

INSPECTION REPORT

Marles Hill Residential Pupil Referral Unit
150 Wheatley Lane Road
Barrowford
Nelson, Lancashire
BB9 6QQ

LEA area : Lancashire

School Register Number : 119114

Acting Headteacher : Mr J N McCafferty

Reporting inspector : Mr A Siddall
T11256

Date of inspection : 12-14 May 1998

Under OFSTED contract number: 600148

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the Education (Schools) Act 1996

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Information about the school

Type of school :	Pupil Referral Unit	Residential
Type of control :		Maintained
Age range of pupils :	11-14	
Gender of pupils :		Mixed
School address :		1 5 0
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Appropriate authority :	Lancashire	

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The Registrar
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
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Main Findings of the Inspection

1. Marles Hill is a Residential Pupil Referral Unit where pupils are well cared for socially and academically. The Unit operates as an orderly community. Pupils are helped by a headteacher, teachers and support staff committed to helping them return successfully to their mainstream school.

Attainment and Progress

2. Pupils' attainment is overall below average on entry and across all subjects taught in the Unit. Pupils with longer experience at Marles Hill show higher levels of attainment. Attainment in English, mathematics and science, whilst in the Unit, matches closely their attainments in these subjects in their mainstream schools.
3. Most pupils' attainment in English is below average and is affected by their difficulties with reading, speaking, listening, grammar, spelling and writing. Pupils' concentration spans and listening skills are generally weak. Pupils are encouraged to read quietly and aloud. Many read aloud in lessons and assemblies showing a growing confidence and understanding. A good range of poetry encourages them to discuss and debate meaning. Pupils' oral skills are explored by effective question and answer activities. Individual opportunities are planned for pupils to research ideas and express them in writing but attainment is below average in this area.
4. In science pupils' attainment is in line with national averages but also includes some above average work. This is supported by a well planned curriculum in short units of work, appropriate and effective activities for learning about science and higher expectations of pupils. In mathematics pupils' attainment is below average and depressed by their general lack of interest in the subject. The activities to explore mathematical ideas are not well matched to the prior knowledge of the pupils. Some of the work is too easy and some too challenging, for example with fractions and ratio. Attainment in information technology is below average although pupils work with growing confidence on word processing in history and data logging in science.
5. In history, geography and religious education pupils' attainment is generally below average. Some individual pieces of work, particularly in history on World Wars, demonstrate attainment in line with national expectations. In religious education the exploration of the meaning of religions enables pupils to form their own ideas about whether a God exists. Other attainments and achievements come through the personal and social education programme and the extended curriculum offered throughout the day. This report does not contain any judgements on art, design technology, drama and music. Physical education is delivered through swimming and outdoor education. Although work is undertaken to support pupils in French there is insufficient evidence to form judgements on levels of attainment.
6. Most pupils, including those with particular special educational needs, make

at least satisfactory progress overall in English and science during their time at the Unit. In English pupils are improving at a good rate in basic reading skills. In science some good progress was seen with individual pupils developing their investigative skills and scientific knowledge. Insufficient progress is made in mathematics overall where tasks are not well matched to individual pupil needs and are often unchallenging. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history, geography, religious education and swimming. Some pupils make less progress than expected in English, mathematics, careers and personal and social education mainly through low levels of concentration.

7. Although each pupil has an individual education learning plan and an individual care plan the targets for improvement are often too imprecise. Targets focused specifically on basic skills, in literacy and numeracy, are needed to effect greatest improvement. The targets for improving behaviour also need to be more explicit in classrooms.
8. Pupils show attitudes about learning and making relationships which are satisfactory overall. They make gains in confidence and in their ability to learn as the programmes begin to take effect. When they show interest they settle quickly, respond positively to questions, ignore distractions and show their previous knowledge to be useful and appropriate. Pupils display positive relationships to others and are helpful at mealtimes and social gatherings. Pupils show respect to visitors.
9. When emotions run very high and poor behaviour results, pupils show a willingness to face up to what they have done and they try again to control their actions. Some pupils find adjustment from their normal unacceptable behaviour difficult to come to terms with as they disrupt the learning of the groups. Some find working cooperatively with others outside their everyday experience. More work is needed to induct pupils on the day to day classroom routines and in the need to work cooperatively. They respond well when given opportunities to look at issues such as bullying, aggressiveness and drugs abuse.
10. The attendance of the majority of pupils during their time at Marles Hill is very good. Although some pupils have poor attendance patterns, prior to entry to the Unit, it improves significantly whilst there and when pupils are reintegrated. Pupils are appropriately dually registered at Marles Hill and at the mainstream school, although occasionally incorrectly recorded. Communications with mainstream schools on attendance is good. Pupils are generally where they are expected to be. The Unit should ensure that the monitoring of attendance and the registration of pupils is always done rigorously.

