

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **COLLEGE HALL PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT**

Wokingham, Berkshire

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 131769

Headteacher: Marion Bent

Lead inspector: Hilary Gannaway

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 275274

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Excluded, At Risk of Exclusion, School Phobic, School Refuser
School category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	43
School address:	West Road Off Old Wokingham Road Wokingham Berkshire
Postcode:	RG40 3BT
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Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of responsible officer:	Martin Gocke
Date of previous inspection:	12/02/2001

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a 40 place referral unit for pupils between the age of 11 and 16 who mainly live in Bracknell Forest. Of 43 presently on roll, 18 are in Year 11 and were on study leave at the time of the inspection, 21 pupils are registered with both a mainstream school and the unit. Five pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs for emotional and behavioural difficulties. These pupils are often in the unit awaiting, where possible, a placement in another special school after exclusion. There are few girls in the unit, five pupils are in care and almost all pupils are of white British origin.

Significant partners include the local college, Connexions, who provide careers and other guidance for pupils, and the Health Service. The unit is on two sites with the second site being a Youth and Community Centre five miles away. Most pupils are educated in the main building with the school refusers, who are part time in the unit, using a cottage on the same site. The second site is used mainly, but not exclusively, for those excluded from special schools. The unit offers flexible individual packages for those in Years 10 and 11.

The profile has changed significantly since the last inspection with the number of pupils now doubled to take account of requirements for full time education.

There are difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff, as is common in many units of this type. Pupils arrive with a history of failure and disruption; often with very low self-esteem. Their attainment is below that expected for their age due to gaps in learning and long periods of absence or disrupted education caused by their behaviour or refusal to attend school. 64.5% of pupils are new this year. There has been a lot more exclusions from three Bracknell Forest schools in the last two years with significant implications for the unit.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21527	Hilary Gannaway	Lead inspector	Citizenship Personal, Social and Health Education French
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
32915	David Harris	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography
30243	Anne Heakin	Team inspector	English Art and design Special educational needs
8810	Sue Aldridge	Team inspector	Science Design and Technology Religious Education
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**College Hall is an effective unit.** Very good relationships between staff and pupils and good teaching help pupils gain in self-esteem and achieve well. Personal development is good and, along with a relevant range of vocational and work related learning activities, provides pupils with good skills for the next stage in their life. The leadership of the headteacher is good with some very good features and she is supported by a committed staff. Despite some staffing difficulties the unit has remained focused on raising standards. The unit provides good value for money.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior managers provide very good role models and this significantly supports and motivates staff and pupils.
- The unit successfully helps most pupils get back into work routines so they make progress and achieve well.
- The strong relationships forged by staff with pupils lead to a positive change in attitudes to learning and in behaviour.
- Very good teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship and good opportunities for vocational activities have a positive effect on pupils' personal development and preparation for life.
- The significant improvement in accommodation has contributed very well to the range of practical activities provided in subjects and to pupils' overall achievement.
- There is limited use of homework.
- Information and assessments on pupils are not always collected and evaluated in a way which helps the unit carefully measure the value they add and check in detail what needs to be done next.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Achievement has improved as a result of teachers having better subject knowledge and there being more consistently good teaching. Opportunities for personal development have been enhanced by improvement in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, PSHE and support and guidance. Improvements in accommodation have helped the unit provide a broader range of curricular activities. However, improvement in assessment and towards individual work for those with additional basic skills needs has been slower.

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>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' achievement is good overall.** It is well supported by relevant aspects of the national strategies. It is good in English, especially in speaking and listening, because pupils have a variety of opportunities for discussion and reasoned argument. Achievement in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is good due to consistently good teaching. It is satisfactory, but improving, in science where there is good subject knowledge and a range of practical activities to interest pupils. In PSHE and citizenship, very good achievement benefits from a comprehensive programme matched to age and needs. In most lessons, literacy and numeracy, along with ICT skills, are promoted well helping pupils to reinforce basic skills. Individual programmes for those with additional special educational needs are now in place but it is too soon, as yet, to see the progress made. Pupils achieve well in vocational courses and an improvement in accreditation means that by the time they leave most pupils attain a range of good and sometimes very good results in GCSE and Entry Level. They make good progress overall against personal

targets. The majority of pupils who attend regularly are effectively prepared for their move to college, work or training.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well catered for.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Most concentrate well, work hard and grow in confidence. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, however, there is evidence that the majority of pupils make significant gains in attendance in comparison to that in their previous school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the unit is good. Teaching and learning are good.** Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons effectively and maintain a brisk pace so pupils remain enthusiastic and on task. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and work effectively together to make sure pupils have many chances to improve their skills and make good gains in their learning. However, tracking of progress is not always consistent and there are a few times when pupils' behaviour is not managed as well as it could be. As a result, opportunities to extend learning are sometimes lost. The curriculum is good and suitable to all pupils' needs with a good range of vocational activities. Pupils are well cared for and offered good, and sometimes very good, personal support and guidance. There are good links with parents, schools and colleges. Pupils' views are carefully taken into account, although the unit has yet to formalise ways of doing this so that the pupils can have greater influence in its day to day life.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** Statutory requirements are met and the local education authority (LEA) in conjunction with the management committee has a good overview and manages the unit well. There is careful monitoring, particularly by the LEA and headteacher, and, along with improved accommodation and resources, this has helped to raise standards. The leadership of the headteacher and that of staff with other major responsibilities is effective because they are easily accessible and this motivates and supports staff very successfully. As a result, the headteacher's clear vision for the future is supported well by staff. Management of the unit is good.

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

Parents are pleased with the progress they see their children making and the awards and certificates they gain. They feel their children are treated fairly and staff helped to become mature. Pupils feel that staff always have time to listen to them and this helps them to feel valued.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Plan opportunities for pupils to consistently receive homework.
- Introduce clearer ways to record outcomes, such as pupils' achievement and behaviour, so that they can be better measured and reviewed and effectively used to help set further targets.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are below average due to pupils having gaps in their learning. Nevertheless, for all pupils, including the few girls, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with additional special educational needs, including statements, progress is good and they achieve well. This is also true for pupils in the main building, the cottage and those who are taught on the second site.

