

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LINHOPE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 131999

Headteacher: Mr J Lough

Lead inspector: Mrs K Halifax

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 259096

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	109
School address:	Linhope Road West Denton Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE5 2NW
Telephone number:	0191 2674447
Fax number:	0191 267287
Appropriate authority:	The local education authority

Name of chair of management committee: Linda Mason

Date of previous inspection: First inspection

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIT

The unit caters for pupils in Years 1 to 11 who have been excluded, or who are the risk of being excluded, from mainstream schools. It opened in September 1999 following local authority re-organisation. During that time it has been on three sites, moving to the present accommodation less than one year ago in September 2003. Serving all Newcastle high schools, it has a diverse population and is over-subscribed. No Year 1 and 2 pupils were on roll at the time of the inspection. Following the leaving of Year 11 pupils at the middle of June, 20 new pupils in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 were admitted and had been in the unit less than two weeks by the time of the inspection. Of the 109 pupils on roll, over two thirds are boys. All pupils are of white ethnic origin. Five are in the care of the local authority. At over 60 per cent, the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. All pupils have identified social, emotional and behavioural needs. Seven pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs to meet their learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have additional literacy and numeracy difficulties. Prior to attending the unit, many pupils have been out of school for long periods of time and have gaps in their learning. Many have a negative attitude to education. As such, attainment on entry is well below that expected of pupils of this age.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Lead inspector	Art and design Personal, social, health and citizenship education
32678	Kathryn Dodd	Lay inspector	
7465	Richard Brent	Team inspector	Humanities Physical education
31348	Phil Ellender	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Special educational needs
13623	Jim Waddington	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus

BPS Business Centre  
Brake Lane  
Boughton  
Notts  
NG22 9HQ

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective unit.** Good teaching and a very good range of learning opportunities have resulted in good achievement for pupils who attend regularly. Pupils are helped to improve their attendance and manage their behaviour, allowing many to return successfully to mainstream or more suitable schools. The unit is very well led and management is good. The cost of educating each pupil is low for a unit of this type; even taking account of the unsatisfactory attendance of some pupils it gives good value for money.

The unit's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding vision and drive of the headteacher and key staff have resulted in an effective provision, despite three changes of location in four years.
- Good teaching, very good behaviour management and very good relationships have resulted in good learning and good achievement.
- Though satisfactory, pupils do not do as well in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 as in other subjects; the same is so with some pupils in mathematics in Years 10 and 11.
- The curriculum and very good links with the community and other schools and colleges prepare pupils very well for their return to appropriate schools and for life beyond school.
- Though much improved, the attendance and punctuality of some pupils are not as good as they could be.
- The management committee is not fulfilling its role.

This is the first time the unit has been inspected.

### 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>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 11	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

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

**Achievement is good.** The achievement of pupils in all three age groups is good in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, art and design, humanities and food studies. Science is taught to pupils in Years 1 to 9 and achievement is good. Achievement is good in English in Years 7 to 11. Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 7 to 9. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 10 and 11, as is the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in English. In personal, social, health and citizenship education, achievement in all age groups is very good because of the planned programme and daily routines.

Pupils' **personal development is good** because of the good provision for their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Pupils have a much improved attitude to school, and behaviour is good. Many improve their attendance, though, overall, attendance is unsatisfactory, as is punctuality.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good.** Particular strengths are in the very good relationships and the way staff help pupils to behave appropriately. In addition,

teachers and support staff work well together helping pupils to be included in all activities. The curriculum is very good. It is very relevant to pupils' needs, promoting personal development through a very wide range of opportunities. Other particular strengths are in work-related opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The accommodation and resources are very good. Links with parents are good. Pupils are very well supported. Systems to ensure their health and well-being are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Key members of staff are highly competent and support him well. Though the management committee has worked hard to ensure the unit has suitable accommodation and resources, until very recently the committee had not met for almost a year for a number of reasons. This is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, despite little support from the management committee, the headteacher and key staff manage the unit well. While the local education authority, as the appropriate authority, has a basic policy for pupils educated other than at school, this is dated and does not fulfil the necessary curriculum requirement.

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

Parents think well of the unit. They like the small numbers and how staff take time to telephone them each week about their son or daughter's activities. Pupils equally like the small groups and the relationships with staff, reporting they are helped to improve their behaviour. Older pupils say working in the community prepares them well for life after school. Both parents and pupils expressed concern about bullying in the past. Senior managers, already aware of parents' and pupils' concerns, have focused on this in personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons. Further staff training is planned in the immediate future.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve further attendance and punctuality;
- raise pupils' achievements in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6, and in mathematics in Years 10 and 11;
- ensure the management committee meets regularly and fulfils its role;

and to meet legal requirements,

- ensure the policy for pupils educated other than at school is updated and contains the required curriculum guidance.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Prior to attending the unit, almost all pupils made little progress in their previous schools. This is because of their behavioural difficulties and poor or irregular attendance. As a consequence, they have been underachieving. Standards on entry to the unit are well below those expected of pupils of this age. Nevertheless, though standards are still below those expected by Years 6, 9 and 11, achievement, overall, is good for pupils who attend regularly.

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

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well, enabling them to return to mainstream schools or more suitable provision.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve as well in English and mathematics as in other subjects. Similarly, some pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not do as well in mathematics as in other subjects.
- Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good.
- The range of national awards has increased the employability of Year 11 pupils.

