

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE PUPIL LEARNING CENTRE

Bury

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 131506

Headteacher: Mrs Krystyna Chantry

Lead inspector: Greg Sorrell

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 271074

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUPIL LEARNING CENTRE (PLC)**

Type of school: Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties  
School category: Pupil referral unit  
Age range of pupils: 8-16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 50

School address: Summerseat Lane  
Ramsbottom  
Bury  
Lancashire

Postcode: BL0 9UD

Telephone number: 01204 885275

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Appropriate authority: The local education authority

Name of chair of governors: Cllr. Maggie Gibb

Date of previous inspection: November 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT**

The Pupil Learning Centre (PLC) serves the town of Bury and operates on three different sites. The Ark serves pupils between Years 3 and 6, who are also registered at mainstream schools. New Summerseat House caters for pupils from Years 7 to 11 while some Year 10 pupils attend the Mosses Centre, from where they also access colleges of further education in Bury and Bolton. These Year 10 pupils progress to the Alternative Provision Programme (APP), the other Local Education Authority Pupil Referral Unit, also based at the Mosses Centre.

The Pupil Learning Centre can educate up to 89 pupils at any one time although this number can vary. Boys outnumber girls by about 3:1. The vast majority of pupils are white British origin whilst a small number are of white-Caribbean or Pakistani origin. All pupils speak English as their main language and there are currently no refugees, travellers or asylum seekers on roll. Attainment on entry is usually below average. Twenty-two pupils have statements of special educational needs and many more have identified special educational needs: all relate to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

In addition to pupils attending the various centres an outreach service is offered to all Bury schools, totalling 79 in all. There are currently nearly 500 pupils of all ages being

supported. This service includes supporting pupils experiencing social, behavioural and emotional difficulties in their own schools to prevent exclusion, supporting pupils being returned to schools on reintegration programmes and working with mainstream school staff to advise and help them on coping with behaviour problems in the classroom.

The Pupil Learning Centre was awarded Investors In People status in 2004 and is involved in Save the Children and Active Sports and Sports Connection initiatives.

The PLC was inspected at the same time as the APP and the report refers to both pupil referral units.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23390	Melvin Blackband	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology; personal, social and health education (PSHE)
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The Pupil Learning Centre (PLC) and the Alternative Provision Programme (APP) provide an effective service that gives good value for money.** As a result of good teaching and learning the pupils achieve well academically and their personal development is also good. Overall leadership and management are good. The outreach provision is very effective.

#### The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the PLC and APP is very good;
- The quality of teaching is good particularly that provided by specialists and this leads to good achievement;
- The overall curriculum is good and has many innovative strengths, however, it lacks breadth for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for some pupils in Year 11 at the APP, the amount of taught time is below recommended levels;
- Links with local colleges of further education are very effective and very good use is made of external specialist expertise and accommodation, particularly for Year 11 pupils at the APP;
- The quality of support, advice and guidance is very good;
- The outreach provision for pupils of all ages is very good and much valued by schools, although there is reduced support for pupils to re-integrate, particularly from Year 7 onwards;
- The low attendance rates of some pupils has an adverse effect their achievements;
- The lack of Internet access restricts pupils' use of widely available resources and the accommodation limits opportunities for pupils based at the Mosses centre;
- The specialist subject knowledge and good management within the PLC's individual bases could be used to greater effect across the service.

The PLC and the APP have shown good overall improvement since the last inspection. Senior management effectively monitor the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum which have all improved since the last inspection. The role of subject leaders and the monitoring of their areas is much improved within the bases they teach, despite their influence not yet fully extending across the service. Learning plans for pupils pay much greater regard to literacy and numeracy which assists them in achieving well across the curriculum. Pupils attending the Mosses Centre have increased access to specialist facilities via attendance at local colleges of further education; however, weaknesses related to the Mosses Centre accommodation remain.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils in all of the centres achieve **well**. There is little difference in the achievements of any single group of pupils, other than those whose attendance rates are low. Overall achievement is better than at the time of the previous inspection. At the PLC and APP, the pupils who attend regularly achieve well in English, mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology and art. Older pupils, also achieve well in external examinations including GCSE

and a range of vocational qualifications, including GNVQ, NVQ Levels 1 and 2, and RSA. Good achievement is also represented by improved engagement in full-time education at the PLC and APP or successful re-integration into mainstream education where possible. Achievement is also good in personal, social and health education and in physical activities. Pupils for whom regular attendance remains a problem do not achieve as well as they would if they were able to engage in the education provided. **Pupils make good progress in improving their personal qualities.** Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils have positive attitudes and know the importance of behaving well. The attitudes of pupils are particularly good during mainstream lessons at the local college of further education where they respond well to positive role models and the quality of teaching. Most pupils show a good awareness of the need for regular attendance, although a significant minority does not always respond to the PLC's encouragement to attend regularly.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE UNITS**

The quality of education is good. **Teaching and learning are good** overall, particularly as a result of very good levels of subject expertise and skilful management of the pupils' social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Lessons are well prepared and assessed to provide appropriate programmes of learning that prepare the pupils well for re-integration into mainstream schools or the next stage at the PLC or APP. Very good support is provided by non-teaching staff, including youth workers at the Mosses Centre, who liaise very well with unit teachers and staff at the local colleges of education. Considerable thought is given to providing a good curriculum, although the taught time for some pupils in Year 11 at the APP is below recommended levels. Suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy is a key component whilst additional flexibility is a strong feature of the APP curriculum which is very good. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, however, lacks sufficient breadth to enable them to access the full range of the national curriculum. **The links with other schools through the outreach service are very good as is the relationship with local colleges of further education.**

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE UNITS**

The leadership provided by the headteacher and senior managers is **very good**. The role of the PLC in particular has been subject to significant change and has required skilful **management that is good overall as is the governance provided by the management committee.** However, some weaknesses related to the accommodation at the Mosses Centre remain to be addressed satisfactorily. The headteacher provides very good support for the staff as they seek to give an effective service to the pupils. The management within individual centres is very good although there are few opportunities for this expertise to be used across the service. The outreach service is very well managed at all levels.

### **PARENTS' & PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE UNITS**

**Parents are pleased** with all aspects of the PLC and APP and regard it as being most appropriate for the children's needs. **The pupils' views are mostly very positive** and they feel that they are treated fairly and trust that the staff have their interests at heart.



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Broaden the curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs as well seeking additional planned activities for pupils in Years 10 and 11;
- Investigate ways to improve the attendance of particular pupils at the PLC;
- Review all pupils' access to the Internet and the accommodation at the Mosses Centre;
- Share expertise between key stages and bases within the overall provision.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Pupils in all of the centres achieve **well**. There is little difference in the achievements of any single group of pupils, other than those who fail to attend regularly. Overall achievement is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

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

- As a result of good teaching and effective use of national strategies the pupils at all bases achieve well in English and mathematics. They also achieve very well in science;
- Older pupils achieve well in a range of accredited academic and vocational courses and show an improved engagement in learning which is a considerable achievement for many;
- The pupils' achievement equips them well for the next stage of their education whether that is a return to mainstream schooling or college of further education;
- Additional support for literacy and numeracy has improved the pupils' achievements, although the use of individual education plans could be more effective.

#### **Commentary**

1. All pupils on entry to the PLC or APP have had significant difficulties in accessing mainstream education which results in their attainment being low. Within the PLC and APP most pupils respond very well to the good quality of education provided. Particular attention is given to support for literacy and numeracy, such as the relatively recent provision of additional lessons that focus upon individual learning needs guided by regular assessments. With improved reading skills the pupils find accessing the curriculum easier and gain in confidence as a result. The PLC in particular has taken good account of national strategies to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Where appropriate, pupils in Years 10 and 11 can access and achieve well following GCSE courses at the PLC. The pupils also achieve well in ICT, art, design technology and physical education, particularly when taught by specialists.

