
- Leaders create very effective teams.
- The role of the middle managers has improved very well since the last inspection.
- The management of primary outreach is very good.
- The centre cannot meet all the requirements on statements of special educational needs.
- Planning by the Local Education Authority for Year 10 pupils with statements of special educational needs when they leave the centre is poor.

### **Commentary**

43. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear vision and sense of purpose for the centre, building on what they do best. This is shared by other staff who form strong teams and feel supported and encouraged in their work by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff. As a result, the headteacher has been able to bring innovations to the curriculum successfully including the very well organised offsite sport and leisure activities that involve several staff and much careful planning. A very good aid to the work of the centre is the agreement, which is in its second year, whereby secondary schools will take a pupil excluded from another school in turn. This has effectively reduced the time needed to reintegrate pupils. It also provides them with a spur to improve their behaviour when they know there is a school prepared to take them. Strategic planning is now appropriately over a three year period and is underpinned by a clear rationale. However it varies in quality and there is a lack of rigour particularly in the improvement plans for the whole-school targets that make it difficult



to evaluate progress: Timescales are too often unclear and a few of the sub targets are not made sufficiently specific.

44. The subject leaders provide good leadership and management overall. There are several subjects where the leadership and management are clearly very good. This improvement is the result of well-targeted in-service training and good use of staff time. Induction of staff is satisfactory overall. There are good arrangements to link teachers and support assistants with a mentor and where possible for them to visit the centre and work alongside or shadow their predecessor. There is an information pack which is in need of updating but no formal programme to ensure important elements are discussed.
45. The management of the primary outreach team is very good. There is very good communication between the team and schools, often built up over several years. Primary schools feel they are part of a 'joined up system'. There is good monitoring of the service from within the centre but evaluation of the service is limited and there is no analysis of value for money. Management of the secondary team is good. Staff meet regularly with the headteacher who also collects information about who is supported and why. A strength of the system is that secondary schools are able to decide how best to use their outreach teacher. However, because there is no direct monitoring of the team's work or support visits to secondary schools, outreach teachers can have a narrow role and not be integrated into the secondary school behaviour system. In several secondary schools, typically those with fewer exclusions, the outreach team is very effective, their range of skills is used, and they manage links with parents well. A few schools are unclear what the impact of the service is on pupils' attainment and the centre relies primarily on a questionnaire to measure its success.
46. The management committee is supportive. The committee structure works well and members are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. There is a very good membership of headteachers that the centre serves, representatives from the local authority and relevant services. However, despite their best efforts in making representations to the Local Education Authority, they have been unable to free up places in the centre and improve the provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs.
47. The day-to-day running of the centre is managed well. Communication is good with a morning briefing and the good range of meetings including the very effective daily staff meetings where pupils are discussed. The work of the centre is monitored well. For example, teaching and learning are monitored using an effective learning proforma and action is taken where weaknesses are identified. The headteacher has a very good overview of the progress made by pupils in both their behaviour and their lessons through the Friday evaluation sheets. These are completed by pupils and staff and then she also makes a comment. Good use is made of the report from the annual monitoring visit by the attached inspector. An action plan is devised to ensure any issues are followed through.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	684,510	Balance from previous year	37,983
Total expenditure	685,008	Balance carried forward to the next	37,485
Expenditure per pupil	N/A		

48. The budget is managed well. Income and expenditure are very carefully scrutinised and a break down of figures supplied to the finance committee. A financial adviser from the Local Education Authority works with the bursar each month to ensure the system is effective.

Money is spent carefully: Staff are expected to link new purchases to maintenance or development of their subjects. The principles of best value are applied well.