#### **Commentary**

1. Staff are successful in settling most pupils, improving their attendance and encouraging a good attitude to work. As a result, overall, pupils make good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire. Daily lessons in English and mathematics ensure pupils in all age groups are able to read sufficiently well to be able to read worksheets and textbooks and to have basic numeracy. Some pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9, have made very good progress in reading, improving their reading age by over two years in a matter of months. This eases their return to mainstream education. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls. However, there are a small number of pupils in each age group whose special educational needs have not been identified prior to attending the unit. Very good additional support for these pupils from staff at the unit and other professionals improves their achievement, allowing them, where possible, to reintegrate into mainstream schools or to a more suitable special school.
2. In Years 3 to 6, achievement in English and mathematics is affected by a number of factors. Though teachers in these classes have worked hard to adopt the national strategies, pupils of this age have a very short concentration span and challenging behaviour. The lack of pace and suitable difficulty in some of the activities means they soon lose interest and do not give of their best. Some activities are disjointed and not matched to pupils' age and interests. Two teachers share one class and pupils' progression of skills is sometimes unclear. Furthermore, some teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of numeracy and literacy in other subjects. In subjects such as science and personal, social and health education, most activities are based on commercially produced worksheets, requiring single-word answers or phrases so pupils do not experience writing imaginatively or at length. Managers had recognised that, though higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 do well and achieve General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in mathematics, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. They realise the subject is taught by a non-specialist teacher who though very enthusiastic, has limited subject knowledge. As a result, the teacher has taken part in a training programme and received support from the local authority advisory service. This is beginning to be reflected in pupils' achievements.
3. Pupils achieve very well in personal, social, health and citizenship education. This is because the subject is central to the work of the unit. The effectiveness of the programme is evident in pupils' personal development and improved attitude. Teaching is very good and topics are very relevant to pupils' lives and needs. Daily routines at lunchtime and the end of day review,

coupled with focused targets in individual education plans, contribute very well to achievement in this area of learning.

4. Over the past four years, there has been a significant increase in the number of nationally recognised awards for pupils in Years 10 and 11. All pupils leave with some form of accreditation with a high percentage gaining passes in English, mathematics, ICT, art, and personal, social and health education. Furthermore, pupils achieve the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) bronze award and silver challenge as well as a few successfully gaining the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. The awards have resulted in almost all leavers moving on to open employment, further education, or work-based learning. Records of pupils who left more than two years ago shows some still in the same position with others having successfully completed courses and taking up posts in, for example, child care. Pupils openly admit their options have been improved through their achievements at the unit.

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

As a result of the good provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between pupils and adults in the unit are very good.
- Pupils respond very well to the calm and positive ethos.
- Although the unit works hard to follow up absences, many pupils do not attend regularly and some arrive late for lessons.
- Very good management of pupils' behaviour enables them to take full advantage of opportunities to raise their achievement.

### **Commentary**

5. Most pupils have good attitudes and work hard to achieve their targets. Pupils transfer to the unit with very low self-esteem and confidence. Staff address this quickly by treating pupils with respect and by building trusting relationships with them. Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in many enjoyable and challenging activities, and to experience and celebrate achievement. This helps them to think better of themselves, to forget past difficulties and to become forward looking. Pupils are proud of their achievements and say that they enjoy coming to this unit. During lessons and activities outside classrooms, pupils learn to get on well together. They learn to co-operate, negotiate, take fair turns and play by rules, and they become sensible and polite. This fosters a calm and orderly atmosphere.
6. All pupils have individual behavioural targets to aim for. Staff regularly refer to targets, giving continual praise when improvements are noted. Many pupils make good improvement in their behaviour, and some make very good improvement when teaching is at its best. A few pupils, however, take a long time to settle and have difficulty controlling their behaviour. This is evident in Years 4, 5 and 6, where there are more frequent outbursts of inappropriate behaviour. Staff deal with incidents impressively by quickly restoring calm and ensuring little disruption to other pupils' learning. Pupils are very well behaved when they go on placements, work experience and visits out of school. The justifiable exclusions are fixed term only, and are mainly to safeguard pupils from harm.
7. Many pupils arrive at the unit late, although in some cases, this is due to the difficult journeys they have to make. Other pupils who could arrive on time however, often do not. Staff follow up absences daily, making painstaking efforts to establish reasons, but lateness is not followed up as rigorously as this. Good links with education welfare officers often help to improve matters. Although most parents encourage their child to attend regularly, this is not always the case.

Poor attendance is highlighted on the individual education plans of only a few pupils, and punctuality is rarely referred to; yet poor attendance and punctuality affect the education of most pupils. Improvements in attendance and punctuality are difficult to track, because targets are not clearly set. While pupils are rewarded for good attendance each term, this is not regular enough to have much influence.

- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is particularly strong. Lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education provide very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. This is furthered by daily routines. Talking about issues helps pupils to understand the impact of their own actions on the feelings of others, and helps them to know the differences between right and wrong. Pupils' increasing personal awareness helps them to be able to identify what makes them behave in certain ways and what the consequences of their actions might be. Year 7 and 8 pupils, for example, learned to identify signs of bullying and thought carefully about how it might feel to be bullied. Pupils are beginning to identify when the language used to refer to people from other ethnic backgrounds is inappropriate, but more could be done to help them to show better respect for the multi-cultural society in which they live.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	15.9	School data	21.4

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
109	21	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 is good. Overall good teaching and a very good, relevant curriculum are reflected in good learning and the successful transfer to mainstream or more suitable schools. Furthermore, pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance. Good links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools contribute significantly to preparing pupils for their return to other schools and life after school.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Procedures to assess pupils' achievements are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are clear about what they learn because of the structure of lessons.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well which results in minimum disruption to learning.
- Teaching is good with some very good and excellent teaching observed in Years 7 to 11.
- Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are very good and used very effectively.



## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	14 (26%)	23 (44%)	14 (26%)	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.*

9. All pupils are clear about what they will learn because, at the start of each lesson, all teachers tell pupils the topics to be covered and what knowledge and skills they will acquire. The learning objectives are suitably written on the board, read and carefully explained. At the end of each lesson, the objectives are reviewed and pupils are expected to tell others in the group what they have learned, what they found difficult and what they found easy. In addition to helping staff plan further work, this ensures pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
10. Teachers and support assistants work together very effectively, having the same high expectations of behaviour and of the work produced. This is particularly so in managing behaviour. The majority of pupils have a history of violent and malicious behaviour. Through very positive relationships, they quickly learn what is acceptable and unacceptable and through the consistent application of the behaviour policy, soon begin to control their actions. This was clearly demonstrated in how pupils who had been in the unit less than two weeks responded to the unswerving approach. When instances of inappropriate behaviour were observed, these were quickly dealt with, sometimes allowing the pupil time out of the classroom to collect their thoughts while others continued with their work uninterrupted. This was not always so in Years 3 to 6 where pupils with challenging behaviours and low concentration levels were sometimes adversely affected by an outburst, and followed the poor example set by the original offender.
11. All teachers have benefited from professional development in how pupils learn and recognise that most of their pupils learn best when taking part in practical activities. They ensure that some part of each lesson has a practical element. As a result, pupils increase their concentration. Though teachers in Years 3 to 6 are aware of the need for a practical approach, some activities are disjointed and not carefully matched to the age and interest level of pupils. In addition, some lessons lack pace and sparkle. Some very good and excellent teaching and learning were observed in Years 7 to 11. These lessons were characterised by imaginative, vibrant teaching, very good subject knowledge, a sense of urgency and skilful questioning. Many teaching groups are made up solely of boys, with only one or two girls in the other groups. Nevertheless, all adults take care to ensure girls are fully included in all activities, including discussions and practical work.
12. A very wide range of formal and informal assessment procedures tracks progress and identifies gaps in learning, thus aiding teachers when planning further work. At the end of each unit of work and at the end of some lessons, pupils complete an evaluation of the knowledge and skills they have acquired, noting any areas of difficulty to help their teacher to give them further support. A review of behaviour targets at the end of each morning and afternoon is very successful in helping pupils improve their attitude and behaviour. One member of staff has adapted a commercially produced list of criteria to assess the readiness of pupils to return to mainstream education. In addition, an abridged version has been produced for pupils to evaluate and recognise when they have acquired the necessary behaviours and attitudes to make the return successful.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is very good and enables pupils of all capabilities to achieve well, irrespective of the duration of their placement. Arrangements prepare pupils very well for reintegration into mainstream schools or more appropriate placements.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and flexible re-integration programmes contribute to the effectiveness of the unit.
- The 'alternative curriculum' prepares pupils very well for life after school.
- The summer term induction programme is very good.
- The very good accommodation and resources allow for a varied programme.
- The co-ordination of English is by a teacher who works part time; this affects what is taught.
- The local education authority does not publish its curriculum requirement.

### Commentary

13. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for very well. The highly experienced special educational needs co-ordinator conducts reviews for all pupils, ensuring the planned programme fits their individual requirements. These are further taken into account when considering the best plans for re-integration. Where appropriate a phased programme is set up, though on other occasions pupils, staff and parents prefer an immediate return, for example at the start of secondary school. Close links with teachers and schools who are responsible for re-integrating pupils and follow-up visits contribute to the success of the programme. A good number of pupils were successfully re-integrated into mainstream schools or other more appropriate placements last year, and evidence suggests that such placements are normally sustained because of the careful planning and support given to pupils and their families at the time when such moves occur.
14. The very well considered 'alternative curriculum' enables pupils in their final two years of schooling to enter further education and other training opportunities as well as extending their experience. This strengthens self-esteem and the capacity for pupils to learn independently. The range, quality and continuing development of this provision are major strengths of the unit and are very favourably received by pupils of all capabilities. The support of 27 community providers enables pupils to choose from a wide and growing range of activities. These range from outdoor and adventurous activities, as part of the Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver awards through the Byker Youth Project to Mobex North East. This is a project which builds skills enabling pupils to achieve vocational qualification as a DJ while developing problem-solving and communication skills. Good quality careers education and guidance and very well organised work experience add to preparing older pupils for the world of work and further education, as well as training opportunities available from public and private sector providers.
15. When Year 11 pupils leave the unit in the middle of June, induction procedures are introduced to prepare pupils for the new school year. Pupils in Year 9 are 'promoted' to Year 10 and begin their accredited courses. Pupils in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 who are on the waiting list are admitted. This approach is very successful. Although 20 new pupils had been admitted less than two weeks prior to the inspection, they were already improving their attitude, behaviour and attendance. In addition to familiarising themselves with the requirements of courses, 'taster days' at a nearby leisure centre taking part in archery, trampolining and kayaking increased their understanding of the need to work as part of a team and to respect others. Their knowledge of staff and routines expelled uncertainty, allowing increased confidence. This ensures no time will be wasted at the start of the new school year.
16. The very good accommodation and staff expertise contribute to what can be taught and to pupils' achievements. Specialist rooms for art and design, design and technology, food studies,

science and computer suites enable teachers to provide a programme which reflects that of mainstream schools, thus easing pupils' re-integration. Skilled classroom assistants work alongside well-qualified and able teachers, supporting and contributing well to learning. Achievements are celebrated and displayed attractively around the unit creating a pleasing environment. A high quality cleaning and maintenance programme ensures the premises are maintained to high standard.

17. The main subjects of English, ICT and mathematics are included well, following National Curriculum guidelines and the content of nationally recognised examination courses. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented satisfactorily overall within subjects of the curriculum. However, present staffing arrangements only allow for part-time management of literacy. This has resulted in the quality of this provision being uneven for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
18. A legal requirement of local education authorities is to provide detailed information about the provision for pupils educated other than at school. This should include the local education authority requirement of what should be taught in establishments such as pupil referral units. While the local authority has produced a one-page policy, this is out of date and does not include the required information.

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

Arrangements for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are good. Pupils receive very good support advice and guidance. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to be involved in their own learning and in the work of the unit.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good links with a wide range of external specialist agencies support pupils' learning and help them overcome their difficulties.
- There are very good arrangements to help pupils settle successfully into the unit.
- Pupils' confidence and trust in the staff make them feel safe and secure.
- Assessments of potential risks around the building are still being developed.