The Quality of Education

11. Teaching quality is satisfactory overall. It is good in English, science, history and information technology, and some times unsatisfactory in mathematics. Given the number of new pupils who show some very challenging behaviour the care and concern of committed teachers enables the Unit to operate as a safe learning environment. Teachers generally show good knowledge and understanding of the needs of pupils and of the National Curriculum subjects for which they are responsible. A deeper knowledge of the National Curriculum programmes of study for mathematics would enhance the mathematics programme.
12. The lack of data on attainment and progress on entry from mainstream schools inhibits teachers from planning more effective learning and assessment activities. Early assessments of pupils at the Unit had not been completed at the time of the inspection. This prompted more class teaching and less individually tailored activities relevant to the pupils' learning needs than was desirable.
13. New pupils are unclear of the overall routines for behaving and working expected of them. Some inconsistency by teachers in the application of these routines for the management of pupils' behaviour needs to be rectified. A more coherent Unit policy, currently under discussion, needs to be agreed and implemented. The setting and use of homework by all staff is currently unsatisfactory overall. Support teachers assist in the class activities but could be used more effectively to enhance both classwork and homework.
14. The curriculum, for pupils in Key Stage 3 only, meets the requirements of the Lancashire Pupil Referral Service (PRS) Curriculum Statement 1997. It offers suitable breadth, balance and relevance for individual pupils. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum of the Unit. There is an appropriate balance and reasonable attention given to English, mathematics and science. The personal and social education programme is effective in dealing with sex, health, drugs, bullying and careers education but would benefit from more systematic planning.
15. A very significant contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils is made by the head of care and his team. The part they play is a significant strength of the Unit. The residential provision enhances the personal and social education curriculum. Pupils are provided with good quality learning support throughout their time at Marles Hill. Expectations of pupils are made clear and agreed on entry by the staff, parents, carers and pupils. Pupils feel valued, safe and secure. The individual care programmes are good, with practical targets to improve behaviour and relationships.

16. The length of lessons creates some tensions for both teachers and pupils. Pupils in their initial adjustment stage have limited concentration spans. Further work is needed therefore to ensure the current lesson planning is backed by effective schemes of work in all subjects taught. A review of lesson length and group arrangements is needed.
17. The arrangements for an initial assessment of reading skills, comprehension, spelling and number capability are good. A programme suitable for the individual pupil is then drawn up. Mainstream schools retain the overall assessment of attainment of each pupil. Pupils are well supported by the Unit staff in preparation for the Standard Assessment Tests.
18. Much of the marking of pupils' work fails to indicate how they might improve. There is much encouragement and praise but the marking policy is not being consistently applied by all staff. Pupils do receive good quality individual support in discussions with teachers and care staff.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

19. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory overall, and for spiritual, moral and social development it is sometimes good. Pupils respond well to the early morning routines, a healthy eating start to the day and assemblies where they reflect quietly on music, poetry and on the beauty of their surroundings.
20. Moral education is a strong feature of the education offered at Marles Hill where daily routines are designed to instil a sense of personal discipline. Major topics such as sex and drugs education help pupils to face up to moral dilemmas and to shape acceptable responses. A code of practice, sometimes inconsistently applied by staff, clearly sets out what is expected of pupils. Awards and a points system of rewards help in the development of a sense of achievement through pupils' own efforts.
21. Pupils' experiences of other cultures through literature, discussion and outside visits is more limited. The library provides appropriate cultural material in the fiction section. Visits to museums, art galleries and other classroom activities contribute to a growing knowledge of other cultures. Pupils study other faiths and cultures in religious education. Some examples of pupil intolerance of other cultures are not explored by staff sufficiently when they arise. The absence of art, music and drama prevents some rich opportunities for cultural development of pupils. This area of cultural and multi cultural awareness needs further development in the curriculum of the Unit.

Leadership, management and efficiency

22. Marles Hill is well managed, on a day to day basis, by the acting headteacher during a period of considerable uncertainty for its future within the new Lancashire PRS, established in September 1997. Good staff relationships, a

sustained approach to care of pupils and successful day to day operations have been satisfactorily achieved. Support to the acting headteacher and staff from the LEA, to implement this policy and to provide the necessary staff development, has been limited in scope and quality during this period. This has contributed significantly to low morale among staff who, nevertheless, continue to display high levels of professional commitment to the care and education of pupils.