49. There are two major barriers to improving the performance of the centre. The first is beyond the control of the centre and concerns the overlong stay of pupils with statements of special educational needs. This makes it increasingly difficult for the centre to meet their needs as they do not provide the required full National Curriculum. Also provision is effectively blocked for those who are excluded from school. Last term, almost a half of the places were taken by pupils with statements of special educational needs. Three of the four pupils currently in Year 9 with statements have attended for either a year or eleven months and the fourth for eight months. Discussions with officers from the local authority confirm that there are two main reasons: Pupils arrive at the centre without adequate evidence from their schools, which leads to a delay in starting the process of formal assessment. Also, once the proposed statement is issued suitable provision is often not available. For example, records show, one pupil has had a proposed statement since July last year. This contributes to the second barrier which is that a significant number of pupils do not have 25 hours of provision despite the length of time they have attended the centre. This includes pupils with statements of special educational needs. Two of these pupils in Year 10 on less than ten hours each left at half term with no provision arranged for their education. The number of hours for each pupil is reviewed every week and, although there are exceptions, on the whole, too long is taken to build time to the required level. This is an area that is not monitored sufficiently well by the appropriate authority.
50. Overall, leadership and management have maintained the good standards achieved at the last inspection. However, the governance of the Local Education Authority has still failed to address serious issues.

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

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Year 11.
- Pupils make better progress in reading and in speaking and listening than in writing.
- A few pupils with statements of special educational needs do not achieve as well as they should.
- Leadership and management are very good and this has driven the subject forward and raised achievement.

#### Commentary

51. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well in English. Due to the very high quality of the teaching in Year 11, pupils that are studying for examinations make very good progress and achieve very well. The reason pupils' achievements are better in speaking and listening and in reading than in writing is because:
  - staff provide very good role models for speaking and listening;
  - a significant improvement has been made in the quality and suitability of reading materials and this has had a positive impact on raising achievement levels and motivating pupils;
  - All pupils have reading and spelling tests when they start at the centre and this helps in setting targets for individuals and identifying those in greatest need of help.
52. Pupils with statements of special educational needs, who attend regularly, often achieve well because teachers carefully match work to their level of ability. However, those that only attend part time make unsatisfactory progress.
53. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. They learn to adapt their language for the occasion, to wait their turn and answer well directed questions politely. By Year 11 pupils are achieving very well because of very good opportunities for discussion and direct teaching that extends their vocabulary.
54. Pupils' progress in reading is good in Years 7 to 9. They have regular opportunities to read interesting books individually or in small groups. They read during a registration session each week in sustained, quiet, uninterrupted individual reading time (SQUIRT). The library is a very good resource. It contains a wide selection of books at different levels to meet the interests of boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds, but is under used. Many pupils find reading difficult. However, they are prepared to read aloud from a variety of texts because they know teachers will have realistic expectations of what they can achieve. Trust and very good relationships are features of all lessons, so pupils are prepared to try hard and behave very well. This was illustrated in a Year 11 lesson where pupils demonstrated very good achievement by reading aloud from a projected text.
55. Achievement in writing has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and good in Year 11. Writing tasks are interesting so pupils, previously reluctant to put pen to paper, are encouraged to try. For example, Year 9 pupils re-wrote a short passage of *Macbeth* using 'texting' language. A Year 11 pupil demonstrated persuasive language as he wrote recommendations for a holiday in Greece. The opportunity to sit GCSE or Entry Level examinations encourages Year 11 pupils. A common approach to spelling and constant encouragement to produce neat work is partially effective. The presentation of some word-processed work, however, is particularly effective, for example designing dust jackets for book reviews.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Year 11. Lessons are planned well in Years 7 to 9 to build on what the pupils already know and this gives confidence. Teaching assistants support well and contribute positively to learning. In a Year 9 lesson, humour was used very successfully to keep pupils on task but there was insufficient opportunity for independent work. In one Year 11 lesson, boys and girls made equally excellent progress. Resources were of high quality and used effectively. Looking at photographs of a prison cell proved a strong stimulation to promote language. The very descriptive comment "It's like all your emotions are dead" made by a pupil whose home language is not English were justifiably valued. Well-deserved praise and excellent oral assessment helped maintain the momentum of the lesson and contributed to building pupils' self-esteem.
57. The strong subject leader is extremely well organised and gives clear direction to the subject. This means that information is readily available to show how and where pupils are making progress and where there are concerns. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated closely. Lessons are then planned on the basis of this information and the very good schemes of work adjusted. Resources have been very carefully selected to support learning and the good accommodation is enhanced very well by the quality of displays. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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