### **Commentary**

19. Staff know their pupils very well and show sincere care for them. They foster very good relationships based on mutual respect. All staff support pupils well throughout the day. They are aware of pupils' vulnerability and check up on them regularly. The fact that pupils think so highly of the staff contributes significantly to their achievement. Procedures for child protection are very good, and all staff are properly trained. Staff keep a close watch over pupils who are at risk and those in public care. Appropriate referrals have been made as a result of staff vigilance. Very good care is shown for the welfare of pupils who abscond from the unit. All staff understand the clear and thorough procedures, and suitable, prompt action is taken.
20. Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are satisfactory. Although the caretaker maintains very good standards, formal procedures to review potential risks to pupils in some areas of the site are not reviewed regularly enough. Pupils are well supervised when off the site, and thorough risk assessments are completed for this provision and for individual pupils. While there are suitable procedures to safeguard pupils' use of the Internet, not all pupils and parents have signed the agreement.
21. There are very good links with numerous professionals, who work very well with staff to support pupils in their lives, both in and out of school. Lessons help pupils to come to terms with their problems, and support agencies are used very well to support learning in this way. The recently appointed worker for teaching about drugs' misuse, for example, is based in the unit and contributes well to pupils' support and guidance. Staff responsible for meals, cleaning and

administration relate very well to pupils and contribute significantly to their support and guidance.

22. Procedures to introduce new pupils into the unit are flexible enough to meet pupils' individual needs. Parents are fully involved in this process. Careful consideration is given as to how each pupil will be phased into the new surroundings, the support he or she will need at home and the curriculum he or she needs to follow at school.
23. Staff make continual reference to pupils' targets for improvement. Achievements are recognised and praised. Pupils know their targets well, particularly those for improving behaviour, and they regularly discuss progress with teachers. Targets are reviewed termly, and both pupils and parents are consulted about improvements and the way forward. However, there are no formal procedures for consulting pupils about the work and development of the unit, for example through a school council, though staff do take account of pupils' suggestions, for example in the range of sports provided. Pupils say that adults listen to them, however, and that they have someone to go to if they have any worries.

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

The partnership with parents is good. Links with the community, other schools and education providers are very good.

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

- Pupils are very well prepared for returning to mainstream or more appropriate schools.
- Very good community links enrich pupils' learning.
- Parents hold the staff in very high regard.
- Regular contact with parents keeps them well informed about their children's progress.

#### **Commentary**

24. Parents think highly of the unit. They appreciate that staff work very hard to restore confidence and self-esteem in their children. They know this is only possible because of the high level of commitment from all staff, especially the very good relationships they develop with the pupils.
25. Relationships with parents and carers are good, and they feel comfortable about approaching the unit. All parents or carers attend the admissions meetings with their child. The very helpful information pack they receive explains the unit's aims and makes expectations about pupils' behaviour very clear. It gives very good guidance about the crucial role that parents can play at home, for example when dealing with bullying. Information about how well pupils are doing is communicated regularly to parents through weekly telephone calls, home visits and formally each term at individual review meetings. At the reviews, both parents and pupils are encouraged to contribute towards setting new targets. They are well attended by parents because staff provide transport and arrange meetings at mutually convenient times. Reviews focus very well on pupils' individual targets for behaviour, English and mathematics. This means, however, that there is not much time for discussing progress in other areas of the curriculum. Although staff take the views of individual parents into account when considering issues relating to their children's welfare, they do not regularly consult parents collectively about the work and development of the unit.
26. Very strong links with the local community enhance pupils' learning and personal development. An extensive range of community partnerships allows Year 10 and 11 pupils to access facilities off site, such as working towards gaining the Duke of Edinburgh Award by taking part in the Byker Project. This is very popular with pupils and attendance is good. Pupils also can access a wide range of work placements, such as being mechanics, shop assistants, hairdressers and office workers. Staff are relentless in their efforts to ensure that pupils are offered the right

opportunities. As a result of work placements and other off-site provision, pupils develop aspirations for their future, know what they need to do to achieve them and are well prepared for life after school.

27. Staff work very hard to foster good links with mainstream schools. Staff from other schools speak highly of the unit, and think that it prepares pupils very well for their future re-integration. Carefully planned programmes for pupils' return are tailor-made to suit the needs of individual pupils. Many pupils are able to return successfully to mainstream schools because of their improved attitudes and behaviour, thorough assessments on readiness to return, close links with parents and very good support from staff.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership is very good, management is good but governance by the management committee is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership and good management help to create a very good ethos.
- All employed at the unit present excellent role models.
- Good systems exist for monitoring performance and raising standards.
- Very good provision for professional development contributes to improved teaching and learning.
- Recent weaknesses in governance have led to strategic and statutory oversights.

### **Commentary**

28. The headteacher provides extremely clear educational direction with suitably high expectations of staff and pupils alike. His vision has been unwavering though there have been three changes of site in as many years. His very good leadership and commitment are key elements in the school's success and constant drive for higher standards. Under his strong guidance and visible presence around the building, staff seek to achieve a high quality of performance in all aspects of its work. His determination that every pupil should have a full chance to fulfil their potential has led to very good opportunities for everybody and a high degree of camaraderie and harmony. Staff attendance at 98 per cent is very high. All employed present excellent role models. These factors have ensured the unit is popular with parents and pupils. Although the unit has not previously been inspected, evidence indicates very good improvement in standards of teaching and achievement since it opened.
29. The headteacher has successfully developed the expertise of all employed at the unit and has created an able senior team. The leadership of the co-ordinator for special educational needs and key stage co-ordinators is very good. It has strengthened considerably the unit's initiatives in teaching and learning and its response to the challenges posed by the admission throughout the year of pupils with a wide range of needs. The headteacher has sensibly allocated key staff offices in different parts of the unit. This allows managers to keep an eye on all that is happening and gives other staff and pupils easy access if required. Subject management is good. Individual subject development plans link suitably to the unit's improvement plan. The daily management of the many programmes, including the alternative curriculum, is very good.
30. From the time the unit was established until a year ago, a sympathetic and able management committee worked hard to provide suitable accommodation and high quality resources. This they have accomplished. However, since the move to the present premises the committee has not met and so has not exercised its formal duties with regard to strategic direction, monitoring and staffing organisation, and certain statutory requirements have been overlooked. Though individual members have provided valuable advice and a listening ear for the headteacher, the committee's understanding of the unit's strengths and weaknesses is limited. Members have

not challenged or questioned the local education authority about the length of some pupil placements that limit the number of short-term places available.

