

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CULVER EDUCATION CENTRE (PUPIL SUPPORT)**

South Ockendon

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114702

Acting Headteacher: Mr Tony Cole

Lead inspector: Jeffery Plumb

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 March 2005

Inspection number: 272488

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	5 – 14
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	40
School address:	Daiglen Drive South Ockendon Essex
Postcode:	RM15 5RR
Telephone number:	01708 853781
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Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Strategic Manager for Pupil Support	Mr Lyndon Cox
Date of previous inspection:	11 October 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Culver Education Centre is a pupil referral unit for 40 pupils aged five to fourteen who are at risk of permanent exclusion or who have been permanently excluded from their mainstream schools. In addition it caters for pupils with statements of special educational needs who are awaiting suitable placements in special needs schools. A number of these pupils have very complex needs including psychiatric needs. The last year has seen very significant staff turbulence at a time when Thurrock's provision for education otherwise than at school has been re-organised resulting in the centre admitting children aged five to seven years for the first time. There is an acting head of centre. There are very few minority ethnic pupils and none speak English as an additional language. The vast majority of pupils experience very considerable social and economic disadvantage. Boys very significantly outnumber girls. There are three pupils in public care. The centre is located in unsatisfactory accommodation which restricts the curriculum because there is no specialist accommodation for science and art and design and no outdoor play area for primary aged pupils. Attainment on entry is well below average. The centre is pivotal to reducing the number of permanent exclusions in Thurrock but some pupils remain in the centre for far too long.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16930	J Plumb	Lead inspector	Modern foreign languages Personal, social and health education and citizenship
9115	T Clarke	Lay inspector	
23412	A Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music
16038	J Bavin	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs
2200	J Stirrup	Team inspector	English Art and design Physical education Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This centre provides a **satisfactory quality of education but there are a number of serious weaknesses. Hence effectiveness is unsatisfactory overall** and the centre provides unsatisfactory value for money. Significant staffing turbulence in the last year, coinciding with the centre's recent re-designation to cater for pupils from Year 1 to Year 9 has contributed to unsatisfactory management. Governance is also unsatisfactory. The very recent improvements put in place have not yet had time to make a difference but bode well for the future. Whilst the centre makes a valuable contribution to building pupils confidence and self-esteem and achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, overall achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.

The centre's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in English is good throughout the centre but in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and in science in Years 3 to 9 it is unsatisfactory.
- The procedures for reintegrating pupils into mainstream schools are very good but some pupils remain in the centre for too long.
- Pupils gain in confidence and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- The academic progress of pupils in Year 1 to 6 has not been tracked.
- The acting teacher in charge has a clear vision and the primary consultant very recently brought into the centre has already brought about significant improvements.
- The care of pupils is good and the family liaison officer plays an effective role in establishing good links with parents.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory for science and physical education and the primary aged pupils do not have an outdoor play area or a quiet room for when they are distressed.
- Performance management is unsatisfactory. Governance is ineffective. Priorities on the centre's improvement plan have not been implemented.

The centre is very different from what it was at the time of the last inspection. It no longer caters for pupils in Years 10 and 11 as it did then but now has pupils in Years 1 to 6. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is better than it was then and parents are more involved in the behaviour management strategies. Careers provision in Years 7 to 9 is better. However, improvements to the accommodation are unsatisfactory. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is worse than at that time and there are more weaknesses in leadership, management and governance. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 except in science but unsatisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 because it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and science.** Achievement in English is good across all year groups. In information and communication technology and art and design achievement is satisfactory across all year groups. In Years 7 to 9 pupils' achievement in personal, social and health education and citizenship is good. Achievement judgements were not made in other subjects.

Because of good quality individual sessions pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their reading and writing. Due to good counselling provision and effective anger management programmes a significant proportion of pupils with challenging behaviour make rapid gains in confidence and self-esteem and they are successfully equipped to cope again in a mainstream school.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.** The majority of pupils behave satisfactorily in lessons and at play. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall. Attendance is satisfactory.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the centre is satisfactory but there are a number of weaknesses. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall** but the teaching of science is unsatisfactory throughout the school and the teaching of mathematics is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is consistently good in English throughout the centre and in personal, social and health education and citizenship in Years 7 to 9. Good and very good teaching occurs in mathematics in Years 1 to 6. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

The centre provides a good curriculum. The accommodation is unsatisfactory for science, PE and there is no outdoor play area for the Key Stage 1 pupils. The library is unsatisfactory for developing pupils' personal research skills. The provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is good. Links with parents are good. The centre plays a valuable part in reducing the number of permanent exclusions in Thurrock but the lack of a service level agreement over the time a pupil spends in the centre results in some mainstream schools being reluctant to reintegrate pupils quickly enough.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.** The leadership of the acting teacher in charge is satisfactory. Because performance management is on hold, the acting teacher in charge has not had management training, and important systems such as assessing primary pupils on entry and monitoring their progress over time are not yet in place management is unsatisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory because weaknesses have been allowed to drift for too long. However, the acting teacher in charge has a clear vision and there is pledged support from the local education authority for sustained support from a primary consultant and also for funding to bring about urgent improvements to the accommodation. In a short space of time he has identified most of the weaknesses but his lack of training in monitoring of teaching and learning meant that he did not fully identify the weaknesses in the teaching of science and mathematics in Years 7 to 9. Action plans have been put in place to address other deficiencies but the inspection took place before they have had sufficient time to bring about sufficient improvement. The chair of the management committee is new and she has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to manage change and bring about the urgently required improvements.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers, on the whole, speak highly of what the centre does for their children. They largely consider that their children make gains in confidence and self-esteem and their behaviour improves. However, some parents of children with special educational needs are concerned about the length of time their children stay in the centre whilst awaiting an appropriate placement in a special school or mainstream school and inspectors agree with their view. The pupils consider that they are listened to and that their views are valued.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Work in partnership with the local education authority and local schools to ensure that pupils do not spend so long in the centre whilst waiting to be re-integrated back into the mainstream schools from which they came or being placed into a new and appropriate school.
- Improve the leadership and management of the primary department.
- Raise achievement in science throughout the centre and in mathematics in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve leadership and management and governance.
- Work in partnership with the local education authority to improve the quantity and quality of the accommodation for science, physical education, art and design throughout the centre and an outdoor play and a quiet area in the primary department.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

The pupils have complex behavioural difficulties and emotional needs; a few have mental health difficulties. A few pupils with statements of special educational needs, for example for autism, are placed in the centre whilst awaiting a suitable permanent placement. Some permanently excluded pupils have been out of their mainstream schools for a period of time before being admitted to the centre whilst others refused to attend their mainstream schools; others persistently truanted from certain subjects such as French and mathematics or were not allowed to attend certain lessons because of poor behaviour. Consequently almost all pupils arrive at the centre with very significant gaps in their learning and their attainment on entry is well below average. A few pupils by Year 9 come close to the national average in English and mathematics but they are the exception. This report will focus on achievement. Improved attendance, better behaviour patterns with less explosions of poor behaviour, and greater self-confidence and self-esteem are significant achievement indicators alongside academic performance.