58. The Key Stage 3 Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy are being well implemented which means that key language (words used regularly within subject areas) is used consistently and is increasing pupils' vocabularies. All teachers are looking for opportunities to encourage reading and writing and there is a common approach to spelling. For example, in a food technology lesson pupils read the recipe aloud and were helped to understand new words such as 'utensils.' Books, magazines and daily newspapers are available and read in the common room. Pupils are helped to develop a vocabulary of emotional words during PSHCE and nurture group lessons. This leads to the reduction of frustration leading to anger because of their inability to express how they are feeling. There is an excellent development of the use of social language during shared times with staff before and during the school day including breakfast club and when eating together at lunchtime.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve very well because the teaching and learning are very good. In Year 11, pupils achieve well due to the good quality of the teaching and learning.
- Lessons are planned very well.
- Subject leadership and management are very good.
- Increased use of ICT supports teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

59. The baseline assessment carried out on pupils on entering the centre is used very effectively to target pupils' learning and to raise their self-esteem and confidence, which are generally low on entry. Work is matched very well to pupils' individual abilities and provides them with good opportunities to experience success. For example, one pupil was given a series of numbers to sequence as a starter activity to practise his numeracy skills. This was achieved well, which spurred the pupil to work hard at the next activity. Teachers build strong relationships with pupils and have very good subject knowledge. This allows them to encourage the pupils effectively and use appropriate questioning to guide individual learning.

Consequently, pupils' attitudes to their learning improve considerably. They rise to the challenge of the set tasks and gain a sense of achievement on completing them correctly.

60. In Years 7 to 9 pupils develop very good knowledge of number and shape space and measures and are beginning to use computers to enter data and compile bar graphs and pictograms. By Year 11, most pupils are making good progress towards their accreditation in the AQA Entry Level Certificate and the more able towards their GCSE foundation level award.
61. The quality of lesson planning is a major factor in pupils' successful learning. Very good resources are selected which match learning styles very well. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on coordinates, resources were available for the differing ability levels of the pupils which allowed them to show their understanding of the set tasks.
62. In one lesson, due to the excellent and enthusiastic teaching, pupils made extremely good progress in calculating angles on a straight line and at a point. Where teaching is less than very good set tasks do not always provide opportunities for the more able pupils to work hard at a suitable level also, sometimes the pace of lessons does not ensure sufficient time is left at the end of a lesson to consolidate what the pupils have learnt.
63. The subject is developing very well, and there are plans to improve further, due to the effective and enthusiastic leadership and management. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adapted to be more appropriate to the learning needs of pupils in Years 7 to 9 and the use of ICT has been improved. Subject specific programs are being increasingly used in addition to some generic applications such as spreadsheets. Using the computer often interests pupils and helps them to maintain their concentration. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection.

#### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. Pupils have good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in several subjects. For example, they weigh and measure in their cooking lessons and in science. Work shows they use ICT to work on spreadsheets and present work graphically. The subject leader plans to raise awareness of staff further to develop consistency through ensuring references to numeracy are included in all lesson planning.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Teaching and learning are consistently good enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- There is an effective focus on improving pupils' self-confidence, which helps them to learn.
- Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has the vision to further improve the provision.