31. Procedures for checking how well the unit is doing and planning for improvements are very good. Data from both individual pupil reviews and examination results are analysed alongside the results obtained through the very good systems used to assess achievement. The resultant information is used well. For example, the improvements in pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 are a result of the review of managing aspects of courses. Managers recognise they need to do more work on improving attendance. While a realistic unit target has been set for improving attendance, no target has been set to improve punctuality. Similarly, pupils do not have targets for punctuality in their individual education plans and few have attendance targets.
32. The successful implementation of the good system to measure the performance of teachers has helped to improve practice. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are generally effective in sharing good practice and identifying areas for improvement. All staff are valued. All are offered very good professional development that reflects both the priorities of the unit and individual needs. The unit is the first establishment in the country to enrol every member of staff on programmes with the University of the First Age. Induction arrangements for new staff are very good and good progress has been made in meeting the requirements of workforce reform.
33. Financial management and planning are good and contribute to pupils' good achievement. They have resulted in considerable improvements in the unit's staffing, accommodation and learning resources in recent times. These developments help to sustain a very good environment for learning, and support the very good ethos evident in the unit's daily life. Financial systems operate well. Good checks and comparisons take place to ensure best value. Day-to-day administration is of a high quality. The main aids to pupils' achievement are: high expectations; good teaching; pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to work; very good leadership; very good use of assessment; very good pastoral care and guidance; and a wide-ranging programme. The main barrier to raising achievement is the persistent absence of a few pupils. Taking account of these factors and the funding received, the unit provides good value for money.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£1079000*	Balance from previous year	0
Total expenditure	£1079000	Balance carried forward to the next	0
Expenditure per pupil	£11999**		

\* Of this figure, £64,520 was delegated to the unit

\*\* This is based on planned places. However, the unit has exceeded planned places, making the average cost of £8500 per pupil.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

### SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 AND 4

#### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve as well in English as in other subjects.
- The vibrant teaching for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has a positive effect on their achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning.
- While subject management is satisfactory, the part-time post for the co-ordinator for younger pupils affects progress and achievement.

#### Commentary

34. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are good in Years 7 to 11. The groups taught by the co-ordinator in Years 3 to 6 learn well, because of effective teaching. However, for the groups overall in these years teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons observed in this age group were of variable quality. Teamwork between teachers and support staff, relationships and behaviour management are strong features. However, activities to develop language skills are not always sufficiently well sequenced to promote effective learning. There was evidence that work is not always suitably matched to pupils' ages and interests both in lessons observed and work sampled. This results in some higher attaining pupils not being sufficiently stretched in writing, speaking and listening. The best teaching and learning occur where pupils are suitably challenged with carefully sequenced lesson content building on previous skills. Good teaching is also characterised by specific target setting, reflecting those in individual education plans.
35. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 who attend regularly achieve well. Most have considerable gaps in their learning because of the amount of time they have been out of school. Nevertheless, they are inspired by imaginative and animated teaching. Work is relevant to their experience. For example, pupils thought Shakespeare 'great' and the characters and plot of *Macbeth* became more meaningful as they set the scene at Newcastle United football ground. Pupils were enthusiastic and articulate as they explained their choice of modern personalities for witches. Pupils in this age group mostly recognise the importance and benefits of improving the quality of their work and gain national awards for their efforts through Entry Level Certificate and as part of ASDAN bronze award.
36. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make very good progress in reading and achieve well because of the effective development of reading skills, for example in a play reading of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Lessons in this age group have a strong pace and a wide variety of carefully timed tasks. Creative writing skills, for example in producing alternative story endings were well developed as a result of carefully considered 'small steps' teaching approaches combined with well-chosen materials as seen in a lesson using *From where I sit*.
37. Computers are not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning. Nevertheless, teachers' confidence is increasing with a few examples seen. For example, using graphics to produce a comic strip of the characters in *Macbeth*, and an interactive whiteboard for a spelling game. All classrooms have computers but little evidence was available in lessons or in pupils' work of, for example, drafting and refining work, using the Internet for research, or using software programs to enhance the appearance of work.

38. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Schemes of work are well planned, particularly for work in literacy and writing. There is an appropriate range of nationally recognised awards for pupils in Years 10 and 11 which enables them to gain entry to further education and training opportunities when they are 16 or when they integrate to mainstream schools. Co-ordination of the subject up to Year 9 is satisfactory, but monitoring and support to staff are limited by the fact that the post is part-time. On occasions, this affects the continuity of what is taught and how topics are taught. Despite this, improved assessment arrangements based on National Curriculum levels have been developed and are now being implemented. Subject management in Years 10 and 11 is good. Schemes of work and assessment are well matched to the requirements of examination boards.

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

39. A satisfactory unit-wide approach to literacy with an emphasis on writing, grammar and punctuation is in place, though the development of speaking skills is more variable, particularly for some younger pupils. Nevertheless, spelling and punctuation are well developed for pupils of all capabilities. However, while all teachers expect pupils to record their work, this is often completing worksheets with single words or phrases. Pupils rarely have the opportunity to write at length, or for different purposes, such as diaries in history, accounts in geography, or instructions in science.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships, very good behaviour management and practical activities have improved pupils' attitudes.
- Pupils who attend regularly achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because of good, and sometimes very good, teaching.
- Though progress is satisfactory, pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 10 and 11 do not achieve as well in mathematics as in most other subjects.
- Assessment is used very well to identify needs and monitor progress.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in the teaching of this subject.