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

Achievement in lessons in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory except in science. Because the centre has only just begun to monitor progress over time in the primary department a longer-term achievement judgement based on teacher assessment cannot be made. In Years 7 to 9 achievement is unsatisfactory overall, because pupils do not achieve well enough in mathematics and science. However, pupils make good gains in confidence and self-esteem and the vast majority make at least satisfactory gains in improved behaviour and conform to accepted social norms. Overall, attendance for the majority is better than when they were in mainstream schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good gains in confidence and self-esteem and as a result improve their patterns of behaviour.
- Achievement by pupils with additional special educational needs is good.
- In Years 7 to 9 pupils' achievement in science and mathematics is unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory teaching and weaknesses in subject leadership. In Years 3 to 6 the unsatisfactory achievement in science reflects the teacher's inexperience.
- In personal, social and health education, citizenship and English achievement is good.
- The lack of specialist accommodation impedes achievement in art and design, design and technology, science and physical education.

### **Commentary**

1. The vast majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 begin to believe in themselves again because of the good achievement they make in managing their anger and in their personal development. This is the result of good counselling and being given the opportunity to be valued and so they make good gains in their personal development. Their involvement in a local '*Sure Start Nursery*' where they play with the children and read them stories boosts their confidence. Those pupils with literacy difficulties make good progress and achieve well because of the personalised programmes of support they receive.
2. Achievement in English is good throughout the centre. In mathematics achievement in lessons in Years 1 to 6 is good but it is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because of unsatisfactory teaching due to weak behaviour management and unsatisfactory leadership of the subject. In science achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 9. In the Years 3 to 6 this reflects the inexperience of the teacher and a need for training but in Years 7 to 9 it reflects very weak behaviour management in lessons and poor subject leadership.

3. Throughout the school achievement in ICT and art is satisfactory. However, lack of resources such as insufficient computers in the primary department and the lack of a kiln in Years 7 to 9 impede the learning and reduce what can be achieved. Achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good.
4. The centre reports that prior to attending the centre, pupils in Years 7 to 9 experienced considerable failure in French and that many hated the discipline associated with physical education. Pupils in the centre now enjoy both subjects and although there is insufficient evidence to make secure achievement judgements the achievement in the French lesson seen was good and documented evidence indicates that many achieve well in sport.
5. Although it is inappropriate that certain students are placed in the centre with special educational needs why suitable provision is found for them they achieve at least satisfactorily, and usually well because of the good quality support they receive. Those with specific literacy needs make good progress in the individual sessions provided for them because of the very good relationship with the teaching assistant and the positive effect of her well-timed questions and intervention. Girls achieve as well as boys and the minority ethnic pupils tend to achieve well and are amongst the highest attainers in the centre.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The centre follows up absences promptly and well.
- Pupils' arrive at the centre punctually.
- Attitudes and behaviour in the majority of classes are good.
- Many pupils show good social development.
- Inexperienced staff are required to manage many instances of poor or very poor behaviour.
- There is limited opportunity for spiritual development.

### **Commentary**

6. Bearing in mind that a number of pupils are admitted to the centre with emotional and behavioural difficulties, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good and the learning support assistants are experienced, pupils in the classroom usually remain on task and attitudes and behaviour can be good or very good. However, when the lessons lack pace and the teacher is inexperienced, pupils become detached from their tasks and the behaviour deteriorates. In such cases intervention is frequently needed and the poor behaviour impacts adversely on other pupils' ability to learn. On a number of occasions during the inspection the acting teacher in charge of the centre had to attend instances of gross misbehaviour from some individual pupils, who needed to be removed from the classroom. Most of the pupils admitted to the centre have low self-esteem. The work of the centre's counsellor helps to improve this.
7. There have been no permanent exclusions during the current year. Instances of fixed term exclusions have been for extreme reasons, principally for violence to staff or to other pupils. Secondary reasons have been for verbal abuse to staff, disrupting the teaching and learning of others, damage to property, disobeying instructions, racial abuse, health and safety reasons and absconding. There have been 18 exclusion episodes involving 13 pupils, ranging from one to 20 days this year. The centre now has a zero tolerance policy for assaults on staff and the number of such instances has been reduced since it was introduced. Racial abuse and bullying are treated very seriously and policies are in place and robust action is taken to ensure that pupils are free from racial harassment and bullying whilst at the centre. Proper procedures are in place for re-integration following exclusion.

8. Within the context of a pupil referral unit, attendance is satisfactory with ten per cent unauthorised absence and 12 per cent authorised. The centre follows up absences well on a first day contact basis. Teachers, support staff and the acting teacher in charge, carefully monitor attendance with the education welfare officer. Pupils' come to school in local authority funded transport and, as a result, punctuality is good.
9. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is, overall, satisfactory. While there is little evidence of spiritual development, the provision for social development is good, partly through the centre's social skills group supported by the centre's counsellor and the PSHCE. As a part of the latter, members of the local police force come to the centre to talk to pupils. Those aged 11 to 14 visit the adjacent nursery to read to the children and this enhances their social development. Pupils' social and moral development is supported through school assemblies and they take the opportunity to socialise during the morning breakfast club. Their understanding of moral issues is in evidence when they take part in charitable activities. Cultural development, including an understanding of cultural diversity in British society, is encouraged through the music and art syllabuses.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10	School data	12
National data	n/a	National data	n/a

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Black or Black British – Caribbean

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
38	5	0
2	0	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 centre provides a satisfactory quality of education but there are a number of serious weaknesses. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 6 considerable good teaching was seen during the inspection but the lesson plans were very new reflecting the work of a very recently attached primary consultant. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in mathematics and science. The curriculum is good and relevant to pupils' needs. The centre provides a good level of care and guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Links with parents are good. Links with other schools and the community are satisfactory but too many pupils spend too long in the centre because of the lack of a formal service level agreement with schools about the period of time a pupil at risk of permanent exclusion should remain in the centre before being reintegrated.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The weaknesses in Years 3 to 6 reflect teacher inexperience. But in Years 7 to 9 the unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics and science is due to

very weak behaviour management and unsatisfactory and poor subject leadership. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of PSHCE is good and builds pupils confidence and self-esteem.
- Throughout the centre English is taught well and there is a lively approach to the teaching of drama.
- Because of unsatisfactory behaviour management the teaching of mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with specific literacy difficulties associated with their special educational needs are taught well.
- There is no baseline assessment on entry in the primary department and no system for monitoring pupils' progress over time.