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

- Achievement is very good in PSHE and citizenship and good in English, mathematics and ICT.
- A well thought-out curriculum and effective vocational, college and work experience links help pupils to settle, remain motivated and continue to achieve well when off-site.
- Awards and certificates more closely matched to individual needs have led to a good improvement in the results pupils gain at the end of Year 11.
- There is a good programme of basic skills work planned for those with additional special needs who need it, but as yet this is not fully established.

#### **Commentary**

1. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. This improvement has been significantly supported by careful and regular monitoring of attendance to make sure pupils attend more regularly, better subject knowledge and planning by teachers, and better provision for personal and social education. As a result, most pupils settle to work. Their behaviour begins to improve and by Year 11 they often achieve a good range of awards and certificates and are well equipped for life after school.

2. The significant improvement in achievement in PSHE and citizenship is due to detailed and appropriate schemes of work which are often very effectively taught by teachers who are confident in all aspects of these subjects. The work is very relevant to pupils' needs as young adults and assists them to gain a range of skills which will help them in the community. Achievement in English is well supported by high expectations and effectively strengthened because other subject teachers regularly reinforce and consolidate pupils' abilities to communicate, read and write. In mathematics, work is practical and often includes the use of ICT so pupils remain interested and make good gains. Achievement is also supported by work especially aimed at enabling pupils with specific gaps in their mathematical learning to improve. In ICT, high expectations, good use of ICT across most other subjects and a well equipped ICT room all help to support good achievement and raise self-esteem.

3. The unit makes sure that there is a wide variety of National Curriculum subjects taught. This is so pupils in Years 7 to 9 who go back into mainstream schools do not miss out on areas of the curriculum that will help them settle back in to school and continue to make effective progress. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, who are less likely to return to mainstream schools, the unit has spent time and effort to make sure that pupils have a range of vocational experiences. These are carefully chosen so they are relevant to their individual needs. They are of good quality so pupils are keen to go and have the best chances to be successful. As a result, pupils work hard, gain in confidence and learn a range of useful skills, some of which lead to certificates and awards in vocational work. As well as awards in vocational work, pupils gain a good, and sometimes very good, range of GCSE and Entry Level awards and certificates matched to their age and needs. Accreditation results have improved year on year. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is due to the good knowledge and a better understanding of pupil needs. For pupils who often have a history of failure, this is highly significant and boosts their confidence very well. Overall, the results pupils gain fit them very well for life after the unit with many going on to college, training or work.

4. A significant development in the unit provision has been the allocation of time for one member of staff to work with individual pupils, to discuss their behavioural and learning needs and negotiate their individual targets. Where pupils have learning difficulties, individual programmes of work based on basic skills development, are devised. Pupils' individual plans and targets are of good quality, however while pupils are clearly making progress, programmes have not been in place sufficiently long for the unit to measure achievement over time.

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

Attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Positive attitudes, better attendance and improved behaviour contribute well to pupils' achievements.
- The unit sets very high expectations for conduct and the rewards scheme is effective, although progress in behaviour is not measured as successfully as it could be.
- Pupils develop very good relationships.
- There are good opportunities for personal development.

### **Commentary**

5. The unit has good procedures to promote attendance. First day of absence telephone calls are made home promptly regarding unexplained absence and the unit works effectively with the educational welfare officer. As a result, approximately 80% of pupils at the unit show improved attendance as compared to their mainstream schools

6. Attitudes have improved well since the last inspection when they were satisfactory. Pupils show high levels of interest in the activities offered by the unit. In lessons they concentrate well and work hard. For instance, in a Year 10 lesson about contraception they listened attentively and took a full part in debates. Pupils also enjoy educational trips, sports and residential activities.

7. As found at the last inspection, pupils behave well in the classroom, at break-times and as they move around the grounds. Pupils say that bullying is not tolerated and swift action is taken by staff to resolve any problems. A high focus is placed on pupils learning to manage their own behaviour. A well constructed, very good, incentive scheme combined with motivating targets is successful in supporting pupils in this priority area of personal development. Daily targets encourage pupils to follow the code of conduct. A healthy spirit of competition exists as pupils compete for individual and best class certificates, privileges and prizes. Pupils also have the chance to win cups for good attendance, behaviour and achievement. There is an *On Call* room for those who have problems behaving where staff work hard to talk difficulties through and get pupils back into lessons as soon as possible. Staff know pupils well and the gains they make. However, there is not yet a sufficiently clear system for measuring pupils' progress in improving their behaviour which brings together all information such as progress towards personal targets, incentives gained, times in the *On Call* room, and information from daily briefings. This means that staff do not always have the clearest picture of exactly how much overall good improvement has been made.

8. Although exclusions were high in the last academic year, it is important to note that this was a temporary period and it is highly likely that the current year will see a reduction of approximately 50%.

9. There has been a good improvement in relationships between staff and pupils since the last inspection. This supports personal development well as do the very well developed programmes in citizenship and PSHE. Opportunities are carefully taken by staff to stress the importance of good relationships and teamwork. Consequently, pupils work very well together, for instance, in team

games. The unit's race equality policy is effective and issues such as discrimination and valuing others are maturely discussed.

10. Better care and support has also helped to improve personal development. There is a positive ethos within the unit which contributes well to pupils learning about themselves and the feelings of others so that they develop self-respect and respect for others. Pupils are helped effectively to understand their own social development through discussions with staff at difficult times. Through community activities such as work experience placements and charity projects pupils learn good interpersonal skills. For example, the report from the off site 'accelerator' project described pupil attitudes as very good and their behaviour as impeccable. Pupils display a good awareness of right and wrong, and this is effectively supported by work in PSHE, although actions sometimes indicate inappropriate choices. Over time, however, pupils develop the ability to accept that some choices lead to difficulties for themselves and others, they learn to admit their mistakes and can make appropriate apologies. The consistent application of the unit's policy for dealing with bad language has led to greatly diminished referrals in this area improving the atmosphere in lessons and in the building generally.