#### **Commentary**

65. Teaching, based upon clear initial assessment, focuses well on pupils' individual academic abilities. This is achieved through good lesson planning and the use of appropriate and sympathetic direct questioning which is effective in not only guiding pupils' learning but in also helping them to remember previous learning. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, which was the pupil's first lesson at the centre, the teacher was very conscious of this and explained tasks in great detail. This ensured the pupil understood and had maximum opportunity to succeed. The teacher gave good praise when the pupil recalled previous learning which encouraged him to show further what he knew. Relationships with pupils are good and teachers effectively use this to increase pupils' efforts. Teachers insist on pupils' adherence to the centre's rules

for behaviour and this helps the pupils to learn without distractions. Teaching assistants are well directed and provide good support for pupils with more severe behavioural problems or those of low ability.

66. Good lesson introductions link work to previous studies and ensure pupils know what they will be expected to learn. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, on chemical and physical changes, after listening to the clear introduction pupils successfully undertook a series of experiments to determine reversible and non-reversible changes. The majority made accurate predictions and took a pride in their work. Pupils in Year 11 make good progress towards the AQA Entry Level certificate. They increase their knowledge of the human digestive system. The teacher's high level of subject expertise and appropriate use of visual aids enable questions to be answered well and pupils' understanding to improve. A feature of all lessons is the use of key words related to the topic being taught. This is very effective in focussing pupils' learning and in reinforcing their literacy skills.
67. Pupils' self-confidence and esteem are generally low, and in some cases, very low when they join the centre. To combat this, teachers' plan to ensure pupils have opportunities to be successful in their learning. However, at times, work is too easy for more able pupils so they do not make the very high levels of progress they should. When this occurs, as in a Year 11 lesson, pupil became restless and the teacher had to persevere to persuade the pupil to start the given task.
68. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and the subject leader has a good vision for the further development of the subject. For example, the QCA units of work are to be further adapted to be more relevant for the centre's pupils, particularly for the investigation into physical processes. Additionally, the practical provision is to be further improved through the accessibility of gas in the science room where the present form of heating is through the use of candles. Although ICT is used for data logging the use of further subject discrete ICT programmes to support teaching and learning is insufficient. The assessment of pupils' learning at the end of each topic encourages pupils to reflect on their learning, but it is over too long a period and makes the assessment of pupils who transfer back to mainstream schools before the end of a topic difficult.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a suitable examination for pupils who attend the centre for short periods.
- Lesson planning and record-keeping are unsatisfactory.
- There is an interesting range of topics that encourages pupils to work hard.
- Links with other subjects are improving but lack monitoring.

### **Commentary**

69. Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, pupils learn to word process accurately and add suitable pictures to their work. For instance, they design a flyer for a football tournament. They evaluate their work indicating what they like and how they might change and improve it. Year 11 pupils work towards the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (New CLAIT) qualification, which covers commercially useful skills. Last year many passed the general ICT unit, and several passed the word processing unit, however, only a very few passed the spreadsheet unit.
70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to ICT are very good; they are persistent, quite confident and want to learn, but they are let down by poorly planned lessons which lack structure with not enough emphasis at the end on what has been learned. Due to the lack of an appropriate assessment system at present there are no arrangements to ensure

that pupils do not repeat work. It is difficult to provide appropriate information about what they have done to a new school.

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new subject leader has chosen a range of topics that capture pupils' imagination. These include planning the controls of a wild water ride and designing a website. There has only been time to teach a few of these topics so far.
72. There is a very good range of resources and support staff have very good ICT knowledge. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

73. More subject teachers are using ICT well, for example pupils make an animated presentation on different types of drugs for their PSHCE lessons. In mathematics, pupils generate bar charts using a computer program and in English lessons they have produced a poster and a digest of *Macbeth*. Many teachers use ICT effectively for displays. However, there are no effective arrangements to ensure that ICT is included in planning as a matter of course by all teachers.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall very good teaching in Years 7 to 9 and good in Year 11 which enables pupils to make corresponding progress and achievement.
- Lesson planning is very good
- Very effective use is made of visitors.
- Leadership and management are very good,