### **Commentary**

10. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is a significant proportion of good and very good teaching but there is also a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. In Years 3 to 6 the unsatisfactory teaching reflects teacher inexperience and a training need for supply teachers, particularly those new to the profession. Unsatisfactory accommodation and lack of resources also contributes to the unsatisfactory teaching. In Years 7 to 9, very weak behaviour management is the main contributory factor to the unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, the quality of teaching is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when there was a significant proportion of excellent teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching.
11. The best teaching occurs where pupils challenging behaviour is very skilfully managed as seen in French for pupils in Years 8 to 9. In this lesson pupils were interested in fun game activities and made good progress in speaking French. In those lessons where teaching assistants are deployed pupils behaviour and learning tend to be better than in those lessons where teachers do not have support. Teaching in English is consistently good throughout the centre as is drama. Weak behaviour management strategies result in unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 in mathematics and science. In these lessons the teaching and learning is hindered by inconsistent application of the centre's behaviour policy. As a result of this weak behaviour management pupils take advantage of the situation and behave badly and so do not learn.
12. There is though exciting and interesting teaching. In PSHCE the teaching is consistently good contributing well to pupils' personal development. The personalised teaching programmes for pupils with very weak literacy skills are good and result in good achievement for pupils with special educational needs. In the best lessons more able pupils are stretched, as in the Year 8 and 9 French lesson, but this is not yet consistent across all subjects.
13. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Pupils are not yet carefully assessed when they enter the primary department and so there is not an effective starting point against which to measure their achievement over time. This deficiency is being addressed but the inspection took place before the impact of recent changes had time to impact. Assessment is a weakness in mathematics because the assessment of pupils' levels of attainment is not sufficiently accurate and so unreliable to be used to inform planning to raise achievement. In science assessment is also weak and marking in particular does not point out to pupils exactly what they need to do to improve. In English assessment is satisfactory. However, there are some models of good practice. Pupils with very specific literacy problems are identified quickly, and have good and specific literacy targets on their IEPs, which are used effectively. The subject leader for citizenship is piloting a good assessment system which involves pupils in self-assessment.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	5 (16%)	18 (58%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

### The curriculum

Overall curriculum provision is good. There are good enrichment opportunities on offer for all pupils. Some aspects of staffing and significant elements of accommodation are unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 receive a good, broad and balanced curriculum.
- The primary curriculum is developing well but is constrained by the accommodation.
- The centre provides a good range of enrichment activities for all pupils.
- Significant areas of the curriculum are led by staff lacking training in behaviour management and curriculum development.
- Preparation for reintegration is a strength of the centre.

### Commentary

14. The curriculum provided for pupils aged eleven upwards is broad and balanced, meeting well many of the needs for which they have been referred. There has been good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, with good use being made of the three-part lesson format. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of texts, including poetry, Shakespeare and play scripts. There is also a strong PSHE curriculum, which provides pupils with sound advice on drugs, relationships, the working world and essential elements of healthy living. The programme for citizenship is good. In addition, the centre has developed very good procedures and techniques for identifying and supporting all pupils in literacy skills. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is at an earlier stage of development. The number of hours of education provided for the majority of pupils compares favourably with pupil referral centres nationally.
15. There is a good programme of assessment and one-to-one literacy teaching, co-ordinated and carried out by a very experienced teaching assistant. This contributes well to the good development of pupils' literacy, attention skills and self-confidence. This programme also pays careful attention to the learning styles of individual pupils. This is an imaginative way to assist in the development of suitable tasks for each pupil.
16. The curriculum for pupils aged five to eleven is only just developing and in some aspects suffers from lack of careful planning in the past. For this reason, policies and formal schemes of work are in their very early stages. However, the partnership between a strong teacher-in-charge of primary provision and a very good primary consultant means that the day-to-day experience for younger pupils is good. Literacy and numeracy are well taught overall and every effort is made to ensure that classroom experiences are well matched to individual needs. Two of the three primary teachers are new to this type of work, but all show a high level of motivation and good relationships with the pupils. The new leadership has ensured that there are individual education plans for every pupil and this lays a good basis for lesson planning and guidance.
17. For all pupils there is a good programme of activities to enrich the taught curriculum. A successful breakfast club has developed and prepares pupils well for the working day. In

addition, all pupils have the opportunity of a residential experience. Pupils enjoy this and regard it as a strong feature of their stay at the centre. They talk enthusiastically about opportunities to kayak, orienteering and contributing in general to life under canvas. Older pupils have many opportunities to visit theatres to see productions such as 'Macbeth for Kids', music centres, to experiencing the work of a DJ, and reward trips, such as ten-pin bowling. The centre's development of the 'Passport to Adventure' has been imaginative and has provided pupils with opportunities to undertake community work and outdoor activities in a format similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The success of this initiative is confirmed by the take-up from other secondary schools. One particularly successful initiative was seen during the inspection. Pupils aged twelve and thirteen took part in one of their regular visits to a local nursery. There they worked with young children, playing, reading and organising in a way that showed their growing maturity. Younger pupils receive skilled games coaching and take part in a range of local visits.

18. Primary age pupils receive a good curriculum, but this is largely as the result of the hard work and imaginative use of limited resources shown by staff. The accommodation places very severe constraints on the development of play, science and the development of independence skills. There is little or no opportunity for pupils to become involved in outdoor play. The lack of sinks and tiled areas means that art and indoor play is significantly limited and the way rooms are currently laid out means that there are no real opportunities for disturbed pupils to have a quiet area for time out. For older pupils, both science and design and technology are constrained by lack of specialised accommodation and resources. The absence of a proper library, mentioned in the last report, continues to limit opportunities for research and reading for pleasure. The lack of on-site physical education accommodation means that opportunities within this subject are limited. The success and popularity of the physical education curriculum, with a wide range of activities and skilled teaching and coaching is due to the imaginative manner in which the acting head of centre makes use of resources outside the centre.
19. Although the centre is not obliged to provide the full National Curriculum and religious education, pupils' reintegration is restricted by limitations in mathematics and science for pupils over eleven. In both of these subjects, and to some extent within ICT, there are staff training needs. Too often lessons in these subjects are undermined by the lack of teacher expertise in behaviour management. Inconsistency in enforcing the school behaviour policy and an acceptance of inappropriate pupil language and demands mean that time is not used to the best effect and many pupils do not receive the challenge and structure within lessons that would assist in their social and academic progress. However, there are some areas, notably with counselling, PSHCE, literacy and physical education, where staff expertise is strong and pupils develop well, both academically and socially.
20. The centre is skilled at preparing pupils for the world beyond school. This is evident from the good links with the 'Connexions' service, the planning for social activities such as visits and residential activities. Specific work related provision for pupils in Year 9 is at an early stage of development. However, the major strength of the curriculum offered is the emphasis and skilled leadership relating to reintegration into mainstream schools. Once again, this is the result of imaginative and resourceful efforts by many members of staff.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance through monitoring and the involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are satisfactory. Pupils receive their education in a supportive and caring environment.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are good.
- Pupils have good access to well-informed support and guidance.

- The school counsellor and family liaison officer give good support to the care provision.
- Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with a number of adults in the school, through the small tutor groups.
- The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views needs further development by the formation of a school council.