11. Through well constructed discussions in citizenship lessons pupils learn to appropriately present their ideas about cultural diversity and gain the knowledge needed to develop broader views. This aspect has improved since the last inspection through teachers' ability to positively manage sensitive issues during discussions. However, there is limited involvement with diverse ethnic groups through music, art or drama to provide pupils with experiences to enable them to further develop considered views related to their multi-cultural community.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	13%	School data	15%

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	36	80	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	7	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the unit is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and work effectively together to make sure pupils have many chances to improve their skills and make gains. The curriculum is good and suitable to all pupils' needs with a good range of vocational activities. Pupils are well cared for and offered good, and sometimes very good, personal support and guidance. Partnership with parents, schools and colleges is good.

**Teaching and learning**

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

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships and well planned lessons ensure pupils mainly stay on task and are keen to work.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this confidently to challenge pupils.
- Sometimes there are missed opportunities for further learning due to a lack of homework .
- Although teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well, there are sometimes inconsistencies which can slow learning.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work well together.
- The unit has initiated an effective system of identifying pupils who have basic literacy needs.
- The charting of pupils' progress needs more development.

## Commentary

12. Although teaching was good at the last inspection, there has been improvement because teaching is now more consistently good and is sometimes very good, especially in mathematics and PSHE. This is as a result of increased monitoring by senior managers and the LEA which has led to more focused training for all staff. There has been a concentration on making sure staff have effective subject knowledge, the lack of which was an issue at the last inspection. This means that pupils now have access to a good range of learning activities in most areas of the National Curriculum. Resources are well matched to pupils' ages and needs and teachers have the knowledge to provide thought provoking work in their subject for a wide range of ability. This keeps pupils interested, reinforces learning and aids the return to mainstream schools for younger pupils. For older pupils, teachers are now able to plan for a wider range of awards and certificates so that they leave with a good range of accreditation. Good opportunities provided by vocational teaching off-site effectively support and widen learning. This not only equips them for further education and work but increases their self-esteem and motivation.

13. Teachers are assured enough to plan work which involves pupils in practical activities so they feel involved and have chances to problem solve, so extending learning. This is supported by a good account being taken of the national strategies. Subject vocabulary is clearly explained so pupils begin to use it when discussing and answering questions.

14. The high quality of relationships quickly established between all staff and pupils means that pupils often respond well in lessons and begin to learn the work routines they are often lacking. As they move through the unit, they start to concentrate and begin to make up gaps in learning. Behaviour management is generally good so pupils know what is expected. They are supported, praised and encouraged, with staff being firm but fair and expecting them to work hard. Behaviour is managed calmly and consistently. However, sometimes, where staff are less confident in their behaviour management, pupils have more difficulty in responding to the good learning opportunities and opportunities to extend learning are lost. On these occasions they are withdrawn to the *On Call* room to minimise disruption to others and returned to lessons as soon as possible so that as little teaching time as possible is lost.

15. In the best lessons, planning is detailed and shows what is expected of pupils including suitable learning objectives which are made clear to pupils. Aspects of the national strategies are used and this gives a clear shape to the lesson. Resources, including the increasing use of the interactive whiteboard are carefully planned into lessons. This is particularly so in mathematics. Frequent changes of activity help pupils to remain interested. Questioning, to encourage pupils to discuss work, explain their methods and demonstrate their learning, is a particular strength and is used carefully so pupils of all abilities have chances to respond.

16. The unit has worked hard to train teaching assistants and this has had a positive effect on learning with teaching assistants being an integral part of the team. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well. There is good one to one working so individual pupil needs can be targeted. Together they maintain a consistent approach to working with pupils, often planning together. Support staff in general provide an invaluable contribution as they enhance teaching and learning in the classroom and in less structured activities.

17. Staff work hard to help pupils to catch up with learning that has been missed and most achieve well as a result. However, homework is not always given out at the end of lessons or

routinely set by all teachers. While many of these pupils may find homework difficult to manage, by not setting it pupils miss opportunities to revise new skills and extend their newly acquired learning further. As a result, work is sometimes not finished or relevant tasks set to reinforce learning as much as they could be. The unit recognises that more needs to be done to make sure that homework is used to effectively support pupils' learning. Homework is identified as an area for development in the development plan.

18. Since the last inspection staff have worked hard to address the key issue relating to assessment procedures. Despite recruitment and staffing issues, good improvements have been made and assessment procedures are satisfactory. Pupils arrive at the unit with varied amounts of information about their academic skills; the unit is sensitive to pupils' anxieties and allows a settling in period before attempting to assess their work against national criteria. A system of collecting and analysing information has been established, but is still being built up. At the time of the inspection the system had not been amply developed for staff to be able to sufficiently measure pupils' progress over time in the unit and to validate the impact of teaching on their achievement. Assessment of pupils' behavioural needs is good, appropriate targets are set and staff work hard with pupils to help them achieve success in this aspect of their development. However, the unit has not yet developed an efficient system to clearly show pupils' good progress in managing their own behaviour.

19. Commitment to addressing the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties is clearly evident. The assessment information is being used well to identify pupils who have significant learning difficulties and appropriate programmes of additional literacy activities have been initiated. Individual Educational Plans are specific and based on accurate information. However, they have not been in place sufficiently long enough to chart pupils' progress over time.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	17	3	0	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Accommodation is very good and resources good and they have a positive impact on learning. Activities outside the curriculum are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is broad and well suited to preparing them for a return to mainstream education.
- The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has a strong vocational strand that prepares pupils well for Post-16 options.
- The quality of the accommodation has contributed well to the range of curricular activities.
- Statemented pupils and those with additional needs benefit from small class sizes and access to all activities.
- There is a good range of sporting activities.

**Commentary**

20. Although the curriculum has maintained its overall quality, there have been some important improvements since the last inspection. For example, the unit has made good progress in eliminating a shortage of teachers. Accommodation has been improved to the point where College Hall bears comparison with the best-housed units. It provides a very welcoming 'school like' environment for pupils. This is because there are a good range of specialist rooms. Weaknesses in

the accommodation for art and science have been entirely eliminated. The ICT room, air-conditioned and state of the art is representative of the improvements that have been effected. These help pupils' self-esteem as facilities, although smaller, are similar to those in mainstream. It has meant that the unit is now able to provide a wider range of practical activities in many subjects. Accommodation is very well maintained and there are high quality displays of pupils' work of which they are proud.