2. For those pupils for whom GCSE study is not appropriate, they achieve well on a more flexible and alternative programme which embraces key skills and a number of vocational options, the majority of which are run at local colleges of further education. Good achievement is demonstrated by all pupils who continue to engage with whatever provision they are offered. This achievement is also due to all staff having a strong commitment to the pupils' personal development which has a positive effect upon their attitudes to learning. There are significant numbers of pupils whose achievements are adversely affected by poor attendance, particularly in Year 10 at the Mosses Centre.

3. The pupils' achievements prepare them well for moving on from the PLC and APP. This is due to the very good attention given to providing relevant education and experiences for the pupils' academic and personal needs. For dual-registered Key Stage 2 pupils at the Ark, there are clear priorities to address literacy and numeracy alongside the need to enable the pupils to relate positively to peers and adults. Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils

at New Summerseat House follow programmes that are modeled as far as possible on what may found in mainstream schools. The few pupils who achieve re-integration benefit greatly from this provision. The Mosses Centre for Year 10 pupils aims to prepare pupils for Year 11 in the APP, whilst successful; the accommodation does not offer the same range of opportunities elsewhere in the PLC. The APP, in particular, is innovative in seeking ways to maintain the pupils' commitment to full-time education, despite not being able to provide the recommended hours for all pupils. The current unavailability of opportunities for work experience is a weakness in the provision which is very good overall.

4. Pupils with additional special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the centre and particularly in regard to their specific targets in English and mathematics. All pupils have their ability assessed on entry to the centre by commercial tests which provide generalised evaluation of pupils' attainment but teachers make good use of their own observations in lessons to more accurately establish the pupils' ability levels. The Learning Support provision is effective and pupils make very good progress in the development of their reading skills. They are taught on an individual basis by a knowledgeable teaching assistant who keeps exemplary records of pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy their sessions at Learning Support and work hard to achieve the carefully devised targets set for their improvement. At New Summerseat House, pupils' individual education plans are written with the assistance of a commercial programme. This supplies general objectives which do not always provide specific, measurable targets in English and mathematics. This lack of focus means that the learning prescribed for the pupils does not progress in small and achievable steps. Occasionally, insufficient attention is paid to reviewing individual education plans to ensure they are effective in monitoring pupils' progress.

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

Regular attendance is achieved by the majority of pupils; however, a significant minority fail to attend on a regular basis. Punctuality is good where pupils attend regularly. The overall attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and compare well with those previously. Such aspects, apart from attendance, help the success of the pupils' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they make very good efforts to improve their behaviour as a result of the high expectations staff hold;
- The way that the unit deals effectively with all forms of harassment is a strength.
- Attendance, particularly by Year 10 pupils at the Mosses Centre, is a weakness.

### **Commentary**

5. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall, due to particularly poor attendance in Year 10 at the Mosses Centre. However, within the PLC, including the Ark, and in the APP, attendance is much higher. Action, by both the PLC and the APP to promote attendance is, nevertheless good and so far this year attendance by Year 10 pupils has improved at the Mosses Centre. The PLC and APP liaise very closely with various agencies including the educational welfare officer. The efforts of parents and carers to ensure their children's

attendance are currently satisfactory. The punctuality of those pupils that attend is good and most lessons commence promptly.

6. From observation at the centre and talking to pupils at the other units, including the APP, most of them take a good interest in what is offered to them both in and out of the Unit day. This is proof of the good way that the unit stimulates a desire in them to learn. This was clear from talking to a Year 10 pupil who was going to live in Spain and began learning Spanish on her own initiative.

7. On entering the PLC the pupils have little, if any, confidence and self esteem. However, joining them in conversation at the centre and separately within the APP, watching them answer questions in lessons and from the good relationships that they show with each other, most of them, exhibit an improving awareness of citizenship.

8. All units work hard and are good at promoting positive relationships including racial harmony. Although incidents do occur from time to time all staff are quick to eliminate potentially difficult situations. When one pupil at the centre had been bullying another and also making racist remarks, in a lesson, the teacher sat him down immediately and informed him of the error of his ways. All pupils are given advice with PSHE lessons and class discussions on harassment.

9. Apart from when attending off-site colleges, the pupils do not have many chances to show their initiative and take responsibility, although many do show these qualities by attending on a regular basis as detailed in their individual plans.

10. Behaviour is good at all centres. Rewards and sanctions are well known and consistently applied. There is very little litter, graffiti or vandalism and many pupils say "Good Morning" and open doors for visitors. Although there have been exclusions at the PLC during the previous twelve months all have been for a fixed period. There have been no exclusions at the APP during the last twelve months.

***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	49	24	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	1	0

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

11. Overall, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. They are beginning to learn and talk more about themselves and their problems. During a Year 7 and 8 pastoral session, two pupils reported how enthralled they were during a science experiment where water had been mixed with other substances to form a fermentation.

12. Through personal, social and health education lessons pupils are learning to have a greater appreciation of the benefits that honesty and respect for others can bring. They are

learning well to share with their friends and distinguishing right from wrong, as witnessed in the various paired games in the dining hall at lunchtimes.

13. Good neighbourliness has been shown recently by pupils building up a wall for a nearby old person and also visiting an old persons home to talk about a project on 'Clothes of the 1950s'. Both moral and social development are good whilst the responsibilities of living in both their school and the outer community are also good.

14. The unit is trying to develop the pupils' awareness of their own heritage such as the Industrial Revolution. They regularly visit The Manchester Museum and local art galleries. Awareness of other cultures is less well developed, although various ethnic costume designs have been studied through art. Overall, their appreciation of their own cultural traditions and those of others is satisfactory.

15. Pupils with special educational needs develop generally positive attitudes to their work. They are fully included in all activities and their work is sufficiently adapted to maintain their interest and their achievement within lessons. Relationships are good. Pupils and staff show respect for each other and the progress which pupils make is always celebrated by adults. Teachers make very good use of appropriate praise for the pupils' efforts. Pupils are usually well behaved and although some pupils enter the centre with severe behavioural and emotional difficulties this is rarely evident in lessons.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	19%	School data	17%
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.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' subject specialist knowledge has a significant impact on the pupils' academic achievement;
- The relationships between staff and pupils are very good and have a very positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes and personal development;
- Most lessons are well planned and assessed although the use of ICT is underdeveloped across the curriculum;
- The quality of pupils' learning at college is very good.

### **Commentary**

16. There is an appropriate regard for academic achievement within the centres. High status is also given to ensuring pupils are well-equipped to return to mainstream schools when the opportunity presents itself. Similarly, for pupils who are unlikely to return, there is a good emphasis on offering them a provision that is close to that on offer in schools. The subject specialists have very good knowledge of the curriculum and realistically high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. For example, they use this knowledge to good effect to provide pupils with a good range of English activities which match their individual interests, needs and abilities. In science, well written reports of experiments and investigations indicate clearly that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good. The expertise of a teaching assistant is very well used to provide good quality lessons in physical education at New Summerseat House. Very effective use is made of external expertise on a number of vocational courses for older pupils.

17. The strong relationships between staff and pupils enable the pupils to appreciate that they will gain from applying themselves within lessons. The staff ensure that pupils are aware of high expectations of work and behaviour. The procedures for rewards and sanctions support the good personal knowledge that staff hold about the pupils. In most cases, the staff's understanding of pupils' needs and appropriate behaviour management prevent disruption to learning and the vast majority of lessons run smoothly.