23. Changes to the admissions criteria, under the new PRS policy, have not yet enabled the Unit to operate at full capacity. The internal arrangements for the admission of pupils, however, and the reviews of progress are satisfactory. Secondary schools participate fully in the reviews of pupil performance as they return.
24. A management committee gives valuable support to the Unit. It does not, however, have any clear remit for monitoring the work of the Unit or accountability for the implementation of policies. It is essential that the future leadership and management of the Unit is resolved, and with it the purpose and accountabilities of the management committee.
25. The development plan for the Unit is unsatisfactory. Although the aims of the Unit are largely met in the daily activities the development targets are not prioritised, costed or arranged with any indications of how they might be judged to be successful. There is little rigorous or systematic monitoring to establish the quality of the teaching, the achievements of the Unit or whether the development plan targets are being met. This has led to weak staff development to achieve the targets set. Pupils do, however, successfully return to mainstream schools. Over 72% of pupils attending the Unit over the past year have successfully reintegrated to an appropriate educational placement in secondary schools or special educational provision. Social services inspections of the residential provision indicated safe practice and all their recommendations have been dealt with effectively.
26. Financial planning is satisfactory and lies mainly with the Local Education Authority (LEA) under the Lancashire PRS. The Unit effectively operates a devolved budget sufficient for day to day resources. The Unit is wholly funded by the LEA.
27. The deployment of teaching and other staff, and other resources for learning is the responsibility of the acting headteacher and is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good lessons. The Unit is staffed appropriately for its current role. Support staff offer good help to the pupils in the classroom but their use and deployment in classrooms needs further development. The benefits of the residential provision are clearly seen by parents as a way of recovering their son or daughter back to mainstream school and often to themselves.
28. The LEA, under the new service provision, has not as yet fully monitored the Unit for cost effectiveness. The pupil Unit costs are, however, high and very high when the residential provision is taken into account. Since the Unit delivers

its stated objectives, particularly the return of pupils to schools, it gives satisfactory value for money.

Key Issues for Action after the Inspection

29. The acting headteacher and senior management should ensure that the current good work of the Unit is continued through the provision of:
- more consistency in the management of pupils' behaviour and improved classroom organisation by:
 - * further development of the reward and sanctions policy to achieve consistent implementation by all staff;
 - * reassessing how pupils are grouped and the length of lessons;
 - * providing guidance to classroom support assistants to maximise their contribution to supporting pupils with challenging behaviour;
 - * systematically and regularly reviewing the targets for learning and behaviour with the pupils during and not only at the end of lessons.
 - improved arrangements for staff development by:
 - * identifying training needs more thoroughly;
 - * evaluating the outcomes of professional development activity; and
 - * providing more opportunities to develop shared professional skills, for example, regular marking of pupils' work to show how they might improve and the setting of homework;
 - improved development planning, with the LEA, to ensure that:
 - * there is a systematic planned cycle of review, prioritisation, implementation and evaluation of the work of the Unit.

The LEA should ensure that the success of the Unit is sustained by:

- ensuring that the management of the Unit is placed on a more secure footing by:
 - * resolving the future leadership and management of the Unit, including the purpose and accountabilities of the management committee;
 - * clarifying the strategic role of the PRU, given the decision to close the residential element;
 - * establishing a process of review, monitoring and evaluation of the Unit against its development plan; and
 - * refining the admission process to ensure that the Unit has appropriate data on pupils' attainment and progress to enable it to plan the curriculum and learning activities for each pupil.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1. The number of pupils at Marles Hill varies according to the needs of mainstream secondary schools. The Unit operates as a short term residential provision within the new Lancashire PRS to help pupils who have behaviour, learning or emotional difficulties. Pupils are generally in Key Stage 3 of secondary education; normally Years 7 and 9. Twenty six pupils, supported by the Unit, made a positive return to mainstream schools in the past year. Most pupils reintegrate effectively into mainstream school and successfully complete their education. All pupils are dual registered with a mainstream school. The current group of 14 pupils have attainment levels below national expectations overall in most subjects studied at the Unit. Five out of the 14 were new to the Unit and in the first week displayed very challenging behaviour.

The Unit aims to:

- promote success through effective teaching and support to pupils;
 - achieve success through partnership with parents;
 - provide short term residential support in a stable environment and;
 - reintegrate pupils back into their mainstream school at the earliest possible opportunity.
1. These aims relate to the current provision, which includes a residential element. Lancashire County Council resolved by Committee on 12 May 1998 to discontinue the residential element. This report has measured the success of the Unit by its current aims.