### **Commentary**

74. Teachers plan lessons taking into account their pupils' individual abilities very well and tasks are planned with different levels of difficulty to reflect this. Although staff are aware of sensitive issues relating to pupils' personal social circumstances, topics involving these issues such as family roles and relationships are approached openly. In one such lesson, Year 9 pupils evidently enjoyed and appreciated discussing changing family roles. The teacher's very good use of questioning to guide pupils' learning was also sympathetic to pupils' circumstances. Lesson planning is very detailed and ensures changes of activities to keep pupils involved. Teaching assistants are included in lesson planning and work very effectively as a team with teachers, generally supporting the more vulnerable or less able pupils very effectively. Activities are relevant, providing pupils with the skills they will need to succeed on return to mainstream education and for those who will be leaving school. For example, they practise how to behave appropriately in an interview. Pupils can see the purpose of these activities and as a result work hard.
75. Pupils' work, teachers' planning and displays show very good emphasis on issues such as drug taking, underage drinking, anger management and strategies to avoid conflict situations. Although teachers have very good relationships with their pupils they also insist on the pupils observing the centre's rules for behaviour. This, together with topics such as rules, fairness and participation, is very effective in the development of pupils' appropriate behaviour and social skills.
76. Visiting specialists such as the community police officer, school nurse and the drugs advisory service provide very good advice to pupils on sex education and relationships and drug and

alcohol issues. In the citizenship work on 'the media and society' the police community officer gave interesting and current information on Internet security to pupils.



77. The Connexions adviser works closely with the centre to provide Year 11 pupils careers information and advice and personal mentoring. Offsite activities, which include outdoor pursuits, trampolining, fishing and golf, also provide opportunities for pupils to use their citizenship and social skills in real settings.
78. Break time and lunchtime are used very effectively to teach elements of the PSHCE curriculum. Pupils learn appropriate social skills such as eating in a group with staff and to converse politely.
79. The subject leader has a very good overview of subject provision and a clear vision for further improvement. There are plans to evaluate the National Curriculum guidance on the knowledge, skills and understanding for the subject and link relevant sections more tightly to what is planned to be taught. Most lesson planning includes the effective use of ICT both using computers and also other applications such as videos. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

80. The subject leader for **art and design** is the only art teacher, has been in post since September and has already had a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement. The very good quality of the accommodation and resources contribute to pupils' progress and give status to the subject.
81. Teaching and learning in the one lesson observed were very good. The teacher's own skills and knowledge were evident as she worked alongside a Year 11 pupil. Relationships were excellent and expectations high so as a result the pupil was prepared to experiment and work hard as he explored pointillism. His previous work included research on the Internet before completing bold, flamboyant images contrasting the devil and an angel as part of a unit on realism. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 talked with obvious pride of what they had achieved. A more able pupil spoke fluently of the process he had gone through to complete marbling work and how he had used shading when sketching a flower. A pupil with a statement of special educational needs had used his interest in motor cars and motor cycles as a stimulus for pop art and pointed out his graffiti work on the wall with some pleasure. All pupils use sketch books sensibly and regularly including a pupil new to the centre who has already completed a creditable amount of good quality work. He recognised and acknowledged the opportunity he was being given and said of his 'horror' assignment 'It's a puzzle, you've got to battle it and win.'
82. Leadership and management are good. The thoughtful subject leader has brought rigour and a clear vision that pupils will be successful if offered the best. Visits to the Dali Universe and Tate Modern support not only art and design but also pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their speaking and listening skills. This year, pupils are to be entered for GCSE examinations.
83. Two lessons were seen of **food technology** which the pupils clearly enjoyed. They learnt new skills in food preparation and had very good regard of hygiene and safety matters. Very skilled and knowledgeable teaching ensured they learnt techniques such as safely chopping an onion as well as improving their understanding of the culinary culture of a range of countries. The pace of lessons is brisk as pupils have to complete their dish within the fifty minutes available. The teaching assistant provides very good levels of support, intervening with pupils at just the right moment and also ensuring that the teacher has all that is necessary to teach one practical lesson after another.
84. What is to be taught is very well planned and in a series of modules so that pupils can join or leave the course at any point. All pupils gained the Sainsbury Taste of Success last year in bronze or silver. At present there are no opportunities for pupils to gain other accreditation. The accommodation is compact but very well designed for a maximum of four pupils.