### **Commentary**

21. The care, welfare, health and safety procedures are, overall good. The child protection procedures are secure. The centre's policy is in line with that of the local authority, with the acting teacher in charge, who has received the relevant training but is waiting to have it updated, as the designated adult. He ensures that all staff are made aware of the correct procedures and regularly re-checks this, particularly with new and supply staff. The centre has a good relationship with social services. The centre counsellor gives good support pupils and makes a valuable contribution to building their confidence and lifting their self-esteem. The designated person has also received formal training with respect to children in public care. There are three such pupils at the centre, but no pupils were on the 'at risk' register at the time of the inspection.
22. There are proper systems in place for reporting health and safety issues. At the moment the recently appointed person with responsibility for health and safety is awaiting a place on a training course, so the point of reference is the local authority. Proper risk assessments are carried out and covered by using the local authority proforma. Special attention is given to risk assessments for education off-site. Outside centres usually have their own risk assessment procedures.
23. While the provision of support, advice and guidance is satisfactory overall that for pastoral support is good. Pupils work in small groups so each one is well known to particular members of staff. Close attention is paid to their progress in personal development, which includes their attitudes and behaviour. They are well supported by the school counsellor and the family liaison officer ensures that parents and carers are kept informed of their progress and of any problems that may arise. She is effective in encouraging parents to attend reviews and come into the centre. Strong support is provided, particularly for those pupils referred through the mental health care route as these pupils have complex needs.
24. The centre has satisfactory arrangements for seeking the views of pupils. Their views can be sought from regular contact with tutors and through individual reviews. There is no school council but plans are in place to form one. It will help to involve pupils more when in place.

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

The centre's links with parents are good. The links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory.

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

- Most parents have positive views on what the centre is able to do to help their child progress.
- The work of the family liaison officer, which keeps parents informed about pupils' progress, is good.
- The links with other agencies such as social services and mental health trust are good.
- Other schools are often uncertain about re-integrating pupils.
- Some pupils have to wait too long for a place at a special educational needs school.

### **Commentary**

25. The centre has good links with parents. Some of the evidence for this is seen from the positive responses to the parent questionnaires. Attendance by parents at the regular half-termly

reviews is encouraged by the good work of the family liaison officer. From the start she is involved, with induction by explaining about the centre and then encouraging parents to attend reviews. If a parent cannot attend a review she will relay information back to them. As a result a parent is kept up to date on their child's progress. Parents are also kept informed about pupils' individual education plans and receive advice on statements. The family liaison officer helps parents who might wish to make a complaint about any part of the process. The centre also holds parent group meetings. For example, they run a parent computer club.

26. The centre has satisfactory links with different agencies within the community. For instance, the police come into the school as a part of the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme. A number of the links come through the pupil referral panel, which includes many of the local agencies, such as social services and more importantly the primary mental health care team. A number of pupils come to the school as a result of referral from the latter agency, 17 pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 and eight at Key Stage 3. Some of these pupils are at the centre waiting for a considerable time to be placed in special educational needs schools, where places are at a premium. A further effective community link is with the youth inclusion panel.
27. The school has proper re-integration procedures in place. Schools have access to the pupil referral panel for admission in the first place. The centre tries to be pro-active in keeping contact with pupils' own schools through staff visits and keeping them up to date with progress. The family liaison officer also visits the schools to help with this process. However, schools are often reluctant to take pupils back and this holds up the re-integration process. Links with other schools are enhanced by the work of the school counsellor, who runs courses for their staff to try to prevent pupils having to be referred to the centre in the first place.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The leadership of the acting teacher in charge is satisfactory. Overall, the leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Management is unsatisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Significant staff turbulence both within the LEA and the PRU itself at a time when the PRU has been re-designated to cater for Key Stage 1 pupils has impacted negatively on leadership and management.
- The acting teacher in charge has held on to a vision which focuses on returning pupils to mainstream education at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The leadership of mathematics is unsatisfactory and of science is poor in Years 7 to 9.
- Governance is unsatisfactory because the deficiencies in the primary provision have been allowed to drift for too long.
- The recent action plan to address the deficiencies within the primary phase is exciting but requires a pledge of funding from the LEA to enable the laudable priorities identified to be implemented.

### **Commentary**

28. The acting teacher in charge has satisfactorily led the PRU through a difficult period of significant turbulence and change. Throughout a time when the substantive teacher in charge has been off on long-term sick leave, the co-ordinator for Years 3 to 6 left suddenly, the primary department has been run by a team of supply teachers, there have been staffing changes and long-term sickness within the LEA Education Otherwise Than at School Team (EOTAS), and the PRU has been re-designated as part of a re-organisation to cater for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the acting teacher in charge has remained totally committed to the principle of a revolving door philosophy. He has held on to a vision that focuses on building pupils' self-esteem and lifting their confidence so that they can be re-integrated into mainstream schools

as soon as they are ready to cope. His vision has at times been thwarted by the fact that there is lack of a formal service level agreement with mainstream schools about the period of time pupils have their needs met in the PRU before they are re-integrated back into mainstream. The teacher who leads on re-integration is working extremely hard to improve this situation but some pupils remain in the PRU for far too long. In addition the current lack of provision for primary aged children with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD) within Thurrock results in some children with statements for complex special educational needs being placed in the PRU whilst a suitable placement is being found for them. Although this is an unsatisfactory situation which needs to be addressed by the LEA their special educational needs are mostly well met.

29. Leadership of other key staff is satisfactory overall. The leadership of the recent primary consultant (put in by the LEA) is very good. In a short space of time she has brought the primary team together and in consultation with them she has successfully drawn up a robust action plan for improvement. The plan had not had time to be implemented by the time of the inspection but it indicates a strong capacity for significant improvement particularly as the LEA has committed to sustaining this support long-term. However, it is crucial that the LEA commits funding to the priorities on this plan as a matter of urgency. The pupils with complex needs in Years 1 and 2 require access to a quality outdoor play area and funding is needed to make this happen. There has been innovative and creative curriculum development in Years 7 to 9 driven by the acting teacher in charge. The leadership of PSHCE is good and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. The drive to improve re-integration protocols and procedures is good and well led by the member of staff with a lead responsibility for this initiative. There are many good features in the leadership of special educational needs and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the leadership of mathematics is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and it is poor in science in Years 7 to 9
30. The primary phase has been allowed to drift for too long and this is unsatisfactory. The progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6 has not been tracked and because performance management has fallen into abeyance the quality of teaching and learning has not been rigorously monitored. This has impeded the opportunity to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Although the overall improvement plan for the PRU has laudable priorities the lack of matched funding to the priorities on the plan has resulted in too few of them being realised in practice. The acting teacher in charge, since November 2004, has begun to address some of these shortcomings but the inspection came too early to evaluate the impact of very recent changes. There has been too little time for the initiatives to have had any substantial or measurable impact. With his commitment, working in effective partnership with the primary consultant and with the support of the LEA and the new chair of the management committee the future looks bright. This is because through his self-evaluation the deficiencies have been unearthed, and immediate action has been taken to address the issues in the primary phase. Given that there is not a delegated budget, and given that there is an over spend on the service budget (EOTAS) it is very important that there is clarity and transparency about where the funding is going to come from to make the improvements required. Financial planning is currently unsatisfactory but discussion with a finance officer suggested that capital funding could be made available to improve the science accommodation and to create an outdoor play area for pupils in Years 1 to 6. This needs to be clear and addressed as a matter of urgency.
31. Governance is unsatisfactory. Insufficient challenge and support in the recent past has left some very significant weaknesses to continue for too long without robust actions to bring about improvement. This is seen in the context of staffing turbulence within the LEA and the newness of the chair of the management committee. However, very recent improvements bode well. The chair of the management committee is clear about what has to be done and a newly appointed and permanent strategic manager for EOTAS is now in post. They are committed to supporting the acting teacher in charge in managing the PRU. In partnership they are committed to overcoming the existing barriers and returning more pupils to mainstream schools far more quickly than is the case at present. The quality of the action plan to improve the primary provision and the commitment to sustained and long-term funded support of the primary consultant led the inspection team to judge that although there are