21. Effective schemes of work are in place and staff have better expertise because teaching staff now include specialists in key areas. This has led to good efforts being made to establish a broad curriculum which closely follows the National Curriculum and includes religious education for those in Years 7 to 9. Good use is made of the Key Stage 3 strategy and by including a modern foreign language, the unit has established an unusually wide subject range for an establishment of its type. Another untypical feature in a unit is the delivery of science by a specialist teacher in a fully equipped laboratory. This breadth of subjects, and the confidence this gives pupils, makes transitions back into mainstream education easier to achieve. Reintegration of pupils is also promoted by components within citizenship and PSHE.

22. However, there is concern that an off-site setting for these younger secondary age pupils may not promote the highest rates of return to mainstream schools. This is because staff from the unit do not have enough time to support school staff fully with skills, such as those to deal with behaviour difficulties. This has prompted the LEA and the unit to implement a change of direction for September. Work with pupils in Years 7 to 9 will be conducted principally as outreach support to pupils and staff in schools. It is anticipated that numbers being taught at College Hall in this age range will be greatly reduced.

23. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 maintains a core with a strong literacy and numeracy slant and adds to it a range of relevant work experience and vocational learning options. Planning emphasises individual needs and a good range of both vocational courses and of work experience has been developed. Skilled teaching is available at the colleges and is utilised effectively by College Hall and pupils benefit from their vocational and adult ambience and the presence of non-unit pupils in groups. These contacts help pupils to develop key skills they need for transition to life after school. The value of this is shown in the good range of training, work and college courses pupils take when they leave. This is effectively assisted by a good range of academic and vocational awards and certificates matched to needs which help pupils to feel valued.

24. Pupils who have additional special educational needs have full access to the taught curriculum. Those with statements of special educational needs particularly benefit from the breadth of the curriculum for those in Years 7 to 9. The very low teacher-pupil ratio provides effective compensation for a loss of special school features. Generous levels of support are available to pupils from capable teaching assistants, further ameliorating any inappropriateness there might be in placing these pupils in a unit. Teachers and teaching assistants focus their planning and attention on pupils' individual learning needs in subject lessons. However, individual one to one programmes, for specific learning needs, although of good quality, are only just being developed and it is difficult, as yet to see the effect they are having. Despite this, activities and challenges are mainly matched appropriately to pupils' academic and emotional capabilities, leading to overall good achievement. Equality of access to the curriculum is good for all and any detrimental effects from the more poorly equipped second site building have been minimised. Those pupils with different needs who are based in The Cottage have access to the specialist facilities of the principal building at College Hall

25. Although the unit is limited by small pupil numbers in the extent to which it can provide competitive or team games, it provides a wider range of small group or individual activities such as climbing and canoeing. This is due to well thought-out use of external providers and has allowed a wide range of sports and activities to be offered to pupils, despite the small size of the unit's staff and the lack of a gymnasium on site. The unit has unusually large grounds, in which there is a grassed area and equipment for five-a-side football as well as a hard surface where pupils play basketball. A nearby water-sports facility is used well, and pupils enjoy this. Through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, pupils tackle the demands of an expedition; the most recent one was on

the River Wye. The activities offered are well chosen to boost self-esteem and to build confidence for hesitant pupils. At present, opportunities for pupils to participate in arts and other activities are limited.

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

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The provision of advice, support and guidance is good and pupils are satisfactorily involved in aspects of the school's development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy very good, trusting relationships with staff
- Pupils are well looked after and guidance and support is augmented by very good links with the Connexions service.
- New pupils settle into the unit quickly because of the good induction procedures
- Pupils feel valued because staff listens to their views.

### **Commentary**

26. Although the unit has maintained the quality of its work in most of these areas, care is now better than at the last inspection. Procedures for child protection are good. The joint designated officers deal with any issues effectively. Arrangements for first aid and fire procedures are good. Safety risk assessments are undertaken as required. The unit works effectively with the community in raising pupils' awareness of health and safety matters, for instance, the school nurse is a frequent visitor and gives talks on issues such as smoking.

27. Staff know pupils well and give them good advice based on effective personal monitoring. This is mainly achieved through twice daily staff meetings, which are a strong feature. Learning, behaviour and other issues are discussed immediately between staff so any changes or new strategies can be implemented quickly to ensure that all pupils achieve well. There is a very good partnership between Connexions and the unit with a room set aside for Connexions staff to use when seeing pupils privately. Connexions provide a wide range of support which very effectively assists pupils' personal development. For example, the Intensive Adviser is available every week for one to one consultations for pupils who need assistance with personal difficulties and pupils have the facility to request a talk. Connexions staff will do home visits where the unit considers these necessary. They are involved in all transition and action plans and know pupils needs well and this helps with ideas and suggestions for the future. They provide a range of summer holidays and other activities which pupils go on. Connexions advisors are made welcome, invited to unit social functions and feel valued as members of the team supporting pupils. They attend all Year 9 and 11 reviews and get to know the pupils very well. A vacancies board is maintained in the unit, like a 'mini job centre', where pupils can see what is available locally. Once pupils have left the unit, contact with the same officers is maintained and this supports the re-integration of pupils into mainstream schools.

28. The progress of pupils who have statements of special educational need is reviewed regularly and the unit devises suitable reintegration plans to help the smooth transition of pupils back into a mainstream school where and when it is appropriate. New pupils and their parents are provided with good information about the unit and its policies. They are also given a guided tour of the unit and offered a home visit. A well-planned tutorial support programme also ensures that pupils settle into the unit's learning routines effectively.