18. In most lessons, good account had been taken of national guidance related to lesson planning and assessment. For example, in ICT lessons, the pupils are clear about what is going to be covered. Key vocabulary is reinforced in writing on the board and regularly

referred to during the lesson. This practice also assists the pupils' development of literacy across the curriculum. Assessments are made regularly of what the pupils have achieved and in ICT at New Summerseat House, there are planned opportunities for both pupils and the teacher to reflect upon how successful learning has been at the end of specific modules of work with a view to revision as necessary. Teachers regularly use astute questioning techniques to continually assess the pupils' understanding. Within some lesson planning, ICT does not always feature as an aid to teaching and learning. In part, this is a result of resources, such as internet access not being available. Although, occasionally, some teachers request that pupils undertake additional learning outside the school day, the use of homework is underdeveloped.

19. The quality of pupils' learning at local colleges of further education is very good where the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are improved significantly. In most lessons, the pupils are supported by PLC and APP staff. However, careful assessments of pupils' abilities to work independent of this support, result in good opportunities for pupils to attend lessons under the sole supervision of college staff. These arrangements have a significant effect upon the pupils' abilities to succeed on mainstream courses when they leave the PLC or APP. Liaison between APP and college staff is very effective and ensures that the opportunities for learning and personal development are maximised. Whilst they study a range of vocational options, including, art, ICT and construction, they apply themselves well as a result of well planned programmes in very good accommodation. The learning environment which includes many opportunities to learn alongside mainstream pupils does much to offer the pupils good role models and increased personal responsibility.

20. Teachers plan thoroughly for pupils with additional special educational needs and make clear provision for their work either as part of the group or when taught by a teaching assistant. Teaching assistants are well trained and establish a good relationship with the pupils. The pupils respond well to the individual attention they receive and maintain good levels of concentration and behaviour. In some lessons the pupils' individual education plans are insufficiently used to focus on their needs. The school does not have a policy of using the plans as working documents or of deploying teaching assistants to observe and record the pupils' progress towards their targets. Limited use is made of behaviour plans for specific pupils. Where these are well used pupils feel secure in understanding how to improve their behaviour and how to seek assistance when they have problems.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	19 (31%)	32 (51%)	11 (18%)	0 (%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.*

## **The Curriculum**

The curriculum is **good**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall, and **very good** at New Summerseat House.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum at the PLC and APP meets LEA recommendations well;
- The curriculum for pupils with statements of special educational needs lacks breadth;
- The provision for vocational education is very good although there are weaknesses in the work-related curriculum and no current opportunities for work experience in Year 11;
- The most able pupils follow a good curriculum, leading to good accreditation;
- Taught time at the Mosses Centre and in APP is below recommended levels, although the curriculum for pupils in APP is very relevant and very well delivered;
- Occasionally, there is insufficient transport available to enable Year 10 and 11 pupils to access off-site activities;
- Accommodation at the Mosses is unsatisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

21. The emphasis on literacy and numeracy contributes to the successful re-integration programme for the majority of Year 3 to 6 pupils who are also registered at mainstream primary schools. The centre teachers work closely with the outreach team forging very positive links with mainstream schools. Pupils' individual needs are met well because of the teachers' good understanding of their pupils, and the very good pupil:staff ratio. The curriculum is enriched through a range of outdoor activities and visits, for example to local farms, or museums. Opportunities are limited by the need to return to the centre in time for the transport home which is provided for these pupils.

22. In addition to addressing the pupils' behaviour problems, the PLC has identified reading difficulties as a barrier to re-integration, and has set up an effective reading programme to raise achievement in this area. The curriculum includes information and communication technology, art, design technology and physical activities as well as the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, effectively meeting the LEA recommendations for Pupil Referral Units. Well qualified and experienced subject specialists deliver a good curriculum to the most able pupils, providing them with the opportunity to take external examinations, and gain accreditation equivalent to their mainstream peers.

23. In relation to pupils with statements of special educational needs, the curriculum is not equivalent to that which would be provided in a special or mainstream school. It lacks breadth in regards to aspects of design and technology, physical education, a modern foreign language and religious education. These pupils are, however, fully included in the curriculum offered and their achievement is significantly enhanced by additional learning support in literacy and mathematics. This well developed facility provides for pupils on an individual basis and has a significant effect on raising reading standards. In Years 10 and 11, many of these pupils achieve well in a range of nationally recognised qualifications at appropriate levels.

24. For Year 11 APP pupils, taught time is less than recommended minimum levels. Weaknesses in the accommodation significantly influence curriculum planning and limit opportunities to increase taught time. Pupils in Year 11 are enrolled at the local college of further education and choose options from a very broad curriculum leading to accreditation. These courses are very relevant, well delivered and promote personal development very well. The benefit pupils gain from these courses is significant and goes some way to address the shortfall in their recommended time of supervised education.



25. The ethos of self-direction combined with a relaxed atmosphere encourages disaffected Year 10 pupils at the Mosses to access learning. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in that almost all of these pupils go on to achieve accreditation in Year 11 through the APP in college. The PLC and APP are giving consideration to the curriculum in relation to work experience and work related learning that had previously been strong features of the provision. The senior managers recognise the absence of appropriate work experience is a weakness in the curriculum for pupils in Year 11.

26. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 access to some off-site provision depends upon transport provided by staff using their own vehicles which they are required to insure themselves. Occasionally, the staff have insufficient capacity to take all pupils and this results in some opportunities for achievement being denied to them.

27. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection in relation to the curriculum, resources and accommodation has been satisfactory. However, weaknesses, of which the PLC is aware, remain in relation to the Mosses Centre. Year 10 pupils placed here, do not have opportunities equivalent to those enjoyed by the Year 10 pupils at New Summerseat House. The specialist facilities and staff provide very well for all pupils at New Summerseat House promoting good achievement. The APP pupils are less affected by the Mosses Centre accommodation due to their lessons being held off-site. However, the weaknesses identified in the last inspection relating to accommodation at the Mosses Centre remain.

## Care, guidance and support

Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **very good**. The PLC and APP take **good** account of the views expressed by pupils.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are consistent and systematic procedures throughout the PLC and APP to track each pupil's personal and educational well-being;
- Pupils are helped to develop self awareness through their own behaviour targets;
- Arrangements and schemes for career options and opportunities are not yet fully in place in the PLC but are very well established at the APP;
- Transition and induction arrangements are very well planned and carried out.

## Commentary

28. There are thorough records, systematically kept for every pupil, with clear evidence of involvement of pupils in their own progress, and parents are also kept fully informed. Pupils are helped to participate in their own target setting, and teachers are very good at insisting on frankness in evaluation, as was evident during a pastoral session at New Summerseat House, where the teacher also skilfully included implications for mainstream school. This approach gives pupils a sense of control over their emotions and social development, leading to greater confidence and awareness of themselves and others. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, and individual pupils choose their own mentor with whom they are able to build up trust and confidence to communicate their views and feelings. There are also very good links between mentors and class teachers or other staff whenever needed. The systems in place throughout the PLC and APP ensure that pupils always have someone they can confide in. All staff on all sites are well briefed and managed in matters of child protection and health and safety. There is very good liaison with the local social services and other agencies supported by clear written policies. Daily routines are clear to pupils and staff and are followed.

29. At the PLC, academic targets are also carefully recorded although in some cases these could be more refined in relation to individual pupils' capacities and inclinations to ensure even greater confidence and enjoyment of academic progress and success. Links between these targets and pupils' individual education plans are not always sufficiently clear. Pupils meet the Connexions adviser at their Year 9 review, and good links are maintained thereafter in relation to careers and college options. The new careers officer is building up this role to ensure greater consistency of careers programmes and schemes, and all Year 10 pupils and some Year 9 are attending a careers convention in Manchester. Initiatives are currently under way to develop further partnerships to promote career options.