serious weaknesses and the set of circumstances are extremely complex that there is capacity for satisfactory improvement, indeed it has already begun to happen.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **REINTEGRATION**

#### **What is the effectiveness of reintegration?**

Provision for reintegrating pupils into mainstream schools is **good**.

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

- The procedures in place for reintegration are very good.
- Reintegration is very well led and managed by a very good co-ordinator.
- A significant percentage of pupils remain at the centre too long, despite the best efforts of centre staff.

#### **Commentary**

32. The purpose of the centre is to support and develop pupils outside of a mainstream school context and return them to mainstream education as soon as possible. It is successful at this. It has developed a clear set of procedures that identify what referring schools should be providing and how the centre can support the initial transfer. While at the centre staff seek to continue pupils' education and, in particular, develop social, personal and interactive skills that will assist pupils in moving back to their previous, or another, school. One of the most important elements of this process is the development of targets within each pupil's individual education plan. The protocols for reintegration are also detailed and identify well the essential elements that need to be in place for success. As the result of classroom observations and monitoring of progress in behaviour, the time for return to a mainstream school is identified and meetings set up between centre and school staff to discuss the most effective ways for each pupil to reintegrate. Once reintegration has taken place, the centre provides informed follow-up contact to monitor the success of the return and offer advice when necessary.
33. This programme is very well led by a skilled and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Herself a good teacher, she spends a large amount of time discussing details of support. She liaises with schools and support services to ensure success for all reintegration placements. Parents and receiving schools appreciate the care and professionalism of this work and the success of most placements attest the quality of management in this aspect of the centre's work.
34. Despite the best efforts of staff, pupils in general remain at the centre too long. Originally expected to be at best a month or perhaps a term, the average placement is over a year and many pupils have stayed for two, three or four years. The major contributory factor in this is the lack of a set of criteria for mainstream schools to receive these pupils back. Thus, the co-ordinator and senior staff have to persuade schools to accept pupils, rather than being able to trigger an agreed set of procedures once a pupil is ready to reintegrate.

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

### SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English was inspected in depth and is reported in full below. **French** was not a focus subject for inspection. Only one lesson was seen for students in Years 8 and 9. Teaching and learning in that lesson were good. The teacher successfully and skilfully '*switched the students on*' and once they were interested and focused they made very good progress in linking phrases in order to talk confidently in French about activities that took place in the past. Very skilful behaviour management enabled one student, totally switched off at the start of the lesson, to attain close to the national expectation by the end of the lesson. Cracking pace, effective questioning and fun game activities contributed to the good learning and achievement in this lesson. When one student owned up to having made a mistake when he had an opportunity to get away with it during a team game the others in the group applauded him for his honesty. This lifted his confidence and self-esteem and he went on to excel in the lesson. The programme is a remarkable success because the students involved were either not allowed to attend French lessons in their mainstream schools because of their poor attitude to learning and poor behaviour or they '*bunked off*' because they could not cope.

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, with the result that pupils' make good gains in their oral, reading and writing skills.
- The National Literacy Strategy is used well to extend pupils' English skills.
- There are few chances for pupils to improve the quality of their written work through the use of re-drafting skills.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have sharp medium-term targets for improvement.
- The lack of a library inhibits pupils' ability to develop independent learning skills.
- There are no strategies for developing language and literacy across the curriculum.

#### Commentary

35. Because of gaps in their education and identified learning difficulties, the majority of pupils enter the centre with well below average English skills. As a result of good teaching and an interesting range of English activities all pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress over time, though standards for many pupils remain well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and below average at the end of Year 9. Good support from teachers and teaching assistants for pupils with identified special educational needs enables them to make the good progress. Overall, achievement in English is good across the centre.
36. The majority of pupils display satisfactory oral skills when talking with their teachers and friends. However, many are less secure in their ability to express their ideas and opinions in formal situations. Chances for pupils to engage in role-play activities in Years 1 to 6, and discrete drama lessons in Years 7 to 9 make a positive contribution to the development of pupils speaking and listening skills.
37. Many pupils, particularly those in Years 1 to 6, enter the centre with under-developed reading skills. Phonic skills are taught well in these years, with the structured reading scheme recently introduced into Years 1 to 6 making a positive contribution to the development of pupils' reading skills. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are given regular chances to read a good range of literature, including whole novels and plays. Whilst this enables pupils to make good progress in their reading skills, poor vocabulary and under-developed reading comprehension skills

often result in pupils not always appreciating the meaning of the texts that they read. Few pupils read in their own time at home.

38. A number of pupils arrive in Years 1 to 6 with poor writing skills. Handwriting and basic English skills are taught well in these years, with pupils being given the chance to use them in an imaginative range of writing activities. Good achievement continues in Years 7 to 9, though many pupils still find it difficult to produce written work of any real substance and length. Although pupils regularly use word-processing skills to improve the presentation of their written work, there are too few opportunities for pupils to re-draft their work in order to extend its length, improve its content and style, and include more descriptive and imaginative language.
39. The quality of teaching is good. Some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers ensure that that activities and work match the needs, abilities and ages of all pupils. The unit has introduced the National Literacy Strategy in an effective manner, with evidence from the scrutiny of work indicating that it is contributing to individual achievement in the subject.
40. Leadership and management are good. The two members of staff responsible for the subject provide good teaching. The centre has gone through a significant period of change recently. In conjunction with the LEA literacy consultant the two subject managers have responded to this change by investing a great deal of time and effort into putting into place a new range of documentation, strategies and schemes of work. These are having a positive impact on raising achievement. Current assessment procedures are satisfactory, but they have yet to be refined for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Although pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a good idea of their National Curriculum levels of attainment, they do not have sharp medium-term targets for improvement. Resources for the subject have improved recently, but they remain unsatisfactory. Pupils retrieve information from the World Wide Web but the lack of a library inhibits pupils' ability to become independent learners. Because the nature of the centre has changed since the last inspection it is not possible to make secure judgement on improvement.