29. Pupils confirm that relationships with staff are very good and they can report any worries and concerns they may have, for instance, about bullying. Many pupils say that their self-esteem and confidence has risen because staff listen to them and respects them as individuals. There are many informal chances for pupils to give their views about the unit. A questionnaire was used recently to seek pupils' views on a range of issues and pupils' response is being considered carefully. The unit

is looking to develop more formal ways of consulting pupils in the near future, such as a school council, to provide a further opportunity for pupil involvement.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The unit actively seeks parents' views and acts on them.
- Parents receive good information about the unit and their children's standards.
- Links with Colleges help broaden the curriculum; those with schools support the re-integration of pupils well.

### **Commentary**

30. The partnership with parents has improved well since the last inspection. Parents now have many chances to influence the unit's policies and practices. The unit liaises with most parents by telephone regarding a range of issues and parents are appreciative of letters they receive when their children behave or achieve especially well. A broad ranging questionnaire is sent to parents each year and this gives them a good chance to raise anything they wish to. It is pleasing to see that the unit has made significant changes in response to parents' views, for instance, regarding parents' evenings.

31. Parents receive good information about the unit through the prospectus. Pupils' end of year reports provide them with good information about how well their children learn together with helpful advice on areas for improvement. Many parents give their time generously to the unit by helping with special events, for instance, some parents gave talks for pupils regarding fundraising recently, supporting citizenship education.

32. Good links with colleges of further education and agriculture enable pupils to follow vocational courses that lead to accreditation and support their transition to full-time college placements, and to adult life. For instance, as part of the *Accelerator* course at Bracknell College, pupils complete a *Motorwise* certificate in basic driving skills. They also follow a motor vehicle studies course that is accredited and taken into account if pupils progress to a full-time course in college. Several go on to pursue vocational courses at colleges.

33. Some older pupils are educated part-time at the unit and spend the balance of their time at secondary school and careful arrangements are in place for their curriculum. Staff work closely with key personnel in several mainstream schools to successfully return pupils who were either excluded from mainstream or at risk of exclusion. Re-integration is gradual and well managed. For instance, each pupil has a clear re-integration plan, which is reviewed regularly. There is a re-entry programme, which is negotiated with all parties, and pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Pupils themselves keep a diary showing where they should be each day of the week, and which lessons they will attend. Pupils find the support helpful, and staff in mainstream schools find that the arrangements work well. One senior manager reported that the unit had helped to keep one pupil 'switched on to education and to us'; so successful was one re-entry that the pupil considered staying on in the school's sixth form.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's clear understanding of the needs of the unit has promoted continual improvement.
- Senior managers provide very good role models and motivate staff and pupils very successfully.
- There is good support from the management committee and LEA.
- The headteacher is committed to ensuring all pupils have the best chance of succeeding.
- Effective staff teams are supported through good communication and training.
- Although the unit collects a great deal of information it does not always evaluate it in a form that shows clearly improvement made.

## **Commentary**

34. Since the last inspection the unit has expanded and pupils now enter with more complex needs. Despite this, standards have improved with achievement and the quality of education now being good. This is supported effectively by very good improvements in accommodation, especially that for specialist provision. This has been achieved due to the headteacher's good understanding of the way forward for the unit and the need to ensure these pupils have the best chances to succeed, having often been in situations of failure. This vision has been effectively supported by monitoring and evaluation in co-operation with the LEA which has clearly shown areas the unit needs to improve and which form the basis of the good quality development plan. The headteacher is also in charge of the Pupil Referral Service. She manages both roles well. This gives her a good understanding of the unit's place within the LEA and where developments are needed, such as stronger support in secondary schools for pupils from Years 7 to 9. Improvement has continued to take place despite staffing difficulties and the absence, of one of the senior management team. However, these difficulties have led to a slowing of improvements in areas such as assessment and individual support for basic skills.

35. Senior managers, led successfully by the headteacher, work very well together to bring about effective change. They provide very good role models in all aspects of the unit work including that of teaching. They work together very effectively, monitoring both formally and informally as they move around the unit. All have specific responsibilities and meet weekly to discuss unit issues. Consequently, they know the unit well and where developments are needed, often providing relevant training sessions for staff. Subject co-ordinators now guide their subjects effectively because they have good levels of subject knowledge but where there is more than one person teaching, co-ordinators do not yet have opportunities to regularly check on how well pupils' learn.

36. Regular meetings are held for staff including twice daily meetings where staff discuss pupils and support each other with ideas and strategies. This they find very beneficial. The school change team, comprising a wide range of teaching and non-teaching staff, helps to formulate plans for the unit's development. This is important in making staff feel valued members of the team and involved in unit decisions. Staff are also effectively supported through training matched to their personal needs and those of the unit. Along with performance management for teachers, teaching assistants are appraised, trained and have gained responsibilities such as library and incentive scheme co-ordinators as part of work force re-modelling. This helps them feel a valued part of the team.

37. The management committee meets frequently and is involved effectively in development planning. Presentations from staff and other providers such as Connexions help them to know what is going on. They have been involved with the LEA over discussions about pupils going back into mainstream and what needs to be done to make this more effective. The chair and vice-chair of the management committee have a particularly good understanding of the unit which helps them to provide an effective lead. The LEA has a detailed understanding of the unit. This is because the headteacher regularly meets with the responsible officer and advisor. The LEA advisor ensures the LEA knows the unit's needs through close monitoring. She is effectively involved in lesson observations and helping to arrange the training of staff.

38. The headteacher knows that the unit represents the last chance for some pupils to have access to consistent learning before they leave school. As a result, the unit works hard to make sure that younger pupils have opportunities to go back into mainstream. For older pupils, the emphasis is on making sure individual needs are met through a combination of work in the unit and elsewhere.

39. The unit values individuals and all staff are dedicated to promoting opportunities for all pupils to flourish. The developments in provision for pupils who have additional learning needs have been managed well. Despite restrictions resulting from staffing issues, the headteacher has made time available for a member of staff to work on the introduction, negotiation and implementation of Individual Education Plans. This reflects the practical commitment of the unit to addressing the identified areas for development.