30. The links that have been built up between different agencies provide a highly secure basis for transition, and for induction of new pupils at any stage. Arrangements are very good for incoming younger pupils at the Ark, where information regarding academic skills may not be rapidly or readily available. Detailed baseline assessments take place during the first half term and pupils are also helped to settle in quickly through the good induction checklist. Pupils returning to mainstream are very carefully monitored and at the transition to secondary school pupils may visit several schools and have a choice in the matter. At the APP there is excellent communication between different agencies and staff to provide a flexible and supportive framework for students on courses at Bury College. On entry to the PLC or APP the pupils and parents benefit greatly from interviews and conducted tours with relevant and experienced staff. The allocation of key workers provides for a consistent approach based upon a secure knowledge and understanding of the pupils' and families' needs.

31. The result of the very careful attention to support and advice systems provides a framework that helps all pupils to achieve their goals and increasingly develop positive belief in themselves as individuals within mainstream education. The incidence of return to mainstream is increasing, and four Year 9 pupils are on reintegration programmes.

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

The PLC and APP have very good links with other schools via outreach programmes and local colleges who offer very good specialist provision. Links with parents are good and those with the community are satisfactory. Such links have improved since the previous inspection and contribute well to the success of the pupils' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The PLC and APP work hard to establish supportive links with parents;
- The extended services and educational support programmes by both the APP and PLC are very effective;
- Links with other schools via outreach and colleges are strong.

### **Commentary**

32. Evidence from parents' questionnaires and views expressed at the pre-inspection meeting most believe the partnership to be good and the inspection team agrees with this. Parents feel that their child is progressing well and they are kept well informed of what goes on. They also feel that their child's behaviour is improving and the unit makes the pupils more mature and responsible in their outlook on life.

33. The unit provides good information to its parents. When their child first joins parents receive very clear information on routines and all they need to know about the unit. They also receive an updated copy of the prospectus and a headteacher's report. There are regular, termly target sheets and a very clear and informative pupil academic report. The Unit has had no problems with home/school agreements as all parents accept them. An "open-door" policy is pursued by the unit for any queries or complaints. The Unit appreciates parents' views and is good at acting upon them. An annual questionnaire is sent to them and recently parents have influenced what is taught in physical education. There is a very clear complaints procedure and it is good that parents are so satisfied that no complaint has ever been referred further than the headteacher herself. The Unit finds it difficult for parents to help with their child's education on the various sites. However, parents do help from home quite satisfactorily. They often help with reading, spellings, projects and topics. They are also helpful by keeping in contact by phone, discussing pupils' attitudes at home with staff. Two parents are currently on the management committee.

34. Educational links with other schools are very effective. The headteachers and staff of primary and secondary schools, who receive outreach provision from the unit, are very positive concerning the very good identified needs and benefits to both, their pupils and staff. The Unit also has very good links with both Bury and Bolton Colleges for Years 10 and 11 pupils. Transfer of pupils from units to colleges is good in that it is based upon very close links established with older pupils. Trainee teachers and social workers from local colleges are always made welcome at the unit.

35. Links with the community are satisfactory. A local 'cheer fund' will shortly be using the school for meetings and making up Christmas parcels for senior citizens. Community work is done by pupils through a local centre in Bury, where they have made, for example, a coffee table for a parent and built local walls. Recently a neighbour offered the unit an old wrought iron bench, which several pupils refurbished and placed proudly outside the main door of the Unit. Some Year 10 and 11 pupils have been into local primary schools and successfully worked with younger pupils. Links with local businesses are underdeveloped, however, the PLC and the APP work well with a range of organisations including the police and Connexions.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership provided by the head and her senior staff is **very good**. Management is **good**. Governance by the local education authority, ably supported by the management committee, is **good**. This is an improvement since the last inspection

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has successfully managed the changing role of the PLC;
- The ability of the leadership and management of the PLC and APP to work closely with LEA and mainstream headteachers has a positive effect upon the ability to provide for referred pupils,
- There are weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs;
- Within all bases, teamwork is strong and all staff feel supported. There is however, scope for greater co-ordination across bases to make best use of expertise;
- Planning for further improvement is good;
- Management of the large-scale use of further education college placements is very effective.

### **Commentary**

36. It has been necessary for the headteacher to manage carefully a significant pressure on the role of the PLC. Prior to September 2002, dual registration and outreach work were very strong strands in Key Stage 3. The impact of the obligation to provide for pupils on a full-time basis led to a reallocation of resources. Additional classes were created at New Summerseat House at the expense of outreach provision. The headteacher has been successful in retaining a successful dual registration programme in Key Stage 2 and in preserving outreach in all key stages that is well-respected by schools. There is a striking unity of vision between the management committee, responsible LEA officers and the leadership group of the PRU that the previously high level of preventative work in mainstream schools must be developed anew. There is shared concern that failure to do so could subject the PRU to unacceptable pressure in terms of the quantity and the appropriateness of referrals being made. With reduced outreach, managers consider that their own level of knowledge of the needs of potential or actual referrals had been reduced.

37. The headteacher is a key member of the pupil placement panel that governs admissions to the PLC and she works very closely with mainstream schools who cooperate in reciprocal arrangement with regard to excluding and accepting pupils. In the absence of local alternatives, there is a strong expectation that the PRU will, in one way or

another, make provision for all referrals. Difficulties that might be expected to arise concerning the capacity of the PRU have been circumvented because of the very warm professional relationship between the headteacher and her local education authority colleagues. She considers that her managers and professional support staff within the authority have proved understanding and responsive as far as any issues she has felt the need to raise.

38. Due to the absence of LEA special school provision related to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is a constant need to provide for high numbers of pupils with such statements of special educational need. For these pupils, the PRU currently represents a long term or permanent placement. The current inability to provide the full range of the national curriculum for pupils with statements of special educational needs is a weakness, despite the best endeavours of all staff.

39. Management and support structures are comprehensive and have resulted in the successful development of a confident positive senior management team. This is true despite there being striking differences in the character of different elements of the PRU. New Summerseat House, has many features expected of a school and has an appropriate atmosphere of relative formality. It also retains pupils for GCSE examinations. The Mosses Education Centre, catering for more disaffected pupils, is much more informal. There are different expectations still of those pupils being educated within the APP. Such diversity is a challenge to consistent management and the detail of best practice is not universally shared, even if the commitment to achieving the best outcomes for all students is keenly felt by the whole management team. Key staff have responsibility for development associated with the 14-19 initiatives but these are at a very early stage. It is recognised that a clear response to the 14-19 strategy could produce greater levels of connection between the work conducted at New Summerseat House and that taking place at the Mosses Education Centre. Consultation with staff is thorough. The continuing professional development of staff is good. Training needs are given an appropriately high priority and they are adequately funded although they are not always reflected in development planning. The management has been very clear in seeking to recruit teachers with strong subject specialisms, this has a very positive effect upon standards achieved within the centres to which they are attached. There does, however, remain scope for these specialist skills to be used more widely across the PLC. The PLC is also reviewing the role of teaching assistants and one is looking to progress to qualified teacher status. The management considers that higher-level teaching assistant status is appropriate for most, if not all, of their support staff.

40. Improvement planning is good. In co-operation with the Quality and Advisory Service of the LEA, very effective self-review process forms part of an annual cycle. The resulting self-review document is valuable in the generation of the Improvement Plan. The latter is comprehensive in its scope even if some targets are insufficiently detailed at present to facilitate accurate monitoring. The match of areas for development with LEA planning is effective. The PRU has a substantial budget but its delegation to PRU level is limited and the headteacher is not required to assume full responsibility. She receives appropriate levels of professional support to allow her to have a clear overview of spending. Currently, amongst the most effective provision is that purchased at Bury College and this represents outstanding value for money. Other elements of the PRU are more expensive particularly when pupils' regular attendance is an issue. The administrative support for the day-to-day running of the PLC is very effective in securing an effective

provision whilst APP staff are largely responsible for their own administration which is also effective.