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :		%
	Authorised	School
	Unauthorised	School
		4.0
		2.0

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :		Number
	Fixed period	1
	Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :		%
	Very good or better	0
	Satisfactory or better	88.24
	Less than satisfactory	11.76

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational Standards Achieved

Attainment and Progress

1. Pupils' attainment is below average overall across all subjects and below average on entry to the Unit. Some variation of attainment levels does occur in different subjects. In English and mathematics the attainment of pupils is below average. In science the attainment is in line with national expectation and includes some above average work. The pupils are taught in two groups; one with mostly new entrants and a second with those who have been there longer. The group with pupils with longer experience shows better attainment than the new group, many of whom show complex behaviour and emotional difficulties. Attainment in English, mathematics and science whilst in the Unit matches closely the attainments of these pupils in these subjects in their mainstream school.
2. Most pupils have difficulties with the basic skills of English reading, speaking, listening, grammar, spelling and writing. Although attainment is below average in each area pupils are able to display a range of skills, appropriate knowledge and reasonable understanding. In reading pupils are encouraged to read quietly and to read aloud. Many read aloud in lessons and assemblies showing confidence and understanding. A good range of poetry encourages them to discuss and debate meaning. Listening skills are the least well developed especially where poor behaviour occasionally interrupts the learning and achievements. Pupils' oral skills are explored by effective question and answer activities. Individual opportunities to research ideas and express them in writing are planned but attainment in these areas is below average.
3. In mathematics attainment levels are depressed by pupils' general lack of interest in the subject. The activities to explore mathematical ideas are not well matched to the prior knowledge of the pupils. Some of the work is too easy and some too challenging. Most pupils find fractions and ratio too difficult. Curriculum and attainment information from secondary schools is of insufficient quality to support more effective planning of appropriate experiences for pupils by the Unit staff.
4. In science some pupils' work is above national expectation. The higher attainments in science are supported by a well planned curriculum, appropriate and effective activities for learning about science and higher expectations of pupils. Although science facilities are limited the modular approach enables pupils to focus on short planned activities which assist the development of their skills and understanding.
5. Pupils show confidence in using information technology. Attainment is below national expectation, and is limited by the time spent in the Unit. Information technology is used well in individual subjects. CD Roms are used effectively to extract information in history, log data in science and word process generally

across subjects.

6. In history, geography and religious education pupils' attainment is generally below average. Some individual pieces of work, particularly in history, demonstrate attainment in line with national expectations. Some written work on World Wars I and II shows an understanding of issues and a capacity to extract information from a range of historical sources. In religious education the exploration of the meaning of religions enables pupils to form their own ideas about whether a God exists.
7. Other attainments and achievements come through the personal and social education programme and the extended curriculum offered throughout the day. This report does not contain any judgements on art, design technology, drama and music. Outdoor education and swimming form part of the physical education programme. Although work is undertaken to support pupils in French there is insufficient evidence to form judgements on levels of attainment.
8. Most pupils, including those with particular special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress overall in English and science during their time at the Unit. Insufficient progress is made in mathematics overall. Most pupils make significant progress in improving their behaviour and becoming more socially adjusted when back in mainstream school. Most secondary schools report that pupils show improved basic skills when returning from the Unit. They also make progress in core subjects and sustain the capacity to learn more effectively.
9. In English pupils improve at a good rate in basic reading skills. Effective strategies are used to encourage reading aloud and to explore literature through library books and poetry. In science some good progress is seen with individual pupils in their investigative skills and scientific knowledge. In mathematics tasks are not well matched to individual pupils' needs and are often unchallenging. More planning of learning tasks is needed in mathematics using, where possible, National Curriculum programmes of study.
10. Satisfactory progress is made in geography, history, information technology and religious education. Some pupils make less progress than expected in English, careers and personal and social education, mainly through low levels of concentration. Parents overall are satisfied, through good reporting, that the Unit enables progress to be made and that it supports their child returning to mainstream school, and to home, with a greater chance of continued successful relationships.
11. Although each pupil has an individual education learning plan and an individual care plan there need to be more focused targets for improvement specifically on basic skills, in literacy and numeracy. The targets for improvement are often too imprecise and lack clarity for the pupils. The targets for improving behaviour also need to be more explicit in classrooms, especially when challenging behaviour is being demonstrated. Greater progress on monitoring and moderating behaviour was seen outside classrooms with good support of care

staff.

12. The arrangements for homework are unsatisfactory overall. Some homework is done well under the supervision of staff but it lacks a clear focus for the pupils in the daily planned activities. It is particularly important to ensure that the homework provided by schools and the Unit is seen by pupils as integral to their learning. Pupils do not currently share or understand its importance in support of their achievements. Links with mainstream schools on the development of a homework policy are not sufficiently strong.

Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development

13. Pupils show attitudes which are satisfactory overall. There are clearly gains in the pupils' self-esteem the longer they are in the Unit. They make gains in confidence and their ability to learn as the programmes arranged for them begin to take effect. There is a clear interest shown in some topics and activities such as word processing, investigations in science and debating issues from poetry. When they show interest they settle quickly, respond positively to questions, ignore distractions and show their previous knowledge to be useful and appropriate. Many pupils, who are reluctant readers, volunteer to read aloud to the group. Pupils show that they can display positive relationships to others and be helpful in situations such as mealtimes and social gatherings. Pupils show respect to adults.
14. When problems arise pupils feel staff are fair in their discipline and expectations of them. In the most difficult situations, when emotions run very high and poor behaviour is shown, pupils are willing to face up to what they have done and they try again to control their actions. They respond quickly when reprimanded for challenging and unacceptable behaviour. They respond well when given opportunities to look at issues such as bullying, aggressiveness and drugs abuse
15. Concentration spans and listening skills generally are weakest in the pupils with the greatest behavioural and emotional problems. Pupils also found working cooperatively with others too difficult. They interrupt other pupils' work and call out in class. Some pupils express forcefully that they can not see the point of what they are learning. More work is needed in the induction of pupils to the Unit on the day to day classroom routines and in the need to work cooperatively. An orienteering activity foundered, in part, on the unwillingness and inability of pupils to work in this way. Although parts of the activity were successful, adequate prior teaching and learning of these necessary skills had not taken place.
16. Notwithstanding the behavioural outbursts which occur pupils operate as an orderly community. Pupils longest in the Unit show clear improvement in their relationships with all staff. Some routines, which are unfamiliar to new pupils, are made clearer and pupils respond accordingly. Rewards and sanctions are accepted by pupils but applied inconsistently by teaching staff. The Unit staff overall need to develop more coherent and consistent approaches to the

management of pupils' behaviour.

Attendance

17. The attendance of the majority of pupils during their time at Marles Hill is very good. Minor difficulties remain with some pupils who have serious attendance problems. Although many of them have histories of poor attendance, prior to entry to the Unit. Attendance improves significantly whilst on the roll. Secondary schools also report improved patterns of attendance when pupils are reintegrated.
18. Pupils are appropriately dually registered at Marles Hill and at the mainstream school. Communications with mainstream schools on attendance are good. Minor irregularities of correct recording of where the pupil is operating are rectified quickly. Authorised absence from the Unit, to attend mainstream school, is naturally high. Pupils are, generally, where they are expected to be. The Unit does, however, need to ensure that the monitoring of attendance and the registration of pupils is done rigorously. The entry of pupils to the registers and the removal when a pupil has returned to mainstream school is insufficiently clear. Staff need to improve the information, on a daily basis, about who is on roll, who is in mainstream schools and who has formally left the Unit.

Quality of Education Provided

Teaching

19. Teaching quality is generally satisfactory. There is some good teaching in English, science, history and information technology, with some unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics. Given the number of new pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour the care and concern of committed teachers enables the Unit to operate as a safe learning environment. Teachers generally show good knowledge and understanding of the needs of pupils and of the National Curriculum subjects for which they are responsible. A deeper knowledge of the National Curriculum programmes of study for mathematics would enhance the taught mathematics programme. Teachers offer good support for pupils returning to mainstream schools to take their National Curriculum Standard Assessment Tests.
20. Levels of expectation are higher for the pupils who have been at the Unit the longest. The newer pupils do not grasp fully what is expected of them in all lessons. The lack of data on attainment inhibits teachers from planning more effective learning activities for pupils based upon their specific needs. Early assessments of pupils at the Unit had not been completed at the time of the inspection. This prompts too much class teaching and too few individually tailored activities relevant to the pupils' learning needs. Some of the work therefore lacks challenge whilst for some pupils the work is too demanding. The lessons, however, do function generally satisfactorily for the most part with the newest pupils, and fully for the more experienced pupils.

21. The lack of prior data on attainment also makes the day to day assessment of pupils in the classroom more difficult to achieve. Without the targets agreed in the eventual individual learning and care plans, moderating behaviour and supporting specific learning needs is very difficult for staff. For the pupils who are re-integrating back to mainstream schools staff reviews and assessments on an everyday basis provide good support to the pupils.
22. Teaching methods are generally well planned to deal with a range of behavioural and emotional responses from pupils. Where difficulties are experienced new pupils are unclear of the overall routines expected of them. Some inconsistency by teachers in the application of these routines for the management of pupils' behaviour needs to be rectified. A more coherent Unit policy, currently under discussion, needs to be agreed and implemented which would improve the consistency by which pupil behaviour is managed in the classroom and by care staff. More effective techniques are needed to ensure work is completed and pupils stay on task.
23. The setting and use of homework by all staff is currently unsatisfactory overall. Some good examples in English and science encourage pupils that learning in class is linked to other activities in schools and at home. Teachers have the benefit of support teachers to assist in the class activities and they could be used to enhance homework more effectively. The work of the support teachers needs to be more carefully focused to ensure individual targets for learning are being addressed. It would be beneficial to the support staff to be involved in the planning of curriculum and learning activities.