40. The unit collects a great deal of evidence on pupils which is used well to set targets and to plan the unit's improvement. The unit has most information it needs. However, this information is not always collated in a way that clearly show improvements made so they can be easily compared to previous years or areas that need further development. Systems have not yet been sufficiently developed to bring together all information for staff to be able to accurately measure, for example, pupils' behaviour and progress over time. While it is clear that improvement has been made in many areas, it is sometimes difficult for the unit to effectively show the value they add.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	582,000	Balance from previous year	0
Total expenditure	549,340	Balance carried forward to the next	32,660
Expenditure per pupil	N/A*		

\*The way the PRU is funded makes it difficult to give an accurate figure.

### **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

#### **Work related learning**

Provision for work related learning is **good**.

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

- There are good arrangements for careers and work experience.
- College links prepare pupils well for adult life and further learning.
- The development of pupils' skills in running an enterprise is restricted to raising money for charity.

#### **Commentary**

41. Staff in the unit work hard to provide work related learning (WRL). Careers education is provided for all pupils from Year 7, and focuses on those areas that are most relevant for these pupils, such as self-awareness, personal strengths, areas for development and planning for the future. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow the *Preparation for Working Life* course, accredited by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA). The unit hosts an annual careers evening, to which college representatives and representatives of the army, the largest local employer, are invited. Good accommodation and resources for careers include a room set aside for pupils to hold private discussions with Connexions officers. A good range of careers software, well organised literature for pupils' use, and a vacancies board are kept up-to-date by Connexions officers.

42. Work experience is provided from Year 10 onwards, and is well matched to the needs and aspirations of pupils, who speak highly of their experiences. Pupils are interviewed prior to their work experience placements and are well prepared for this by the 'mock interviews' conducted, with army personnel, before the real thing. Not all pupils choose to go on work experience, and not all are successful in maintaining a placement. However, those that do complete placements receive good reports from employers and a few obtain Saturday jobs as a result.

43. Pupils have opportunities to develop their enterprise skills when they raise money for charity. For instance, they have raised money for Red Nose day by doing car washing. Every year, pupils each make and decorate a Christmas cake; these are sold and the funds sent to a charity of the pupils' choice. However, there are no opportunities for pupils to experience the running of a small business.

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

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- The curriculum provides many good opportunities for pupils to improve in all aspects of English.
- Good opportunities for accreditation promote pupils' overall good achievement.
- The consistently good quality of teaching includes a good range of motivating activities
- Achievement of pupils in Year 10 is inconsistent.

#### **Commentary**

44. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening (communication), reading and writing because there are high expectations, pupils are encouraged to write for a wide range of purposes, and teaching assistants offer good quality support. This is further reinforced in other subjects where teachers regularly consolidate pupils' abilities to communicate, read and write.

45. Lessons are effectively planned and teachers work successfully to provide pupils with a curriculum that is comparable with that in mainstream schools. Tasks match well with pupils' wide range of learning needs. The success of this is evident from the fact that all pupils achieve accreditation in either GCSE or Entry Level certification. The most recent results from 2004 show twelve pupils were successful in gaining GCSE grades between G and C. In English literature one pupil gained E and two achieved C. In Entry Level certification, seven pupils gained Levels 1 and 2, with most gaining the higher level. These successes are due primarily to effective teaching of English. In all lessons the teaching provides a challenging and appealing range of activities. The good pace and frequent changes of activity are successful strategies in maintaining and sustaining pupils' interest in reading and writing. Pupils are busy throughout lessons and teaching assistants make an important contribution to this by re-focusing pupils, encouraging them and dealing with difficulties that arise.

46. Pupils in Year 10 have to work hard to manage their own behaviour. In some instances they have more difficulty in responding to the good learning opportunities because their behaviour interferes with their capacity to learn. On these occasions they need to leave lessons and samples of work show less positive attitudes to neatness and the completion of work. In some instances it is evident that, despite consistently good teaching, pupils in this year group do not maintain the good levels of achievement seen in the rest of the school. Their achievement is satisfactory overall.

Pupils are confident speakers; they learn to take turns and to ask as well as answer questions. In an activity based on knowledge of prefixes, pupils in Years 7 and 8 made lively responses. Older pupils were confident to talk about adjectives and discuss *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. In response to *Not My Business* by Niji Osundere, Year 10 were very responsive to discussion about bullying. Good opportunities are provided to improve reading. Though many pupils feel self-conscious about reading in front of visitors, the majority are fluent readers. They enjoy the set texts for the English course and understand the nuances of poetry and prose. Years 7 and 8 were so involved in reading *Wreck Room* with their teacher that they were reluctant to close the book. Pupils throughout the unit follow a well-structured course in grammar, punctuation and spelling. They have good opportunities to write imaginatively and factually and to write for a purpose, such as when they write instructions or devise campaign leaflets. The English provision makes a good contribution to pupils'

social and cultural development through discussion, turn taking and the use of a range of books from different cultures.

47. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. This is because the subject manager is an effective role model, consistently teaching well and developing very positive and effective relationships with teaching assistants and pupils. A thorough audit of the English provision has been carried out and an appropriate action plan has ensued. Spelling has been identified as an area for development and it is evident from pupils' work that this has become a teaching focus. Assessment has been used effectively to identify pupils who need basic literacy support and the unit is in the process of organising this provision. Accommodation and resources including the library are of good quality. Appropriate use is made of computer technology for Internet research and for pupils to word process their original writing.

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

48. There are good opportunities to practise speaking and listening skills and group discussions are encouraged. Pupils benefit from this and from the implementation of the recommendations of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. For example, key words are routinely used in lessons and displayed in classrooms. The majority of pupils have personal targets in literacy; this impacts on teaching overall and enables teachers and teaching assistants to promote literacy effectively in other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in Mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching from specialist staff enables pupils to overcome significant gaps in their learning and achieve well.
- An increased range of examinations in Year 11 motivates all pupils to gain an accreditation.
- Assessment and homework are not yet consistent enough to fully support pupils in fulfilling their potential.

### **Commentary**

49. Standards are below average, reflecting the low levels of attainment of pupils on entry. Many have a lot of catching up to do. However, most pupils make good progress so that by the time they leave the unit achievement is good. In 2004, sixteen pupils gained grades between G and B at GCSE. In addition, four pupils gained Entry Level passes at the highest level.