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

41. There is currently no policy or identified strategies for developing language and literacy skills across the curriculum, though it is expected that teachers develop literacy skills whenever the opportunity arises. Some good examples of the development of literacy skills in history and geography were observed during the inspection, with pupils writing in character as they produced letters from evacuees in the countryside to their parents at home. Pupils also created their own Tsunami poetry. These are the exception however, with lost opportunities to develop literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum and this has a negative impact on pupils learning. This is an area for development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall for primary age pupils, but unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching assistants provide good, and often very good, support.
- Younger pupils achieve well, but achievement is unsatisfactory from Year 7 as the result of inconsistent teaching.
- Assessment, recording and its use in planning for individual pupils is a weakness throughout the centre.

- There is not enough detail shared with pupils relating to immediate targets.
- Some ICT is used within mathematics, but there is still room for development.
- There is no planned reinforcement of mathematics in other curriculum areas.

## Commentary

42. Mathematics is a key area of provision within the centre as it relates to the success of pupils in reintegrating into mainstream schools. In the early stages of development, the teaching of mathematics for pupils up to Year 6 is good. Tasks are well matched to pupils and resources are imaginatively used to provide a rich range of mathematical experiences. Thus, in a lesson dealing with minutes in the hour, a group that comprised pupils from age five to eleven years old was fully engaged for the whole lesson. The wide range of age and ability was dealt with very well, using support staff effectively to challenge pupils who find group work and concentration difficult. The atmosphere within the lesson was very much one of fun. Pupils timed themselves to see how many jumps, claps and hops they could accomplish within a minute. Each activity was backed up by a relevant and well designed record sheet which every pupil completed. Throughout the lesson key vocabulary, such as 'minutes', 'seconds', 'more' and 'less', was reinforced well. All staff worked to the same lesson plan, which meant that all pupils received the same rich experience, whether they were taught by the teacher, a one-to-one teaching assistant or in a small group in the corridor.
43. This lesson, and others observed with younger pupils, was characterised by very good teamwork within the classroom. Teaching assistants demonstrated a good understanding of the mathematical concepts that were being taught and reinforced. In addition, they had developed very good relationships with individual pupils, which allowed them to respond effectively to poor behaviour and re-engage pupils in the tasks set. Assistants are used less in lessons with older pupils, but, when involved, show a similar sensitivity and understanding. Where teaching assistants are deployed to support pupils with special educational needs their needs are met and they make at least satisfactory progress. This practice is consistent in Years 1 to 6 but not in Years 7 to 9 and so in the upper school the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory overall.
44. Pupils from Year 7 receive some satisfactory teaching and all teaching in Years 7 to 9 is informed by a good understanding of the mathematical processes required. However, the overall standard of teaching here is unsatisfactory. Too many lessons are undermined by the inconsistent application of the school's behaviour policy. The implications of this are that pupils receive confusing and often conflicting messages. As a result they take advantage of the low-key attempts at discipline. During the inspection, pupils were frequently observed, making inappropriate comments and using language that was offensive to both pupils and teacher. All classes contain one or two pupils with good mathematical potential. This is not maximised as the result of general indiscipline within the class as a whole or poor relationships between teacher and pupil on a one-to-one basis. Although lessons are well planned with individual personal and academic targets, these usually fall by the wayside during the, often disrupted lessons.
45. As a result of the weak discipline, the achievement of pupils from eleven upwards is unsatisfactory. Records and work samples indicate a lack of progress within lessons and over time. This is not helped, by marking that fails to identify where a pupil should go next. There were also strong indications during the inspection that the assessment of pupils' levels of attainment in mathematics is not always accurate and there were many indicators that training in both behaviour and subject management is urgently needed.
46. The picture is brighter with pupils up to the age of eleven. Although in post for only a few months, the teacher in charge is beginning to develop a well-structured way of working. Lessons are well planned, support staff have clear guidance as to how pupils with behaviour difficulties can not only be contained but moved on in their mathematical skills and knowledge. Progress is recorded and all teachers have a good knowledge of the levels attained by individual pupils. Above all, the implementation of consistent rules of behaviour, good pace

within lessons and the ability to challenge pupils of all abilities make mathematics lessons productive and enjoyable.

47. For the range of reasons indicated, assessment and recording in mathematics is a weakness. For older pupils there is recording of sub-skills within mathematics, but this is not always accurate and, although used to plan lessons, is not effectively shared and discussed with pupils in a way that supports them in moving forward in the subject. Practice for pupils up to eleven is better informed by mainstream National Curriculum techniques and pieces of work are more accurately assessed and retained within portfolios of work. However, this is at an early stage and has not yet been established as a uniform way of working for all primary class teachers. As a result, it is difficult to identify the true nature of pupil achievement within the four key areas of mathematics.
48. Some ICT is used within mathematics. An effective lesson was seen with older pupils, where an imaginative suite of estimation programmes provided a high level of motivation in pupils and good achievement as a result. In primary classes, the constraint arises from the lack of effective ICT hardware and programmes. This is being addressed within the action plan for the primary classes, but at present the use of ICT in mathematics is unsatisfactory throughout the school.
49. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The current co-ordinator has a strong body of knowledge and skills within mathematics, but lacks the more detailed knowledge of both National Curriculum requirements and behaviour management techniques that would ensure better pupil achievement. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

50. During the inspection some good use of mathematics was seen across the curriculum. In science, for example, good mathematical skills were reinforced in the estimation and calculation of shoe pressure, while there was a good overlap between mathematics and ICT in many lessons, for example in the use of flow chart programmes and spreadsheets. However, there is no planned use of mathematics within many subject areas and many good opportunities are missed to reinforce the skills and vocabulary being taught. Consequently in too many subjects pupils' learning is hindered because of the missed opportunities to reinforce important numeracy skills.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are not making sufficient progress in science because expectations of their work are not always high enough.
- There are not enough resources throughout the school and the accommodation for older pupils is poor.
- The leadership and management of the subject are poor.
- The teacher in charge and other staff recognise the weaknesses in the subject and are keen to address them.

### **Commentary**

51. Standards in science reflect the disruption pupils have had to their learning and are below average throughout the school. There is too little evidence to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils in other years do not make as much progress with the subject as they could. This reflects a decline in achievement for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 since the previous inspection.