Curriculum and Assessment

24. The curriculum, for pupils in Key Stage 3 only, meets the requirements of the Lancashire PRS Curriculum Statement 1997. It offers suitable breadth, balance and relevance for individual pupils. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum of the Unit. There is an appropriate balance and reasonable attention given to English, mathematics and science. There is appropriate provision for geography, history, information technology and religious education. There is no provision for art, design technology, drama and music. The use of community facilities does, however, support swimming and orienteering. Some French is taught but there is insufficient to make judgements as to its quality.
25. The personal and social education programme is effective in dealing with sex, health and drugs education as appropriate. Careers education is appropriate to Year 9 pupils as they begin to think of the examination and other courses they may wish to follow at their mainstream school. Pupils are encouraged to talk frankly about their relationships and behaviour problems. Whilst much of this is dealt with through normal lessons, much of the time in extra curricular activities enhances the experiences of pupils very significantly and gives them good support for their personal development. The extra-curricular provision would benefit from more systematic planning.

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26. The part played by the care and classroom support staff, to help teachers, is a significant strength of the Unit. The residential provision enhances the personal and social education curriculum. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory overall with some good provision for moral and social development.
 27. The breadth of curriculum currently offered is constraining the time to plan for the individual pupil's learning needs, especially on arrival at the Unit. The length of lessons also creates some tensions for both teachers and pupils. Pupils in their initial adjustment stage have limited concentration spans. Further work is needed to ensure lesson planning is backed by effective schemes of work in all subjects taught.
 28. Attainment is effectively assessed by the Unit from a range of nationally available tests on reading skills, comprehension, spelling and number capability and a programme suitable for the individual pupil is drawn up. Mainstream schools retain the overall assessment of attainment of each pupil, some of whom took the Standard Assessment Tests prior to the inspection week. Pupils are well supported by the Unit staff in preparation for the tests. The new admission arrangements are still developing and still need to ensure that appropriate data on pupils' attainments are given to the Unit prior to admission.
 29. Much of the marking of pupils' work fails to indicate how they might improve. There is much encouragement and praise but the marking policy is not being consistently applied by all staff. Pupils are not, therefore, receiving sufficient written feedback on their work from teachers. They do receive good quality individual oral support but often this is not linked to clear targets for improvement.

Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

30. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory overall, and sometimes good provision for spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils respond well to the early morning routines and a healthy eating start to the day. They are encouraged in assemblies to reflect quietly on music and poetry and on the beauty of their surroundings. Outdoor education visits are used to reflect on the wonders of nature. Pupils are encouraged to discuss what makes a real impact in their lives and how it can be explained.
31. Moral education is also a strong feature of the education offered at Marles Hill. Daily routines are designed to instil a sense of personal discipline. Major topics such as sex and drugs education help pupils to face up to moral dilemmas. The personal and social education programme, and the full range of extra curricular opportunities help to shape acceptable responses from pupils. A code of practice clearly sets out what is expected of pupils. Some staff inconsistency in its application causes some confusion in pupils, giving mixed messages about expectations.

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32. Much of the emphasis on social education is on developing pupils' social skills in the full programme for the day. Social adjustment by conforming to reasonable rules for behaviour helps pupils, whose patterns of behaviour have been generally very disruptive to others. Awards and points systems of reward help in the development of a sense of achievement through their own efforts. Pupils are given residential experiences outside the Unit, in Northumberland and the Lake District, to develop working in teams and to enrich their overall experiences. The personal and social education programme makes appropriate provision for the development of life skills.
 33. Pupils' experiences of other cultures through literature, discussion and outside visits is more limited. The library provides appropriate cultural material in the fiction section. Museums, art galleries and classroom activities contribute to a growing knowledge of other cultures. Pupils study other faiths and religious cultures in religious education. Some examples of pupil intolerance of other cultures were not explored by staff sufficiently when they arose. Art, music and drama currently make no contribution to the cultural development of pupils. This area of cultural and multi cultural awareness needs further development in the curriculum of the Unit.

Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

34. Pupils are provided with good quality systematic support throughout their time at Marles Hill. The support and guidance focuses on developing the most important learning skills and helping them to modify their behaviour. The pupils are directly involved in reviewing their own performance and setting personal targets for themselves. The internal review process is good. The individual education programme is, however, inadequate and could be improved by more specific academic targets in the subjects pupils study whilst in the Unit. Pupils feel valued, safe and secure. The individual care programmes are good, with practical targets to improve behaviour and relationships. A very significant contribution to this personal and social development of the pupils is made by the head of care and his team.
35. Expectations of pupils are made clear and agreed on entry by the staff, parents, carers and pupils. A sound policy supports careful handling of all forms of bullying. The guidance and support offered, through the co-keyworker process, enables the majority of pupils to make a successful return to mainstream schools, where they make progress in their learning and show improved attendance and behaviour.
36. Notwithstanding the behavioural outbursts which occur the Unit operates as an orderly community. Rewards and sanctions for behaviour are accepted by pupils but applied inconsistently by teaching staff. Staff overall need to develop more coherent and consistent approaches to the management of pupils' behaviour.
37. The child protection policy and practice are very good. All staff thoroughly

understand their responsibilities and the procedures they should follow. All recommendations of two social services inspections have been completed successfully. The Unit has satisfactory health and safety practice.

Partnership with Parents and the Community

38. Communications with parents are very good. They are fully involved in the initial registration arrangements, the six week review process and at other times when contact about their child is necessary. The reviews also involve the pupil and staff from the mainstream school. Marles Hill staff are in contact with parents at least weekly and many home visits are made. There is close liaison over the behaviour modification part of the individual care programme, especially when pupils are being reintegrated back into mainstream schools. Written communications to parents clearly outline behavioural improvements but rarely refer to academic progress. Complaints from parents are dealt with promptly and effectively.
39. Liaison with schools at the initial stages of admission have now changed to the new PRS. Secondary schools are still uncertain what arrangements are likely for the near future with the new PRS. Mainstream schools, however, value the work with families to support the reintegration of pupils. This ensures that lines of communication are kept open. The preparation for re-entry and the day to day arrangements are good and work effectively. Pupil support reduces gradually as the successful re-entry continues. Marles Hill retains a small number of continuing outreach activities to support pupils.
40. Parents are aware of a homework support line. Few make any practical use of this facility. Parents have few social contacts with the school and opportunities are limited, often by distance, to carol concerts. Marles Hill has no current business links. Links with others in the community are limited to the use of facilities such as swimming pools. Developing longer term relationships of this kind has been difficult given the uncertainty of the future of the Unit.

The Management and Efficiency of the School

Leadership and Management

41. Marles Hill is well managed, on a day to day basis, by the acting headteacher during a period of considerable uncertainty for its future within the new Lancashire PRS, established in September 1997. Good staff relationships, a sustained approach to care of pupils and successful day to day operations are satisfactorily achieved. Support to the acting headteacher and staff from the LEA has been limited in scope and quality during this period. The lack of clarity on the strategic direction of the Unit makes the overall position unsatisfactory. The LEA decision to withdraw the residential provision at the Unit contributes significantly to low morale of staff who nevertheless continue to display high levels of professional commitment to the care and education of pupils.
42. Changes to the admissions criteria, under the new PRS policy, has not yet

enabled the Unit to operate at full capacity. The internal arrangements for the admission of pupils, however, and the reviews of progress are satisfactory. Secondary schools do participate fully in the reviews of pupil performance as they return.

43. A management committee gives valuable support to the Unit. It does not, however, have any clear remit for monitoring the work of the Unit or for any accountability for the implementation of policies. It is effective as a support for the acting headteacher in the consideration of policy changes suitable for the Unit's development plan. It is essential that the future management of the Unit is resolved including the purpose and accountabilities of the management committee.
44. The development plan for the Unit is unsatisfactory. Although the aims of the Unit are largely met in the daily activities the development targets are not prioritised, costed or arranged with any indications of how they might be judged to be successful. There is little rigorous or systematic monitoring to establish the quality of the teaching, the achievements of the Unit or whether the development plan targets are being met. This has led to weak staff development to achieve the targets set. Notwithstanding the lack of monitoring by the Unit itself or the LEA, the return of pupils successfully to mainstream schools continues. Over 72% of pupils attending the Unit over the past year have successfully reintegrated to an appropriate educational placement in secondary schools or special educational provision.

Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

45. Marles Hill is staffed with sufficient qualified teaching, support assistants and care staff. Teaching commitments are well matched to teachers' qualifications and experience. The teaching staff ratio to pupils is very high as the Unit has operated below its full capacity for some time. This means fewer pupils in the daytime classes, increasing the range of learning support to individual pupils. There are sufficient staff to ensure effective liaison within mainstream schools.
46. The Unit has operated since the inception of the Lancashire PRS with an acting headteacher. Two of the teaching staff are relatively new to the Unit. Professional support for these new staff has been limited. Consequently the analysis of staff training needs and staff development has been limited and is currently unsatisfactory. There is no staff appraisal. Inservice training of staff has taken place but is not adequately recorded or effectively evaluated. Specific training events have taken place but there is little practical evidence of what difference has been made. Further staff development is needed to achieve consistency in their strategies for behaviour management and focusing classroom tasks on the needs of the individual pupil. Support staff work hard in classrooms but would benefit from greater clarity in their role and should be involved in planning the classroom activities.
47. All staff have made considerable effort to ensure their work is planned to meet the requirements of the new Lancashire PRS. These planning activities have

not been easy given the considerable uncertainty of the LEA policy for the future of residential pupil referral units.

48. The accommodation is sufficient to deliver the full planned curriculum. Although the three current teaching spaces are adequate they are not always well deployed. Science is currently taught in a small room with limited space and facilities. This curtails the possible extension of activities described in the policy and developing scheme of work. The provision of social and outdoor spaces is good to deliver the extra curricular activities and provide for effective personal and social development.
49. The Unit has complied with the recent LEA audit of health and safety. Regular daily checks are made of everyday health and safety issues. It should now act on the following additional health and safety issues:
 - ensure the moss on the tennis courts is removed completely to enable safe play;
 - complete, as appropriate, internal risk assessments and safety checks to comply with national legislation; and
 - seek to provide first aid cover for the full 24 hours whenever possible.
1. The Unit has a very good range of resources, efficiently managed, which are suitable to deliver its planned curriculum. The library facility is able to support the priority placed upon developing reading skills. An extension of artefacts to support religious education and history, in particular, would benefit pupils' understanding of those subjects. Further developments are needed to resource science investigations and software for information technology.

The Efficiency of the School

2. Financial planning lies mainly with the LEA under the Lancashire PRS; the Unit operates a devolved budget for day to day resources. The Unit is wholly funded by the LEA and therefore each pupil is double funded.
3. The deployment of teaching and other staff, and other resources for learning is the responsibility of the acting headteacher and is satisfactory. The Unit is staffed appropriately for its current role. Support staff offer good help to the pupils in the classroom but their use and deployment in classrooms needs further development.
4. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in English and science; and less progress than expected in mathematics. Their personal development is very good and the benefits of the residential provision are clearly seen. Parents support the residential provision as a way of recovering their son or daughter back to mainstream school and often to themselves.
5. The LEA, under the new service provision, has not as yet fully monitored the

Unit for cost effectiveness. The pupil Unit costs are, therefore, high and very high when the residential provision is taken into account. Since the Unit delivers its stated objectives, particularly the return of pupils to schools, it gives satisfactory value for money.

PART B : CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

1. Information is not provided in this section on individual subjects taught at the Pupil Referral Unit. The evidence collected in lessons and from other sources is, however, used in the main report to show the attainment and progress of pupils.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of Inspection Evidence

1. The inspection was undertaken by a team of four inspectors who completed nine inspection days in the Unit.
2. A total of 17 lessons was observed with each teacher, including the acting headteacher. This report does not include judgements on art, design technology, drama and music as these are not part of the present curriculum provision. Swimming and outdoor education form part of the physical education programme.
3. In addition inspectors:
 - held discussions with pupils, teachers, parents, LEA officers, acting headteacher, the chairman of the management committee and support staff;
 - scrutinised all pupils ' work;
 - visited three contributory secondary schools;
 - observed extra curricular activities;
 - observed the homework arrangements;
 - had access to the residential provision report from a social services inspection.
1. Before the inspection, documentation from the school, including policy statements and the Unit development plan were inspected. A meeting of parents was called to discuss their views of the Unit and was attended by eight parents. Four parents returned a questionnaire distributed by the Unit. These were very supportive.

Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y9	14	1	14	14

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y9)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.5

Education support staff (Y7 - Y9)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	20

Average teaching group size:	KS3	5
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FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1997- 98
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	£
Total Income (LEA source)	313,700.00
Total Expenditure (actual + projected)	313,700.00
Expenditure per pupil	8713.00
<i>36 pupils in last full year. 26 returned either (22ft and 4pt) to schools or other agencies. 14 presently in Unit (10ft and 4pt)</i>	
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

14

Number of questionnaires returned:

4

Percentage return rate:

28.5

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	75	25			
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	100				
The school handles complaints from parents well	100				
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	100				
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	100				
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	100				
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	100				
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	75	25			
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	100				
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	100				
My child(ren) like(s) school	75	25			