41. Management of the large-scale use of further education college placements is very effective and has enabled many disaffected pupils, particularly in the APP, to make a successful return to education alongside their peers. In terms of cost-effectiveness in achieving strong outcomes, this element of provision is outstanding.

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### What is the effectiveness of outreach provision?

#### Overall effectiveness

Provision for supporting pupils and schools through outreach is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outreach staff have a high degree of expertise which they share wisely and productively;
- The quality of relationships and collaboration between the outreach team and partner schools is outstanding;
- The success rate for the reintegration of pupils into primary schools is very high, although for older pupils is much lower;
- The Centre has clear plans that are in the early stages of implementation to develop the outreach service further.

#### Commentary

42. The outreach service is very effective in supporting pupils who are experiencing difficulties within their mainstream school or who have been excluded permanently. This is due largely to the high calibre of staff who manage a heavy workload so successfully. Currently, over two hundred primary and two hundred high school pupils are being supported, mainly within the 79 mainstream schools. Teachers receive referrals via the efficient joint planning meetings held with schools, although they are adaptable enough to offer advice for emergency referrals. They have sensibly been encouraged to negotiate their own workload so that they support clusters of schools, thus forging strong links and reducing travelling time. Teachers display a wide range of skills and knowledge. Among the most effective are:

- Observing pupils in class and agreeing behaviour management techniques with staff;
- Working with individual pupils or small groups, for example on ways to control anger or improve social skills;
- Training mainstream staff, including mid-day supervisors in a range of behaviour management skills;
- Discussing with parents the best ways to ensure continuity of approach between school and home;
- Sharing knowledge and expertise at multi-agency meetings;
- Supporting primary pupils as they are re-integrated into mainstream.

43. Schools are highly complimentary of the outreach service. Their only regret is that staffing levels restrict the time allocated to them. Relationships are of the highest order, especially between outreach staff and school SENCOS (special educational needs co-ordinators). Schools value the flexibility of staff and their willingness to fit in with the needs of individual pupils and teachers as far as possible. They rightly respect the advice given and commend the service for its contribution to improved educational inclusion and improvement in pupils' attendance levels. They particularly like the strong links with parents and other agencies because it encourages a uniformity of approach and the increased confidence brought about by good training for staff. Observation of staff

working with pupils within mainstream schools helps emphasise the high degree of collaboration and co-operation that exists and the mutual trust and respect each has for the other.

44. A number of factors contribute to the successful reintegration into mainstream of almost all excluded or dual registered pupils before they move to high school education. The opportunity for some pupils to work part time at the Ark reduces pressure on schools and on pupils whilst ensuring continuity with a mainstream curriculum. Behavioural and social issues are addressed during this time and careful consideration is given to how and when pupils should be returned full time to their own or another school. Permanently excluded pupils are introduced sensitively to a range of subjects and activities at welcoming primary schools. For example, some pupils join lessons at Whitefield Primary School, where the Ark is based, and all pupils join their peers for lunch in the dining hall, giving good opportunities for social development. This flexibility of provision is not available to secondary age pupils and contributes to very low rates of reintegration. The small numbers of pupils who do return to school are supported by school staff rather than PLC staff due to workload constraints on outreach staff. However, the curriculum received by the pupils, especially at New Summerseat House, is designed to keep pupils in touch with their peers and is supportive of reintegration. With one exception, outreach secondary teachers have a number of other responsibilities within the PLC unlike their colleagues in the primary outreach team who work solely on outreach.

45. Leadership and management are good overall despite the deficiencies in reintegration of secondary aged pupils owing to reduced staffing levels. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed and will endeavour to unite the primary and secondary provision and provide opportunities for all outreach staff to meet on a regular basis. The already good administration procedures for managing such a complex provision are to be reviewed and teachers' records standardised in line with PLC practice.



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

### **SUBJECTS and COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4**

#### **ENGLISH**

The provision for English in all centres is **good**.

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

- Good and very good teaching in the subject enables pupils to achieve well in all years;
- The guidance related to the National Literacy Strategy is used in an effective manner, and enables pupils to make good progress;
- The majority of pupils display positive attitudes to work and wish to learn;
- Although pupils regularly read in class there are too few opportunities for shared and guided reading activities;
- Although pupils word process their work in order to improve its presentation there are too few chances for pupils to re-draft ideas;
- Pupils have targets for improvement although they need to be more accessible to pupils however, and with the chance to review them within individual lessons.

#### **Commentary**

46. Pupils' attainment in all aspects of English upon entry into the Ark Primary Unit is below average. Pupils however make good progress during their stay at the unit, with pupils continuing to achieve well both at New Summerseat House and at the Mosses Centre. Additional learning support sessions that focus upon literacy, have a significant effect upon the pupils' reading abilities. Pupils engaged in the 'Skills for Working Life' course at Bury College make good progress in the acquisition of skills relevant to the next stage of education or world of work. Pupils at the Ark Primary Unit are good listeners. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to talk about their work and the activities they are involved in. Most pupils are confident in their ability to express their ideas and opinions, though some pupils are reluctant to make an active contribution to oral activities.

47. The majority of pupils continue to make good progress in their speaking skills in Years 7 to 9 at New Summerseat House though some pupils are less secure and confident when asked to express themselves in more formal situations. Those pupils following the Key Skills course and GCSE English at New Summerseat House and The Mosses Centre are given regular chances to communicate their thoughts and ideas, though not all pupils find this easy. Older pupils following the 'Skills for Working Life' at Bury College achieve well in their ability to express their feelings and emotions.

48. Discussion with pupils in Years 3 to 6 at the Ark reveals that many pupils have a limited access to, and knowledge of, books prior to starting their full time education. Phonic and word building skills are well taught at the unit, with structured reading books making a positive contribution to the development of reading skills. Pupils are given the chance to read a good range of poetry, stories and factual materials. This helps the pupils make good progress over time.

49. The use of regular reading periods for all pupils at New Summerseat house is a significant factor in pupils' progress in reading. By the time pupils are fourteen many of them have satisfactory technical reading skills, though they do not always fully understand and appreciate the meaning of what they read, because of their below average vocabulary and comprehension skills. Although pupils following the Key Skills course, both at New Summerseat House and The Mosses Centre occasionally read poetry and extracts from stories from other times and cultures, pupils rarely read whole stories or plays which means they miss the full impact of literature. More able pupils following the GCSE course are given the opportunity to read a challenging range of poems, stories and plays. Whilst most pupils enjoy these reading activities, many of them read only at a surface level and do not always understand the layers of meaning in the demanding texts they read. Few pupils read at home. Whilst some more able pupil starting Year 3 at The Ark Primary Unit display the ability to string very short sentences together in order to tell a simple story, or relate events in their lives, many pupils are still in the early stage in the development of their writing skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 however are given the chance to develop and use the basis English skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar within a good range of writing activities, with the result that pupils achieve well over time. At all centres, the use of word-processors is well established, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to re-draft work in order to improve its content, style and use more imaginative language.

50. Good progress continues in Years 7 to 9 at New Summerseat House, with pupils being given the chance to respond to a good range of literary texts and factual information. Pupils produce a range of letters, book and television reviews, good examples of poetry, and some interesting instructional, descriptive and creative essays. Pupils following the Key Skills course at New Summerseat House and the Mosses Centre develop a satisfactory understanding of how written language can be used to convey information in different forms and for different purposes. Much of this writing takes the form of notes and short response, with only a limited amount of extended writing. Pupils following the GCSE English course are confident in their ability to write about the storylines and characters in the poems, novels and plays they read, but are less secure in their ability to write about ideas, issues and abstract concepts. Year 11 APP pupils following a range of vocational courses make good progress in their studies and achieve and develop a satisfactory range of communication skills.