### **Commentary**

40. Staff quickly establish very good relations and this is successful in encouraging pupils to behave well and participate in lessons. Relations are constantly positive and encouraging, creating a positive learning environment in which pupils persevere. Most lessons proceed with minimum disruption because of the way behaviour is managed. However, behaviour is challenging in Years 3 to 6, which means that increased time is spent on managing outbursts. Nevertheless, the calm, consistent and expert response of staff teams means that relations are not damaged by such events, and pupils are helped to return to their work, though the poor concentration of some pupils does cause disruption to learning and affect achievement on occasions. Practical activities help to capture pupils' interest, so they enjoy the subject and work well. For example, pupils' improved their knowledge of the three and four times tables by taking part in a 'multiples treasure hunt' while others increased their understanding of the properties of three-dimensional shapes through constructing these from 'nets'.
41. Lesson planning is good, and linked to National Curriculum Programmes of Study and the requirements of external examination boards. Planning identifies what pupils will learn each lesson, so all know what is expected of them. In addition, at the end of each lesson, all teachers expect pupils to be clear about what they have learned. Teaching is mostly lively and enthusiastic. Support assistants are key members of the staff team, and their successful

support enables pupils to feel confident about their ability to succeed. In Years 3 to 6 where teaching and learning were satisfactory, the pace was slow, and some explanations did not fully prepare pupils for the task. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' rate of progress is reduced because the teacher is not a subject specialist. Too much time was taken up in direct explanation and copying of instructions, rather than consolidating and developing knowledge by questioning. On occasions, explanations leave pupils uncertain and the match of work to individual pupils' needs is less well developed. Notwithstanding this, achievement is satisfactory with pupils achieving nationally recognised awards, the numbers of which have increased steadily over the past four years.

42. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator for Years 1 to 9 provides good support for colleagues. A lot of work has gone into assessing and analysing pupils' achievements. Pupils' knowledge and achievements are checked each term through formal tests and a review of mathematical targets in individual education plans. The results of assessments are used well to identify gaps in learning and to set further targets for the following term. Teacher records and lesson observations show progress is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 10 and 11. It is good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have adopted the recommended format for the national strategies. This has resulted in lively mental introductions which quickly gain pupils' interest. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are expected to explain the reasons for their answers and so learn at a greater rate because they have greater understanding.
43. In addition to the computer suite, other than the Year 10 and 11 mathematics room, all classrooms have computers. While these are used occasionally, for example for individual pupils to work towards their individual targets, insufficient use is made of ICT to present and handle data in different forms, to challenge higher attaining pupils or to provide support activities for those who complete set tasks early.

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

44. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use and improve their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. In food technology, for example, pupils are expected to weigh and measure accurately and calculate the time their given dish needs for cooking. Similarly, in design and technology, pupils measure and become increasingly familiar with scale. In science, while pupils record the outcome of their investigations, more could be done in the way that information is presented, for example as graphs or pie charts.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Teaching is good; this is reflected in pupils' learning and achievement.
- Teachers provide well for pupils to improve their reading and mathematical knowledge, though this is not always so for writing.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

#### **Commentary**

45. Pupils enjoy their work and make progress because teaching is lively and enthusiastic and because of the high expectations of their teachers. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives, taking account of pupils' current knowledge. Practical investigations are chosen well. Teachers start lessons with confidence and pace, and maintain this with well-chosen questions, so that pupils develop their knowledge at a good rate. Good use of praise and encouragement also helps to maintain a positive atmosphere. Staff teams work together well to encourage and support pupils and help them to manage their behaviour, so that pupils remain on task and gain confidence and skills. Given the previous histories of pupils, it is unsurprising

that there are occasional outbursts, which, on occasion affects learning, especially in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, staff manage behaviour well, so pupils return to their studies as soon as possible, and relationships between staff and pupils remain positive. Such events are far less common among the older pupils, demonstrating that the positive ethos maintained helps pupils to manage their own behaviour as they mature.

46. Teachers plan well for pupils to extend their vocabulary. Key words are written on the board and pupils are encouraged to help with spelling. Worksheets and books are at a suitable level and pupils are expected to read instructions and find technical vocabulary in, for example, word searches. Mathematical skills are improved as pupils measure and record their findings. However, most of the work is recorded on commercially produced worksheets so pupils do not have the opportunity to write, other than filling in single-word answers. Pupils have undertaken a small amount of research using the Internet, but otherwise very little use is made of new technology, for example to sense or record data, as in temperature changes in investigations, or from electronic microscopes.
47. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator provides good support for teachers in Years 1 to 9 where the subject is taught. She has developed a good scheme of work and already identified the need to increase the number of science lessons in Years 7 to 9 to ensure pupils cover the same work as their peers in mainstream schools. Resources and materials are good, and easily accessible.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adult expectations are high; as a result pupils are motivated and achieve well.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to gain awards for their work; this provides purposeful learning and assists with the re-integration of pupils into mainstream schools.
- While curriculum planning is good, there is insufficient co-ordination of ICT across other subjects.
- The very good accommodation and resources contribute to pupils' achievements.