52. There are several reasons for the unsatisfactory achievement in the subject. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Teaching of older pupils is unsatisfactory because expectations of pupils' work, effort and behaviour are not consistently high enough. Whereas teaching for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 is unsatisfactory because of insecure knowledge of the subject and the level at which it needs to be taught for these pupils. Throughout the school the dearth of suitable resources is a very real problem making teaching more difficult for staff. This problem is exacerbated for older pupils and staff working with them, by the extremely small room that constrains suitable investigative work. The weaknesses in accommodation and resources were highlighted as a 'Key Issue' in the previous report but have not been addressed.
53. Teaching is satisfactory in individual lessons for older pupils when support staff help to manage pupils' behaviour successfully. This allows the teacher's secure knowledge of the subject to be heard and practical work to continue, promoting a reasonable rate of progress in understanding topics such as magnetism. Nevertheless, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils who could do so are not expected to record simple scientific predictions before practical work. Work is often poorly presented and marking does not help pupils understand how to improve.
54. Leadership and management of the subject are poor. Too little has been done to address the weaknesses found at the time of the previous inspection. There has not been enough training for the co-ordinator to address the challenges of planning and assessing work for the different groups of pupils attending the centre for varying periods of time. There is no history of staff leading the development of a subject for pupils of all ages, so there is a lack of cohesive development understood and shared by all staff to the benefit of all pupils. However, staff recognise that science has been a 'Cinderella' subject and share a willingness to remedy this. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are clear signs that pupils' confidence and enthusiasm in working with computers are developing well.
- Primary ICT work is currently constrained by lack of fully functioning computers and limited access to the ICT suite.
- The co-ordination of the subject has not yet addressed the use of ICT in all subject areas, staff training or the most effective use of the ICT suite.

### **Commentary**

55. Pupils of all ages observed during the current inspection showed confidence and enthusiasm in working with computers. For pupils in Years 7 to 9 this showed itself in their ability to enter and store data, to move between programs effectively and to surf the Internet for clipart and information. Thus, a good lesson with 11 and 12 year old pupils, started with them carrying out a five minute touch typing routine, showing a good development of these skills. This was followed by pupils using a suite of programs to estimate angles and compare capacities. Within each program they demonstrated satisfactory ability to access and navigate program, enter and modify data. However, some inconsistencies in the management of behaviour meant that one or two pupils did not apply themselves throughout the lesson and make the most of the skills and knowledge they clearly possessed. A second lesson on accessing mobile phone ring tones caught the pupils' imagination and application was significantly better.

56. No ICT lessons were seen with primary classes. ICT work has only recently been introduced with this group. However, scrutiny of work and displays, together with discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils indicated that there is satisfactory achievement within this group. Word processing is used within literacy work and word games used with pupils on a regular basis. In addition, pupils complete simple bar charts to record favourite colours. Graph work is already being introduced into mathematics and science. Younger pupils have some opportunities to use ICT, but this is constrained by the slow development of effective hardware and the failure to plan usage of the ICT suite effectively. However, younger pupils show a similar enthusiasm to their older peers and plans are already in place to develop the full curriculum for them.
57. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. The level of staff knowledge relating to ICT is satisfactory throughout the school. There is some teaching and use of ICT within class lessons and this is most effective where a member of staff displays confidence and the software used is motivational. However, in general the teaching of ICT is not part of every teacher's repertoire of skills and this means that achievement is not as good as it might be.
58. The co-ordinator concerned with work for eleven-year-olds and above has a good knowledge base, together with some imaginative ideas for motivating pupils. Thus, during the inspection imaginative work was seen relating to composing ring tones for mobile phones. In this, pupils showed good levels of concentration and expressed opinions which were based on sensible and practical criteria.
59. Co-ordination of the subject has not been a priority as older pupils all receive teaching from the one specialist ICT teacher. He is well informed, extremely enthusiastic and relates well to most pupils. There has been satisfactory improvement in this subject. The co-ordinator has set up an effective suite and begun to install appropriate software for mathematics and literacy. Recent additions have been a flow chart program to support 'control' skills, a presentation program and multimedia software that is highly motivational. The curriculum is developing and a scheme of work is gradually being put in place. Lack of effective co-ordination is more obvious in the slow speed at which assessment and individual target-setting is progressing for all pupils and a failure to develop a usage policy for the ICT suite.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. There is no formal policy or guidance to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum, but ICT is being used well in some subjects such as English, some areas of mathematics and music. Lack of a coherent training policy for staff has prevented many from developing important skills that would aid the use of ICT within their subjects. In addition, the slow development of software relevant to many subject areas has also been a constraint on the effective use of ICT across the curriculum. Overall, pupils' development of ICT skills across the curriculum is satisfactory.

### HUMANITIES

61. **Geography** and **history** are both taught throughout the school and so contribute to the good breadth and balance of the curriculum. Only part of one history lesson was seen during the inspection and no geography lessons. It is not possible, therefore to make secure judgements about the level of achievement or quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. However, the history teaching and learning that was seen was good. The teacher and learning support assistant worked well together, using drama effectively to help pupils imagine what it would have been like to be evacuated during the Second World War. Displays of pupils' geography work provide examples of good links between geography and other subjects. For instance, older pupils make good use of their literacy skills to write poems about the recent Asian Tsunami, and use their computer skills effectively to research its geographical significance. **Religious education** is not taught as a discrete subject. However, opportunities are provided for students to explore world faiths as part of their personal, social, health and citizenship lessons. The chance for pupils to appreciate and value cultural diversity is provided for in others areas of the curriculum.

## TECHNOLOGY

62. **Design and technology** was not a focus for the inspection and it is not possible to make secure judgements about teaching, learning and achievement. However, evidence from parts of lessons observed and talking with staff and pupils indicates that there are plenty of chances for boys and girls to work with wood. The value of using recycled materials is constantly emphasised which supports pupils' geographical understanding and personal and social development effectively by drawing their attention to responsibility for the natural environment. Pupils clearly appreciate practical sessions and behave sensibly in the workshop. They are justifiably proud of previous achievements and current projects, such as making birds' nesting boxes.
63. On occasions teachers spend too much time preparing pupils for practical work. At these times they over-direct pupils by giving too much help and so miss opportunities for pupils to make their own choices and decisions. There are also times when expectations of pupils' understanding and preparation work are too low. The accommodation is not conducive to teaching food technology and resources for it are unsatisfactory. Pupils sometimes work in the school kitchen but during the inspection a group of three pupils making shepherds' pie could not have one potato masher each. Nevertheless, motivated by the end result and enjoyment of such practical work, pupils behaved well and awaited their turns patiently.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

64. **Art and design** was inspected in depth. **Music** was sampled. At the request of the acting teacher in charge as much information as possible was gathered about the provision for **physical education**.
65. **Music** is a popular subject which makes a good contribution to students' self-esteem. No music lessons were seen and it was not possible to gauge the achievement of pupils. However, documentary evidence, pupils' work and discussion with the acting co-ordinator indicated that music makes a very strong contribution to the curriculum at the centre and, through that, to students' independence and self-esteem. There is normally a good specialist music teacher who has good relationships with pupils and, as a result, pupils are keen to learn. Their written work shows good achievement in the development of skills relating to composing and performing. She has developed a very good scheme of work for older pupils and the centre's plans are highly imaginative with regard to the development of a primary music curriculum. Planning is detailed and supported well by good assessment and recording. Careful attention is paid to what pupils can do and understand and link closely to literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
66. It was not possible to observe any **physical education** lessons during the week of the inspection. It is not therefore possible to make a provision judgement. The centre has no specialist PE facilities of its own, though the grassed areas around the centre are sometimes used for games lessons during the summer term. This seriously impedes the curriculum that the centre can offer.
67. The provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6 takes place at a nearby primary school, with lessons being delivered by specialist tutors from the LEA. The large majority of lessons focus on the development of pupils' game skills and staff would value increasing the range of provision available. The focus during the inspection was on the development of pupils' invasion skills through a range of hockey activities. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 participate in a range of weekly outdoor and adventurous activities at a nearby outdoor activity centre each week. These lessons are delivered by accredited tutors. Activities include orienteering, mountain biking, archery, rope work, rafting and sailing. These are very popular with pupils.