51. The quality of teaching at all three units is good, with a half of lessons being very good. Lessons are well planned, organised and managed with teachers using resources well to promote pupils' learning. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and use it to good effect to provide pupils with a good range of activities which match their individual interests, needs and abilities. Progress in lessons at all centres is enhanced by pupils' good working relationships with their teachers, and the wish of the majority of pupils to learn. All sites use a good range of assessment procedures in order to monitor pupils' progress, inform future practice and to provide pupils with targets for improvement, although they are not routinely addressed in all lessons.

52. Leadership and management of English are good, with members of staff responsible for the subject in all units having a good range of policies and schemes of work in place to support teachers in the delivery of the subject. National strategy guidance is used effectively by all teachers in Years 3 to 9, with evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work that it is making a positive contribution to raising standards in English.

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

53. Literacy is well used in other areas of the curriculum in order to promote pupils' English skills, with good examples being observed in ICT and science. With the use of the National Literacy Strategy in Years 3 to 6 and increased access to external accreditation and examinations, the chance for pupils to achieve well and make progress in all aspects of English has improved since the last inspection

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good** and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and the curriculum have been improved by the use of the National Strategy in Years 3 to 9;
- The flexible curriculum in Years 10 and 11 enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress;
- The subject is well led and managed;
- Assessment of pupils' achievements is insufficiently linked to their targets in individual education plans.

### **Commentary**

54. Teachers make good use of the National Strategy for mathematics and this has added rigour and focus to pupils' learning. As a result the achievement of pupils is good in Years 3 to 6 at the Ark and remains good for the pupils in Years 7 to 9 at New Summerseat House, many of whom enter the provision with relatively low levels of attainment. Although the pupils' attainments at age 14 remain below those expected nationally they make good progress and enjoy their mathematics lessons. The curriculum is broad and balanced and has been carefully adapted to the needs of pupils of varying ability. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and focus on the pupils' depth of understanding. For instance, pupils in Year 6 at the ARK centre spent much of the lesson in a discussion of the best ways to multiply single and two digit numbers. They made good progress in their understanding of the benefits of rounding numbers up or down. In a very good lesson in Year 8 at New Summerseat House, pupils focused on the mathematics of probability and learned through very good questioning by the teacher to express the chance of an event occurring in mathematical terms.

55. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well because of the varied range of courses provided at New Summerseat House and the Mosses centre and in the Year 11 Alternative Provision Project. The courses all lead to national qualifications and the pupils respond well to the challenge. Higher attaining pupils follow a GCSE course which has a significant effect on their achievement. These pupils are making good progress in their understanding of algebra and have mastered the process of solving complex equations involving one or two variables and including minus numbers. Other pupils follow appropriate and very structured courses in which they are making good progress in, for instance, calculating obtuse and acute angles and in applying their knowledge of percentages to every day operations, such as profit and loss. The structure of the courses allows pupils to work at their own pace and they benefit from the high degree of individual tuition they receive from the teacher and the knowledgeable teaching assistants. The pupils are expected to help evaluate their own work and they respond well to the increased independence of their learning.

56. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is sometimes very good in Years 3 to 6. The best lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils and by the challenge and high expectations which the teacher has of the pupils' learning. The teacher manages the pupils very well. Teaching proceeds at a good pace and the teacher uses questions effectively to establish what pupils understand and can do. The

teachers of Years 7 to 9 at New Summerseat House extend the pupils' understanding through well chosen questions. The pupils respond well to the brisk pace of activities. They concentrate well on their work and many have gained the confidence to suggest alternative answers to questions. Lessons are well planned and have been suitably adapted to the needs of pupils of all abilities. The teachers have a very good knowledge of the progress which the pupils are making but although each pupil has appropriate targets in mathematics these do not relate sufficiently to the targets in pupils' individual education plans.

57. There is a lack of continual assessment of pupils' work which would further inform teachers of pupils' progress and which would enable them to plan more efficiently for the needs of each individual pupil. The very structured nature of courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 provides for a high level of continual assessment and this has a positive effect on the pupils' learning.

58. Leadership and management are good. Mathematics at New Summerseat House is led by a specialist teacher who brings a good understanding of the subject and which enables her to provide very good support to her colleagues. She has developed thorough schemes of work which offer suitable assessment opportunities to ensure progression in pupils' learning. In Years 10 and 11, for pupils on more flexible programmes, assessment is less well developed in identifying specific progress in the subject. There is an appropriate range of books and other materials suited to the ability of all the pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Opportunities for pupils to increase their mathematical knowledge in other subjects are satisfactory. In design technology, for example, pupils are expected to measure accurately and they are taught to apply their knowledge of angles and scale drawings as they design projects in wood and plastic. Pupils work in science on a range of graphs and measurements. An understanding of mathematical means and averages is increased as pupils compile charts of the temperature ranges in areas of Britain.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **very good**, and shows **very good** improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- At New Summerseat House, excellent curriculum planning enables pupils of all abilities to gain the most appropriate accreditation;
- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement on all three sites;
- At the Mosses, the link with mainstream is very effective in raising achievement.

### **Commentary**

60. At New Summerseat House the clear, differentiated, planning in science shows a very good understanding of the wide range of needs and abilities of the pupils. Links with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are well planned and

implemented. The subject co-ordinator has a very clear vision and very good management skills. Coverage of the National Curriculum is very good, and access for all is achieved through careful planning to meet specific needs. Around one third of pupils enter Edexcel GCSE Single Award, while the rest work towards OCR Entry Level.

61. On all three sites, science teaching is very good and leads to very good achievement. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations, provide interesting and exciting lessons and monitor progress through end of topic assessments. Work is well presented and illustrated with diagrams and tables. Well written reports of experiments and investigations indicate clearly that the quality of teaching and learning is consistent, and as good as the very lessons observed during the inspection. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy science; two boys in Year 8 citing it as the best lesson of the day. The attitude of pupils, arriving to take an examination contributing to their GCSE accreditation, was excellent, mature and confident. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 show very good understanding of the properties of materials, and classification. The most able pupils in Years 7 to 9 are working at a level close to national expectations, studying a broad curriculum including human biology, physical forces, and chemical reactions. Less able pupils cover the same topics with planning and teaching adapted to meet their needs. The curriculum in Year 10 and 11 makes a significant contribution to pupils' sex education.

62. A very effective link with a local mainstream school promotes very good achievement at the Mosses. Pupils were motivated by the very good teaching, and responded very well to the structured lesson observed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- When information and communication technology is taught by specialist teachers and external staff, the quality of teaching, learning and achievement is very good in both the PLC and APP.
- The subject is very well led and managed at New Summerseat House, although this expertise is not sufficiently spread across the PLC or other subjects of the curriculum;
- The specialist provision is very good at New Summerseat House and at the local college, however, it is much less favourable at other locations which has an adverse effect upon pupils' achievements.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough to support learning in the different subjects within the PLC.