50. Very good teaching enables pupils with serious gaps in their earlier learning to make effective, and sometimes, very effective, progress. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to cover the range of needs within groups and use focussed questioning to encourage pupils to discuss work, explain their methods and demonstrate their learning. Very good relationships between pupils and adults are evident in all lessons. This, and the sensitive demands made by teachers, ensures that pupils maintain good self confidence when learning becomes difficult. Practical activities and computer programmes, such as spreadsheets, are utilised in lessons to assist pupils learn new concepts, and used to help them solve problems and present their findings. Work in pupils' exercise books is mostly neat and carefully set out showing pride in their work and respect for their teachers' high expectations of them. Pupil's work is presented well in graphs, tables, charts and diagrams as well as in writing. Teachers mark work consistently, writing positive comments about pupils' learning and how it can be improved. However, homework was not seen to be given out at the end of lessons so pupils miss opportunities to revise and reinforce new skills and extend themselves further.

51. Leadership from the recently appointed subject co-ordinator is satisfactory and improving. The curriculum is planned well. The co-ordinator maintains productive links with teachers in mainstream schools to check on the levels of pupils' work. Currently, the assessment processes in use do not provide consistent, accessible information about pupil progress and so opportunities to improve achievement are missed. Increased opportunities for accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11 have led to improved examination results and the good achievement of most pupils indicates good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. Numeracy is well integrated into other lessons and teachers are aware of the national strategy to improve basic skills. In science, history and geography pupils use bar and line graphs to illustrate their work and in careers and food technology they calculate the costs of living. The practical skills of weighing, measuring and estimating are also practised in technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and includes good opportunities for pupils' achievements to be externally accredited.
- The teacher has good subject expertise.
- The new science laboratory is a very good development but the lack of a technician makes it difficult to provide frequent practical experiences.
- The lack of homework restricts pupils' achievements.
- There is too little use of ICT as a learning tool.

### **Commentary**

53. There has been good improvement in science since the last inspection and this has been effectively supported by the good leadership of a science specialist. For example, resources have been increased so pupils have access to a better range of equipment, subject planning has been further developed, and there is now suitable accreditation for all pupils.

54. However, achievement remains satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection. This is because although a good range of learning experiences is provided in lessons, homework is rarely set, and as a result, there is a lot of unfinished work in pupils' books. Even when there is an obvious task, such as drawing a line graph from data collected in a practical investigation, this is not routinely set as homework.

55. The new science laboratory is purpose built and well equipped; it is of a good size and the layout enables pupils to keep practical apparatus separate from written work. It has opened up the possibility of pupils carrying out a wider range of practical tasks, but as the science teacher has to carry out all the preparation herself, the extent of investigative work is not as great as she would like. Pupils are not as well motivated as they are in other more practical subjects and this sometimes shows in their behaviour. They do, however, enjoy those practical tasks that are set, and the tasks are well designed to enable pupils to grasp scientific concepts and develop skills and understanding. For instance, in a Year 10 lesson on electrical circuits, pupils were able to establish that the current flowing through each of two bulbs in parallel was half the current that left or returned to the battery.

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared, with resources to hand, so no time is lost; the pace is good in most lessons. There is confident subject knowledge and concepts are explained well using models and analogies effectively to help pupils understand scientific concepts. Subject vocabulary is used well, and so pupils learn the meanings of terms.

However, marking of pupils' work does not always highlight spelling errors, a lack of homework and occasional instances where behaviour is not always dealt with as well as it could be mean pupils do not always learn as well as they could. A good proportion of taught time is allocated to science, so pupils cover a broad range of topics. Teaching prepares them well for external examinations, and they are all successful in obtaining external accreditation. If pupils are capable of obtaining a pass, they are entered for the Entry Level examination in Year 10. In Year 11, they are entered for single award GCSE. A few pupils who enter the unit in Year 11 have some modules for the double award GCSE and these pupils are successful in completing the course at the unit. In the summer of 2004, eleven pupils were successful in achieving GCSE grades E to G; four pupils achieved a GCSE double award, two at grade C and two at either E or F.

57. The teacher makes limited use of ICT in enabling pupils to learn or to reinforce tasks undertaken, and pupils' work shows that they rarely use ICT, either to present work or as a learning tool. The subject development plan formally recognises the need to increase the use of ICT in the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Despite the recent absence of a colleague who presently leads in this subject, teaching cover has been of high quality so pupils continue to make consistent progress.
- ICT is deployed effectively across the curriculum and supported by high quality ICT accommodation.
- A higher level of accreditation is not currently available for more able pupils.

### **Commentary**

58. The subject is well taught by teachers who use the modern equipment effectively. A number of teachers within what is a small staff group share good subject knowledge. The same may be said of teaching assistants: they provide high quality support and often supply individual tuition to pupils. This has been put to good use to make sure ICT skills have continued to be regularly taught. Expectations are high and pupil achievement is good. The main building of the unit has enjoyed a recent hardware refit and is very well equipped. The ICT room itself is an airy, attractive space with nine modern stations. Interactive whiteboards are available in the classrooms and are used routinely by teachers in all subjects, successfully supporting and reinforcing learning. The well equipped ICT room enables computer skills lessons to be taught. It is effectively used for parts of other lessons, so all pupils have access to a computer when, for example, word processing, designing posters or objects for design and technology, or for completing spread sheets.

59. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 gain a thorough understanding in a full range of areas. Pupils use word-processing functions and save their work in folders. They progress to creating and interrogating a database and draw what they have learnt together in the building of a website. The manner in which complex ideas were presented in a lesson was lively and accessible. For example, the building of a personal website was preceded by a quiz that established entertainingly what audience different websites might be aimed at. Consequently, pupils were much better prepared to gauge their own potential audience. Their growth in skill is reflected in good standards of graphical presentation in the portfolios they create.

60. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 complete many of the same tasks as those in Years 7 to 9. Entry Level tests are taken and last year of fourteen who took it, thirteen gained the highest level. However, the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) course has been interrupted by the absence of the teacher. Increasing competence is found in pupils transferring from local schools and teachers do not consider that Entry Level is now capable of offering adequate

challenge for the full range of pupils. Teachers have identified the need for developments in the syllabus and in accreditation. Introduction of the short-course GCSE is anticipated.

61. Planning and assessment is thorough in individual lessons and information gained is used carefully to plan further learning. The very favourable staff to pupil ratio also helps to ensure individual teachers have a detailed knowledge of their pupils so they know their immediate needs. As a result, pupils are given intensive coaching in their work towards any target in the subject. However, the recording of assessment over time is less well developed so staff do not always have the best understanding of how to extend learning, especially in the way of accreditation for the more able.

62. There has been good improvement since the last inspection effectively supported by the recent re-equipping of the ICT room. Facilities are more restricted at the second site but plans are imminent to revise the use of that building. Leadership and management are satisfactory as several staff in the unit have the expertise to maintain and continue developments until the co-ordinator returns.

### **Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum**

63. ICT use across the curriculum is good and firmly embedded in the work of teachers in all subjects. Pupils use spreadsheets competently in mathematics but they also make extensive use of ICT in English and citizenship, downloading pictures or word processing their work. In many classroom discussions, the interactive whiteboard is a focal point, sometimes with attractive graphics such as the animated text in a discussion on bullying.

### **OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM**

64. Work was sampled in a range of other subjects taught by the unit, except for PSHE which is reported in full. Samples of pupils past work, records and schemes of work were looked at. Inspectors talked to pupils and some discussions were held with staff.

65. Lessons and work seen in **art and design** indicate that the subject is an established and valued part of the curriculum. Pupils talk very positively about their artwork. Sketchbooks and display around the unit show pupils have good opportunities to use a range of media, experiment with tone and shade, evaluate the work of known artists, and produce two and three-dimensional work. Teaching seen was consistently good, typified by calm but firm management, high expectations and, above all, enjoyment. Results show that pupils achieve some accreditation; last year (2004) two pupils achieved Level 1, three achieved Level 2 and two achieved Level 3 in the Entry Level certification. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Since the last inspection a designated specialist room has been established, providing a pleasant learning environment.

66. Pupils have the opportunity to continue their **French** in Years 7 to 9. Work is planned systematically and much work is oral so pupils stay interested. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of basic French and use vocabulary sheets well to check words they are not sure about.

67. **History and geography** make effective contributions to the overall curriculum. In 2004 pupils attained one GCSE at grade G and nine Entry Level accreditation, ranging from Level 1 to 3, in history. In the one history lesson observed the teaching, learning and achievement of the pupils was very good. A range of strategies were used including photographs, word search and short text to stimulate pupil interest. They learned the meaning of propaganda and discussed the events that led to world war two and related this to the formation of the 'Hitler Youth' movement. Geography seen in pupils' books and in wall displays is good showing progress in the presentation of information through tables, graphs and charts.

68. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a weekly lesson of **religious education** which covers aspects of all the major faiths. During the inspection, one lesson was seen on Buddhism, good relationships helped pupils to stay interested and working while learning about the *Wheel of Life*.

69. Two very good food technology lessons were seen in **design and technology**. In both sessions, a cracking pace, appealing and relevant activities, and good support meant that pupils were busily engaged throughout and were successful in preparing, tasting and evaluating their products. Pupils displayed very positive attitudes, and achieved a great deal in the time available. The teacher has high expectations and challenges pupils all the time, keeping them thinking about what they are doing and the theory behind their work. For instance, in a lesson where pupils made scotch eggs, they were constantly reminded of the properties of eggs, such as their ability to hold air, coat foods and coagulate when heated. Pupils assess their own work in food studies and this helps them to judge their own progress and identify where they can improve.

70. On-site facilities for **physical education** are limited but intelligent use of local facilities has allowed the creation of a broad and relevant programme. Activities such as canoeing have great value in building confidence and self-esteem for pupils with little sporting background. It is a useful feature that sampler sessions in a local gym are linked to the possibility of discounted membership for pupils.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- PSHE and citizenship are very carefully planned to give these pupils a wide range of opportunities to gain skills which will help them as young adults.
- The high quality of relationships and teaching keep pupils motivated and interested.

### **Commentary**

71. Provision in PSHE has improved well since the last inspection because there is a very well planned programme which includes all aspects relevant to these pupils' needs. For example, pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn about aspects of independent living, their neighbourhood, health and personal issues, group rules, responsibility and crime. Older pupils learn about personal awareness, feelings, healthy life styles, finances, human rights, crime and the global village. Sex education and drugs education are very well managed and effectively incorporated while careers education and guidance and work by Connexions staff effectively support PSHE. All pupils are involved in charity activities.

72. Teaching and learning is very good because teachers plan lessons carefully and are skilled and confident when teaching sensitive issues, always reminding pupils of the ground rules so everyone feels comfortable. Lesson objectives are clear so pupils know what is expected. Lessons are planned to cover a wide range of activities which keep pupils involved through thinking and questioning their own views. Staff have very good relationships with pupils and know how to get pupils to discuss and take part calmly in reasoned arguments, encouraging them to acquire a deeper understanding of the needs and feelings of other people. They respond very well to this and feel motivated when gaining skills for independence which will help them go back into mainstream or on to college or work.

73. There is rightly a strong emphasis on PSHE in the unit. The addition of very well thought out separate citizenship lessons means that pupils receive a very good education in this area and achieve very well. Last year four pupils gained the highest level in Entry Level PSHE, in Preparation for Working Life, which is both a PSHE and careers award, nine gained a Level 1 and four a Level 2 and five gained GCSE results in citizenship, one of which was an A and one a B.

74. Leadership and management are good with some aspects being very good. This is because the co-ordinator is very experienced and there are well thought out subject development plans for both subjects. The good range of awards and certificates very effectively support pupils'

enthusiasm and motivation and both subjects contribute very well to social and moral development. However, at present there is little in the way of self assessment so pupils can effectively see their own progress.

## 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	3
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	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

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