85. Only one lesson of **French** was seen during the inspection. The teacher and the teaching assistant worked well together to encourage the pupil to participate. They used a range of interesting activities which included a series of games which the pupil enjoyed. As a result, good gains were made in learning French vocabulary, particularly in counting successfully to twenty. Good pronunciation was modelled well and copied by the pupil. However, opportunities were missed to use phrases to support the vocabulary to increase the use of the language by staff.
86. The subject supports pupils' cultural development well: A French breakfast experience is a great success which pupils remember well.
87. No lessons were seen in **geography** because they were taught later in the week. Pupils' work shows they understand terms such as renewable and non-renewable resources, why earthquakes happen and how different climates affect people's way of life. Pupils with literacy difficulties get appropriate help in lessons. The subject makes a good contribution to their social awareness for example by studying the effects of the recent tsunami. However there is no opportunity to gain accreditation in geography.
88. **Physical education** is taught offsite and the manager has worked hard to provide pupils with demanding and imaginative activities that are interesting and successful. Currently, staff do not have the expertise to teach physical education so very good links have been forged with a number of providers. This means that pupils are taught by highly qualified instructors and use specialist facilities.
89. In the one lesson seen, a trampolining session held at a local leisure centre, the pupil responded very positively, listening carefully to the advice of the instructor and clearly appreciating his expertise. The pupil was prepared to work very hard, refining his skills and performing competently an increasingly complex sequence of jumps and turns. Assessment is good, with pupils receiving certificates as they make progress through the levels.
90. Activities contribute very positively to pupils' social and moral development and preparation for the future. For example, sessions of golf, kayaking or dry slope skiing introduce pupils to activities that not only need concentration and provide physical challenge, but introduce possibilities for leisure activities beyond school. Several pupils who have been introduced to fishing have become members of Watford Piscators.
91. Lunchtime sessions of basketball and football are led by qualified coaches. A small number of girls attend a dance club led by a teacher from a nearby specialist performing arts school. Indoor games such as table tennis and pool are used regularly during breaks and provide additional opportunities for competition and co-operation. This purposeful use of time reduces the number of behavioural incidents and promotes pupils' self-esteem. However, pupils on reduced timetables have correspondingly less opportunities for physical activities.
92. Only one lesson of **religious education** was observed during the inspection. The teacher's very good relationship with the pupils and high expectations resulted in the pupils working hard and establishing possible consequences of not following rules. They further considered how it could ultimately affect world peace. Conversations with pupils and staff and the scrutiny of work and lesson plans indicate that pupils are making very good progress in their lessons. Lesson planning is particularly detailed and shows clearly how individual needs are met.
93. The leadership and management of the subject leader are very good. Teaching assistants are fully involved in lesson planning and very good links have been formed with a local pastor who attends the centre weekly to take a circle time session and to support the subject teaching. The subject leader shows very good vision for the further development of the subject. This includes monitoring the effective use of ICT in lesson planning and evaluating the success of following the Locally Agreed Syllabus when pupils spend different lengths of time at the centre. The accreditation used at present is unsatisfactory because pupils do not

achieve sufficient units for an award by the time they leave at the February half term in Year 10.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the centre</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the centre is	3
How the centre's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the centre	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the centre</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-centre activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the centre seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the centre's links with parents	3
The quality of the centre's links with the community	2
The centre's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the centre</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the centre	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

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