### **Commentary**

63. The subject is well taught, particularly at New Summerseat House where pupils follow GCSE courses as well as Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). As a result the pupils achieve well, as indeed they do at the local college of further education within key skills courses. Subject expertise is clearly evident and this, supported by high expectations, thorough planning and assessment combine to ensure the pupils' learning and achievements are very good at New Summerseat House. When available, the use of an

interactive whiteboard, a large touch-sensitive display screen, is effective in engaging the pupils' interest. In Key Stage 2, the pupils use programs well to support literacy and numeracy. The use of ICT is integrated into lessons on English, mathematics, science and topics addressing geography and history. Older pupils have access to ICT through discreet lessons or as part of Key Skills courses where the use of ICT is part of the syllabus. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 on all sites develop their ICT skills through a number of accredited courses. The pupils achieve well on the relevant aspects provided, for example, correct formatting of letters of application. At New Summerseat House, pupils from Year 8 onwards gain an understanding of web-page design. Wherever possible, the pupils are encouraged to use their skills independently and focus upon building a portfolio that demonstrates their range of achievement. All pupils are familiar with routine procedures, such as logging on to the network, printing and saving their work in appropriate folders. All pupils at all centres learn to use programs to create designs, word-process and handle data. Particularly strong feature of lessons are post-lesson evaluations by the teacher and pupils' self assessments which provide accurate feedback about pupils' progress. The majority of pupils respond very well to using ICT and most display good mouse skills, but many find using the keyboard more laboured.

64. The leadership and management of the subject are very good at New Summerseat House. The subject is very well planned and assessed so that each pupil receives an appropriate programme of study. Very good account is taken of local and national strategies such as that to raise standards within Key Stage 3. Good support is offered to colleagues as they seek to use ICT more effectively within their subjects, although the full impact of this support is yet to be evident in all subjects. Currently, there are few opportunities for this expertise to be extended to other sites. This is mainly due to the distance between sites and other responsibilities held by the subject leader.

65. There has been a significant improvement in hardware and software resources, since the last inspection on some sites, and as a result standards achieved are higher. However, resources at the Ark, Mosses Centre and some classrooms at New Somerset House are not well served. The lack of access to the Internet and sometimes printers and digital cameras has an adverse effect upon the pupils' abilities to research topics and reflect upon their work when printed.

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

66. Overall, the use of ICT across is satisfactory where the strengths evident at college and some use in other subjects outweigh the weaknesses across the PLC and the APP base at the Mosses Centre. Where pupils have access to the Internet, ICT can support research to develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills of many subjects. The use of ICT across the curriculum does not reflect the levels of pupils' achievements in specific ICT lessons. There are several reasons for this weakness. Although teachers of other subjects feel more confident with computers as a result of training and support, they do not always identify ICT opportunities in their planning, for example, data handling in mathematics, science and geography. As a result, the pupils are not provided with sufficiently regular practice to develop the skills they have learned. The lack of internet access for significant numbers of PLC pupils has an adverse effect upon their achievements.

## **HUMANITIES**

67. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the provision in **history** and **geography**, and no lessons were seen during the inspection. Planning and co-ordination in the subjects follows as far as possible the national curriculum programmes in mainstream education. For the younger pupils at the Ark, history and geography are taught as part of a topic, and schemes of work are in place. The humanities curriculum is effectively supported by trips into the local community. For example, pupils have an excellent opportunity to reinforce their learning in humanities through their experiences at the local activity centre. During the inspection pupils were learning orienteering, practising their map reading skills during a day at the centre. There were many other opportunities to learn about the environment as well as teamwork and social skills. The pupils worked hard during the day and their infectious enthusiasm offered clear evidence of the value of this kind of experience to reinforce their classroom learning. In history, pupils have learnt about the Victorians, comparing ways of life in earlier times to their own experiences.

68. At present there is no co-ordinator for history and geography for older pupils, but a newly appointed co-ordinator will be in post in January, to take over planning for these subjects, which, in the previous inspection were judged as satisfactory at primary and good at secondary levels. In the meantime all pupils are being taught both subjects as humanities by their class teachers, within the framework of national curriculum schemes.

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

### **Art & Design**

The provision for art and design is **good**.

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

- Good teaching results in the pupils enjoying art and design and achieving well;
- Pupils are provided with an imaginative art curriculum, including the work of accepted great artists and are given the chance to explore and use a range of art media;
- Pupils are introduced to the works of and are given the chance to draw and paint in their styles;
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to consider art from other cultures and traditions and to use this experience as a stimulus for their own work.



## Commentary

69. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' art work indicates that their achievement is also good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and use it to good effect as they demonstrate the skills to be developed within individual lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants provide pupils with good support and advice in their art activities yet allow pupils to retain ownership of their work. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and take pride in their efforts. There are good assessment procedures in place, with pupils assessing and evaluating their own work. Leadership and management of the subject at all centres are good, and have a similar effect upon standards achieved. The subject co-ordinator at New Summerseat House has a good policy for the subject and a detailed scheme of work.

70. Pupils in the Ark use a range of materials to develop their designing skills such as the creation of repeating patterns. Pupils are also introduced to the paintings of Monet, before moving on to produce paintings of their own in his style. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 at New Summerseat House make good progress as they consider the paintings of Kandinsky as a stimulus for a range of activities using a range of media and techniques. This included pupils producing their own paintings in his styles, producing block printing and stencilling templates as well as being involved in the creation of computer generated patterns and paintings. Pupils involved in the Alternative Provision Programme follow a GNVQ Art and Design programme at Bury College, where pupils were making good progress in their fine art skills as they replicated the work of old masters and contemporary artists. The scrutiny of pupils' artwork reveals that pupils at both the Ark and the New Summerseat bases are given the chance to use a number of skills and experiment with and use a range of media. Pupils produce collages, good quality pictures using pencil, charcoal, pastels and paint. They engage in screen printing, stencilling, mask making and three-dimensional work using scrap materials and Modroc, as well as producing some good quality ceramic and clay work based upon containers in a range of styles.

71. The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development, with work on display contributing to the welcoming atmosphere at The Ark Primary Unit and New Summerseat House. However, the majority of work produced by pupils is based on the work of white European artists, with too few chances to explore art forms from other cultures and traditions.

72. With the chance for pupils to engage in a wider range of art activities, pupils' achievement and progress have improved since the last inspection.

## Design and Technology

73. Provision for design technology is **very good** and reflects very good improvement since the last inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good curriculum in Years 7 to 10;
- Teaching by a specialist in the subject is very good;
- The subject is well led and managed.

## Commentary

74. Pupils in Years 7 to 10 achieve very well in design and technology at New Summerseat House. The curriculum here enables them to develop their skills and understanding within a framework which gives them a high degree of responsibility and independence in their learning. The pupils work through a well chosen series of projects in woodwork which gradually introduces them to more complex problems in design and in practical skills. The pupils exercise a high degree of choice in the design of their project and in the selection of materials and tools they use. The pupils respond very well to having responsibility for their own product and they work with sustained concentration for long periods. The finished work, though simple in construction, is made to a high standard and the pupils take great pride in their work, often taking it home to present to their family. Pupils in Year 8 have produced effectively decorated frames for mirrors using techniques in cutting and shaping wood and plastic. Pupils in Year 9 have made individually designed wine racks and compact disc holders which show originality and a well developed aesthetic appreciation of form and colour. Some of the best work is prominently displayed at the entrance to the centre. By Year 10 pupils are able to study for external qualifications and have produced design portfolios leading to the completion of coffee tables and stools. Pupils are expected to complete detailed evaluations and assessments of their work at each stage. This has a significant effect on raising their understanding of the processes they have been taught. Some higher attaining pupils are making good progress in a GCSE graphics course which increases their ability to realise three dimensional shapes on paper and which requires them to demonstrate developing awareness of angles and the value of precise measurement. In one individual case, excellent progress was seen in skill and attitude development where the pupil accepted the need to continually evaluate his work and correct mistakes.