### **Commentary**

48. Teaching and learning are good. Adults challenge pupils to give of their best. Staff know their pupils well and are able to engage them readily in tasks by ensuring that the relevance of specific pieces of work is made clear at all times. This was especially evident in an activity developing advertisement posters using graphic design software. Pupils' learning was enhanced by the well-planned use of an interactive whiteboard. This enabled good quality whole-class teaching and useful review by, for example, consolidating learning and understanding criteria for judging the layout of greetings cards. The very good teacher and pupil relationships maintain the pace of learning well for pupils of all capabilities.
49. Pupils who attend regularly achieve well in all age groups. They are increasingly confident in aspects of word processing and communicating information in Years 3 to 6. Between Years 7 and 9, pupils acquire a suitable understanding of graphics and spreadsheets. This stands them in good stead for re-integration. Pupils enjoy the subject. They concentrate and work well independently, although they are less comfortable in learning from each other. Pupils in Years 8 to 11 make good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire and in working towards national awards. The range of accreditation available to each year group is well developed and meets the variety of learning needs.

50. Leadership and management are good. Schemes of work are well matched to both the ability range of pupils and the duration of the placement, which varies significantly. The inclusion of learning support staff, as well as teaching staff, in training has ensured greater flexibility in supporting pupils in acquiring new skills such as desktop publishing. Although planning and record keeping are efficient, there is insufficient data available concerning the application of ICT in other subjects. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has plans to conduct an audit of use to inform the future development of the ICT curriculum.
51. Accommodation and resources are very good. In addition to two computer suites, all year groups have their own computer. The extensive range of software interests pupils and is suitable for their age. Interactive whiteboards are used well in lessons observed and beneficial to both the pace and variety of teaching and learning in the classroom. Plans to extend the number of rooms equipped with this technology are in hand.

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

52. Though identified by the subject manager as an area for improvement, satisfactory use is made of ICT to support other subjects. In English and mathematics, many teachers suitably use a variety of software programs for pupils to work towards individual targets. However, not enough use is made of ICT for pupils to draft, refine and present their work in different ways in English. In mathematics, pupils do not use ICT sufficiently to record their findings and to produce data in different ways. While on occasions use is made of the Internet for research, the technology could be used more imaginatively to support learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

Provision in humanities is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well.
- Good teaching and assessment contribute to good learning.
- Good leadership has high aspirations for pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have weaknesses in chronology and in understanding the causes of events in history.

### **Commentary**

53. Though standards at the end of Years 6 and 9 are, overall, below average, this represents good achievement compared to pupils' attainment on entry to the unit. By the end of Year 6, pupils identify cities and continents but they find difficulty comparing different places. They are aware of the importance of environmental factors and map satisfactorily. In history, pupils know details from the Victorian and other periods but many have difficulty in understanding why important events happened. This difficulty is linked mainly to their weakness in verbal reasoning.
54. By Year 9, progress has been good. Pupils have a better grasp of environmental change and aspects of physical geography, such as world climates. In history, they use different sources of well to find information and communicate their findings soundly, as in their work on castles. However, weaknesses in chronology and in linking events to their causes remain. In both subjects, achievement is helped by teachers using pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to help them understand topics. Furthermore, teachers encourage pupils to record their work neatly and to make use of their mathematical skills to support work in geography. As a result, some good work is done involving estimation, measuring and calculations.
55. Good teaching ensures good learning for all pupils. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to make topics interesting. Consequently, pupils are motivated and keen to improve their work, making good gains in acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding. Their productivity, as

seen in the analysis of work, is high. Assessment systems are good and pupils' learning is consolidated as a result.

56. Good leadership has produced a clear improvement plan with appropriate priorities. Good management provides appropriate resources for learning, including the provision of interesting visits and visitors. Humanities provides well for pupils' overall development by making important contributions to citizenship and providing opportunities to discuss a range of topical and controversial environmental issues that assist pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in food studies and graphic design are good. This makes a strong contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem.
- Good workshop provision for acquiring skills in working with resistant materials enables and motivates pupils to produce good quality objects.
- There are potential health risks in the food studies room.

### Commentary

57. Teaching and learning in food technology and graphic design are good because lessons are well planned and are conducted at good pace with a clear focus to provide all pupils with relevant 'life skills' as well as technical proficiency in preparing food. This represents good achievement based upon the skills pupils have when joining the unit. In a lesson observed on food hygiene, pupils made good gains in their knowledge of safe food handling practices. Similarly, very good teacher knowledge contributed to deepening pupils' learning well in a lesson dealing with perspective and kitchen design. Pupils are justifiably proud as they explain the processes involved in the finished product, and their sense of achievement on completing a task successfully.
58. It was not possible to observe lessons dealing with resistant materials. Pupils' work and unit documents, including photographic records, were scrutinised. These indicate teaching and learning are good. The well-equipped workshop for work on resistant materials is suitably laid out to meet health and safety requirements. It enables pupils to realise ambitious designs, including pneumatically operated pieces of equipment. As a result of the good facilities and teacher knowledge, pupils have designed and made, for example, imaginative clocks, and chairs made from paper which will stand the weight of a pupil. The food technology area is equally spacious and well equipped so all aspects of food preparation can be undertaken. However, as a matter of urgency, there is a need to provide greater spacing between the two electric cookers, and work surfaces at the correct height on each side of each cooker.
59. The subject is well led and managed and appropriate monitoring of the quality of what is taught and of classroom practice is in place. The good range of accreditation in food technology enables pupils to progress to other courses on leaving school.

## Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good overall and very good when working with the specialist teacher.
- More use could be made of ICT to support the subject.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

### Commentary

60. Most pupils arrive with a low opinion of their capabilities and few skills in expressing themselves other than through drug-related or violent images. As a result of good teaching, good resources and, most importantly, very good relationships, pupils grow in confidence and achieve well. Staff are enthusiastic about the subject and provide well for pupils to explore a wide range of materials. By Year 6, pupils have investigated and made colourful containers to hold their soft

toys and designed and made a range of clay pots. When sketching outdoors, they understand using a 'viewfinder' aids the composition of their picture and have produced particularly pleasing work on landscapes. Using the Internet, pupils have selected images of, for example, Bamburgh Castle or the local skyline, setting these as a silhouette against a watercolour sky. By Year 11, pupils achieve Entry Level Certificate in up to six modules. Pupils say the topics are interesting and talk enthusiastically about work on posters and, following a talk by local author Colin McNaughton, illustrations for children's books. The current module to design and make a decorative body piece in the style of Celtic art has improved skills in designing and in converting two-dimensional plans to three-dimensional objects.

61. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 achieve very well, in some cases attaining standards expected of pupils of this age, despite having had long periods of absence from mainstream education. Work is very well organised and shows clear progression in skills. Pupils have produced some particularly high quality portraits using shading and toning very well and commenting on the differences in portraits when using 'cold' or 'warm' colours. Using *mod roc*, they have produced imaginative, colourful masks, in some instances influenced by African or Aboriginal art. Observational drawings of the rich architecture in Newcastle have resulted in very good pencil drawings of, for example, the railway station, which have then been transferred into clay tiles of the frontage of buildings.
62. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6 and 10 and 11, and very good in Years 7 to 9. Lessons are purposeful with opportunities for pupils to explore the required elements such as shape, form and texture. Where teaching and learning are very good, very good use is made of demonstration, and the teacher's knowledge facilitates skill development. Furthermore, good attention is given to pupils evaluating their work. Some teachers are beginning to use computers well, for example, basic programs such as 'paint' or to manipulate images. However, little use is made of digital cameras, of more sophisticated programs or of using computers to aid design.
63. Pupils enjoy their art lessons. They say they find the activities relaxing and are proud to achieve success. Often during the course of a lesson, they feel sufficiently at ease to discuss things that concern them, giving advice and support to a troubled classmate. They are pleased that their achievements are celebrated, commenting their work has never been on display at other schools, being animated as they described the techniques used to produce a particular piece. Pupils in all age groups begin to appreciate beauty around them as they look more closely at their environment, for example, art in nature, by making rubbings of tree bark textures. Their cultural awareness is developed through an increased appreciation of different styles of art from Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* to North American Indian hide paintings.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Teaching and learning are good and, as a result of this and the pupils' positive attitudes, achievement is good.
- The provision for gymnastics is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

64. The standards of performance by pupils in Years 6, 9 and 11 are similar to those of their peers in mainstream schools in all aspects of the subject, other than gymnastics. This is because insufficient time is spent on this area of learning. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 6, most pupils perform safely in a range of activities and link skills and techniques in ball games. By the

end of Year 9, most pupils select and combine skills and perform with control and fluency. In Years 10 and 11, some of the higher attaining pupils have developed good evaluative skills and use these to improve their performance. However, mainly as a result of very small classes, understanding of the principles of team play is less good. The good provision for extra-curricular activities provides opportunities for pupils of all capabilities to participate in, for example, kayaking, archery and orienteering. A well-resourced indoor gymnasium and a spacious field further help standards.

65. The subject co-ordinator has made significant and effective improvements to the subject in the last two years, with a clear vision for further development in games and in enhancing the provision for gymnastics. He is also setting high expectations for pupils based upon an imaginative and carefully implemented system of assessment.
66. Teaching and learning are good overall. When teaching is very good, capable and enthusiastic teachers deliver well-prepared lessons that are both brisk and well structured. There are clear demonstrations, followed by practice to improve skills. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers' occasional gaps in expertise are assisted by a clear and helpful scheme of work which guides their lesson planning. Pupils take part in lessons with commitment and enthusiasm, as seen in a very good Year 9 tennis lesson where pupils sustained some long and skilful rallies.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is very good because of very good teaching.
- The taught programme is very relevant and well supported by daily routines.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Ways in which pupils record their work could be improved

### **Commentary**

67. Teachers are very knowledgeable about this subject and about the pupils they teach. The very good relationships enable pupils to feel secure in an atmosphere of mutual trust. As a result, pupils listen and are not afraid to admit to their problems, with most genuinely wanting to learn how to deal with them. Lessons are interesting with a wide range of activities using, for example, video, visiting speakers and drama. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to improve their conversational skills, to talk about their feelings and to consider the merits of the arguments of others. While pupils of all capabilities record their work, this often consists of supplying missing words or phrases with few occasions provided for them to write at length or for different purposes. Subject leadership and management are good. Though relatively new to the unit, the co-ordinator for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is working very well alongside her colleague for pupils in Years 1 to 9. Both are clear about the strengths of the subject and areas for development.
68. Pupils in all age groups have produced a good volume of work covering topics that are very relevant to their young lives and that contribute especially well to their social and moral development – for example, 'Making Friends' and 'Beliefs and Values'. Great emphasis is placed on relationships, bullying and drugs misuse. Recognising a number of pupils smoke and that this is often condoned by families, the drugs awareness worker is piloting a smoking cessation programme. A particularly successful lesson was observed when pupils were appalled as they listened to two Asian ladies speaking about domestic violence. By Year 11, pupils work towards the ASDAN bronze and silver challenge and through the Entry Level Certificate. In addition, basic cookery in food studies and an awareness of health and safety prepare pupils well for living independently.

69. Alongside teachers and other professionals, pupils compile a plan for their future. Work with Connexions advisors and the 'alternative provision' further enable pupils to know their strengths and weaknesses, to make choices, to set targets and to have realistic aspirations for their life after school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour at all times, assisting pupils to set targets for improving their social skills and ensuring these are met during lessons, at break-times and in the dining hall. At the end of each morning and afternoon, pupils are expected to be honest about their rating for meeting their targets, which on the whole most do well. Before school and during break-times staff provide opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learned in lessons by the use of table games so pupils learn to play by the rules, to take turns and to be gracious in success or defeat. In addition to lessons, older pupils increase their awareness of citizenship as they put classroom theory into practice. As part of the service element of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, they worked with the National Trust taking part in woodland preservation. In addition to acquiring skills in woodland management, National Trust workers recorded changes in the young people including increased confidence, commitment, a sense of pride, and hard work.

## 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	n/a
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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
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	5
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). In a special school such as this, standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not against national standards.*