68. In addition pupils in Years 1 to 6 are provided with a short residential break at an outdoor centre each year. At this outdoor centre they are given the chance to engage in a good range of sporting activities. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 likewise are given the chance to go on a residential holiday each year. This takes place in the Wye Valley, and is somewhat longer, lasting from Monday to Friday. This enables students to take part in a range of climbing and water sports activities.
69. The centre is currently engaged in discussions with the Sporting Development Officer from the LEA about the possibility of using the former secondary school gymnasium which is located on the same site as the PRU. This will significantly improve the range of physical education and sporting activities it is able to offer pupils. The subject is well led and managed considering the constraints imposed by the accommodation and available resources and the subject leader has ensured as far as is possible that the pupils experience a rich curriculum which impacts positively on their physical development and improves their confidence and self-esteem as they develop the skills of collaborating in team activities. The provision makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development.

## **Art and design**

The provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are given the chance to explore and use a range of art media.
- Pupils enjoy their art lessons and take pride in their efforts.
- Pupils are introduced to the works of accepted great artists and are given the chance to paint in their style.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development; particularly in raising their awareness of cultural diversity.
- The curriculum offered to pupils is constrained by the available accommodation and resources.

### **Commentary**

70. Evidence from a limited number of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' artwork indicates that their achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. By Year 9 pupils attain standards close to those expected nationally but they are below because the limited accommodation and resources means that they cannot access the full range of experiences that they would in mainstream school. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
71. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 develop satisfactory observational drawing skills relative to their age. They draw a range of still-life pictures using pencils, charcoal crayons and paints. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 participate in a wider range of art activities although their work is restricted by the limits imposed by the accommodation and resources. Pupils continue to improve their observational drawing skills satisfactorily, create collages, engage in block printing and stencilling, and produce some interesting masks based on examples from West Africa. Pupils also consider the works of great artists and begin to develop the skill of painting in their style. Textile work is a strength with pupils involved in tie dyeing and the creation of wax resistant pictures and patterns on a range of materials. However, due to the lack of facilities they cannot have the opportunity to work with clay. There is no kiln and this limits what can be provided. Because of the opportunity to explore art from a range of cultures, and to paint in the style of a range of artists, the subject makes a useful contribution to raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
72. It was only possible to observe two art lessons during the inspection. Teaching and learning were good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. Scrutiny of work indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is planned well and the resources available are used to good effect to stimulate pupils' imagination and to extend their knowledge and

understanding. However, limited accommodation and resources does have an adverse impact on the quality of teaching that can be provided. Because pupils enjoy their art activities they take pride in what they produce and this makes a valuable contribution to their satisfactory achievement. However, some of them, because of their difficulties, lack the patience and concentration to refine their work over time in order to improve its quality.

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are suitable schemes of work. Assessment is through one-to-one discussion and the self-evaluation of work. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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

The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are given good opportunities to develop as citizens through participation in a 'Sure Start Nursery' project.
- Sex and drugs education is sensitively managed.
- Skilful counselling builds pupils confidence and self-esteem.
- The PSHCE programme makes a valuable contribution to enable pupils to successfully manage their anger.
- Innovative and creative curriculum development makes a valuable contribution to developing pupils as citizens and making them feel valued.
- Teaching is dynamic and interesting and the development plan for further improvement is exciting.

### **Commentary**

74. The planning for and teaching of PSHCE is good. In Years 1 to 6 effective use is made of 'Circle Time' (an activity where pupils sit in a circle and there are opportunities for them to express their feelings and to value and respect the feelings of others in the group) to build pupils confidence and self-esteem. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils have discrete PSHCE lessons. An innovative and creative curriculum in Years 7 to 9 ensures that pupils can participate as citizens, as evidenced in their involvement in a 'Sure Start Nursery' project on the same site as the PRU. Their involvement in reading stories to the children in the nursery build their confidence and self-esteem, and for many it is the first time that they have been valued as responsible citizens. They enjoy working in the nursery and make rapid gains in their confidence as readers as a result of the activity. Involvement in a modified Duke of Edinburgh programme piloted by the PRU enables students in Key Stage 3 to develop as citizens. The structured counselling sessions, as part of taught time, make a very valuable contribution to pupils personal development as they develop anger management strategies and improve their ability to express their feelings
75. Because of the experiences of some of the pupils the approach to sex education and raising awareness of the harmful effects of drug misuse are very sensitively managed. Effective use is made of the 'Drugs Roadshow' in association with Essex Police and workshops facilitated by Connexions to teach pupils in Years 7 to 9 about the harmful effects of drug misuse. There is a good programme of sex education in Years 7 to 9, and parents/carers have been consulted about the content of this programme. In Years 1 to 6 issues related to sex education and drug misuse are managed on a 1: 1 basis according to individual needs. There is a strong emphasis on healthy eating and the PRU is very aware of students who show signs of eating disorders. Liaison with agencies, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAHMS), is good and effective in supporting such students.
76. By Year 9, pupils attain standards in citizenship close to national expectations because of the opportunities they are given to participate as citizens in the community. In addition their

achievement, particularly in more effectively managing their feelings and behaviour, is good. In a Year 9 lesson pupils made very important gains in their understanding of the importance to probe issues deeply, to ask penetrating questions, and not to always accept what they are told in the media at face value.

77. Teaching and learning are good in PSHCE. Fun activities, cracking pace, exciting visual cues and the involvement of outside agencies motivate the pupils to learn. The regular use of the '*one stop PC shop*' where pupils can have a 1:1 consultation with the community police officer for the PRU enhances their learning about law and order but also enables them to gain confidence in their relationships with the police. The formal teaching programme is backed up by many opportunities to promote pupils' social skills, such as the breakfast club each morning. The taught PSHCE programme also makes a valuable contribution to the provision of careers education in Years 7 to 9, but this was not seen during the inspection.
78. The leadership and management of PSHCE are good. The co-ordinator has developed good schemes of work linked to robust assessments. The programme focuses on developing confidence and self-esteem and promotes the fact that it is fine to say no to sex and no to drug misuse. The programmes make a valuable contribution to the personal development of the pupils. There is a robust development plan with a focus on developing a pupil council to enable the pupils to have an improved voice on how the quality of education provision for them can be improved.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