75. Teaching in the subject by a well qualified specialist is very good. The teacher has a very good command of the subject and she works effectively with individual pupils in advising them on technique and in extending their understanding through well directed and skilful questioning. Planning is very good and lessons are well organised. Lessons are characterised by very good relationships and a high degree of motivation by the pupils. The teacher expects and receives high standards of effort from the pupils. They are challenged to produce their best work and they respond well. The pupils are well supported by competent teaching assistants who display a good awareness of health and safety requirements and who help the teacher maintain an exemplary standard of behaviour.

76. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has established a curriculum which is effective in promoting pupils' achievement through the gradual acquisition of skills and techniques. Assessment is a strength. Pupils discuss their work regularly with the teacher and they evaluate their efforts at each stage of production. Consequently their understanding of their own progress is significantly enhanced. The accommodation and resources at New Summerseat House for work in wood and in graphic design are very good. Pupils benefit from the use of a comprehensive range of machinery and hand tools within a self contained and spacious workshop. Provision for food technology is limited. There is only a very small kitchen at New Summerseat House which severely limits the number of pupils who may use the facility. A small number of pupils make good progress in learning to cook simple recipes as part of their reward time but there is no other provision on the timetable for food technology.

## **Physical education**

77. The PLC and APP make the best use of very limited on-site provision for physical activity, as a result the pupils achieve well overall. At the Ark, the time apportioned to physical education is adversely affected by the appropriate focus upon literacy, numeracy and behaviour to facilitate a return to mainstream education. No lessons were seen at this base, although the pupils were observed gaining experience in orienteering under the instruction of external staff at a local country park. The curriculum for Years 7 to 11 at New Summerseat is well planned to offer pupils access to a range of team games such as football and hockey. These activities focus upon specific skills such as passing and moving into space to support team-mates. They also encourage the pupils' personal development such as sportsmanship and fair play. Older pupils at the APP and Mosses Centre access a range of activities including visits to leisure centres and undertaking outdoor pursuits such as canoeing and sailing. Good use is made of a teaching assistant who has particular expertise in a number of sports. In lessons observed the staff had high expectations and showed themselves as good role models by wearing correct kit and participating in all practices and games. The quality of relationships is evidently strong as the pupils behaved well and maintained a clear focus upon practising skills despite driving rain.

## Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the curriculum and teaching is developing well in Years 7 to 9;
- The subject is well managed at New Summerseat House, although overall co-ordination between centres is insufficient.

### Commentary

78. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching, learning and achievement in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and has been improved by the very recent introduction of courses which are clearly linked to the national guidance on the subject. Teachers are developing topics which are very well planned and to which the pupils are responding well. They enjoy the discussions about the consequences of bullying and the strategies to combat its effects and pupils in Year 8, for example, made good progress in understanding that there are alternatives to giving in to bullies or to running away. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress through an integrated course which links their careers education to aspects of life skills and their own learning styles. The pupils' achievement is increased throughout the curriculum by the strength of relationships between the staff and pupils and by the emphasis on good standards of behaviour and courtesy to others.

79. Teaching is good throughout Years 7 to 10. Teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a brisk pace. They have a good understanding of the subject and ask searching questions which extend both the pupils' understanding and their confidence in making suggestions and giving their opinions. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' efforts and continually stretch their thinking, for instance, in a good lesson in Year 9 where the teacher challenged the pupils to consider more and more deeply why their behaviour should affect others. Teachers and pupils value and respect each other's contribution. Pupils in Year 8 listened sympathetically as their classmates recounted incidents when they had been bullied.

80. Management of the subject is particularly good within Years 7 to 9 at New Summerseat House. The new co-ordinator has made a very good start in developing planning and curriculum balance and she is beginning to give valuable support to other teachers of the subject. The co-ordinator has provided well researched policy documents and her action plan gives a clear direction to the subject's development. However, although planning in each centre is developing well, the lack of continuity and progression in pupils' learning as they transfer to the different stages in their education has an adverse effect upon achievement. Resources are presently inadequate to satisfactorily support all aspects of the curriculum.

### Citizenship

The provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

81. In terms of planning, little distinction is made between PSHE and citizenship. One lesson timetabled as citizenship was taught to pupils as PSHE. Citizenship is the early stages of development as a subject and shares with PSHE a lack of a clear programme of study. There was, however, some very good teaching observed in a lesson on bullying. A key contribution is made to the development of citizenship when some older pupils, assessed as suitable, attend local colleges of further education. Staff require these pupils meet the particular and demands of learning in the colleges.

82. Bought-in provision supplied by external training providers plans to deliver key citizenship concepts to the discrete group of hard-to-engage Year 11 pupils for which it will take responsibility. When visited, the programme was only three weeks old and had not yet assembled a complete group of referred pupils consequently it is not possible to judge the overall effectiveness of this provision.

## **Vocational Education**

Provision for vocational education is **very good**.

### **Main areas of strengths and weaknesses**

- The high quality of the provision contributes significantly to the raising of standards and broadening of the curriculum.
- Links with colleges and other providers are very strong and mutually supportive.
- The high quality of youth workers and support staff has a positive impact on the success of vocational education.
- Pupils gain in independence and self-confidence.
- Very limited opportunities for work experience restrict the practical application of skills.

## **Commentary**

83. Provision for vocational education is very good across a number of settings including Bolton and Bury colleges. The flexibility and variety of the courses offered allows for the inclusion of pupils with a wide range of educational, behavioural and social needs. This means that pupils have access to courses that range from nationally accredited GNVQ's and NVQ's, working with mainstream peers to specific courses for PLC pupils only that are accredited by the colleges. Challenging, practical courses such as bricklaying, electronics, catering or hairdressing engage pupils' interests and help prepare them for life after the PLC. They are supplemented by additional courses offered by other providers such as the well-established motor vehicle course and more recent programmes in painting and decorating; construction and motor-cycle maintenance offered by a training provider.

84. Selected courses are available to all Year 10 and 11 PLC and APP pupils except for the small number of pupils following a GCSE curriculum at Summerseat. As a result of high quality provision including very good support, pupils acquire skills and knowledge of a practical nature at the same time as reinforcing their basic skills of numeracy and literacy and developing social skills. This was observed during a bricklaying session at Bolton College where students built different types of walls over a number of weeks, calculating the materials they required for a given space and working with a high degree of independence. Older full time students, working in close proximity, acted as very good role models. Much of the success of this provision is due to the very good relationships that

have been built up between the providers and the PLC and APP. There has been a joint determination to meet the needs of all pupils, requiring not only appropriate courses, but also clearly identified time for liaison and discussion. Very regular meetings take place, not only to review individual learning plans but to celebrate success, and adjust provision if required. This was seen at a weekly meeting between the link member of Bury College staff and the APP youth workers in a session that contributed much to effective assessment of academic and personal development.

85. Youth workers and support staff from New Summerseat House, the Mosses Centre, New Summerseat House and the APP are committed, resolute and highly adaptable. Their knowledge of individual pupils, of their strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities has a strong bearing on whether pupils succeed or not. They accompany pupils to college where they encourage and cajole them and act as effective intermediaries with college staff. They are excellent role models as was observed during a highly challenging lesson in the catering department. Two cheerful youth workers not only followed the rapid instructions to make lasagne for themselves but ensured that the APP pupils followed these steps successfully alongside mainstream pupils.

86. When asked, pupils say they like opportunities for practical, vocational activities. They usually rise to the challenge and develop skills of independence and self-reliance, often finding their own way to the course. As a result of this, attendance rates for some pupils improve and their self esteem and self confidence grows. Some pupils move on to college courses after leaving the PLC as a direct result of their experience of vocational courses.

87. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to put into practice skills learnt at college because of lack of opportunities for work experience. This means that chances to reinforce learning, to comply with accepted standards of behaviour and occasions for social development are lost.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

