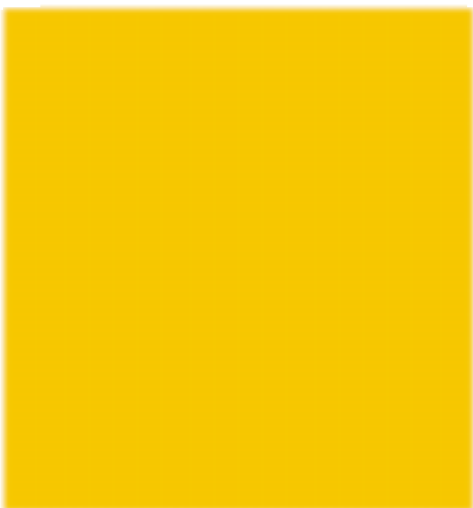


*Education and
Training Inspectorate
Report on*



**Provision for Pupils
with Emotional and
Behavioural Difficulties
in Northern Ireland**

Inspected 1997-98





*The Education and Training
Inspectorate*

*Provision for Pupils with Emotional and
Behavioural Difficulties
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1997-1998

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 During the academic year 1997/98, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) undertook an evaluation of the effectiveness of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) across the five education and library boards (boards). Special schools, outreach and peripatetic provision, including provision for Education Other Than At School (EOTAS), and educational guidance centres (EGCs) were inspected in general, focused or follow-up inspections, or in structured visits (see Appendix 1). A number of consultation meetings were also held with special education and psychology service officers in the area boards.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Department of Education for Northern Ireland's (DENI's) Review of Discipline in Schools, conducted in 1997, indicated that the majority of schools were managing pupil behaviour successfully, and the nature of the majority of difficulties encountered were low key and of a mild or moderate nature. In contrast, there is clear evidence from the current survey that a significant number of pupils with EBD are being suspended or expelled from mainstream schools, and there exists a reluctance by mainstream teachers to re-integrate these pupils. Evidence from the boards indicates a steady rise in the number of pupils with EBD referred for specialist provision.

3. THE FINDINGS

3.1 ETHOS IN EBD PROVISION

- 3.1.1 One of the main findings of this survey is the importance attributed throughout the service to the promotion of a positive ethos in EBD provision, and its influence on the management of behaviour. In this context, a consistent factor is the patient and caring attitude of the staff, and their understanding of the pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties. The key features of this approach include:

- the creation of a secure and caring environment;
- a commitment to achievement;

- the consistent application of rules and routines;
- the careful preparation of work by the teachers;
- a corporate approach to planning;
- a clear focus on re-integrating the pupils into mainstream education;
- high teacher expectations of the pupils;
- external accreditation of pupils' work;
- the successful involvement of parents in the pupils' efforts.

- 3.1.2 In six of the 22 centres visited, good links were established with parents: one centre, for example, involves parents in an initial meeting to ensure that they understand the aims of the provision; in another centre, parents agree to support guiding rules, and make a commitment to help staff promote good behaviour. A third centre provides parents with a daily report of their child's progress. The illustration below records the progress achieved in one centre in this specific area of its work:

"Good humour and negotiation characterise the working atmosphere of the centre. The staff work hard to raise the esteem of the young people who attend; they are energetic and enthusiastic about their work, and whole-hearted in their efforts to succeed with the pupils. Contact with the parents is regarded as important, and is seen as a major ingredient in the potential success of the behaviour policy. The parents and pupils sign a contract with the centre when the pupil is enrolled. Parents are kept well informed of progress through weekly and termly reports as well as half-termly home visits."

- 3.1.3 In four centres where the ethos was evidently poor, parents were rarely seen or contacted, and were not involved in a meaningful partnership to promote good behaviour.

4. BEHAVIOUR STRATEGIES

4.1 Out of 32 centres or services inspected, the quality of the behaviour strategies and procedures in eight were recognised as excellent and in three were poor. The majority of the provision was at least of a satisfactory standard.

4.2 The most effective strategies and programmes specify clearly how good behaviour is to be encouraged. In these, it is evident that:

- clear and comprehensive policy statements are in place;
- procedures are clearly understood by all staff and pupils;
- a range of strategies is available to meet the needs of individual pupils;
- activities are planned to help the pupils to develop the skills they need to manage their behaviour better;
- individual targets are set and reviewed constantly;
- behaviour targets are integrated into teaching and learning;
- regular evaluation is effectively implemented.

4.3 The following example illustrates how good planning strategies helped to effect improvement in the behaviour of one pupil:

'Barney', an eleven year old boy, with a history of bad temper, foul language, and verbal and physical aggression, was found to be unwilling to accept responsibility for his poor behaviour; he was argumentative and cheeky and constantly left his seat in class. For most of the time, he refused to work or produced careless work, and habitually disturbed other pupils. In response to this, the staff counselled 'Barney' at length about the consequences of his compliance and non-compliance. A number of strategies were put in place including verbal praise, stars, merit badges, certificates for earning a target number of stars, time out for specific behaviours, constant follow-up of incomplete or careless work. In addition, 'Barney' was provided with a level of work with an emphasis on presentation and accuracy at which he was able to work independently and experience success. Targets, which were discussed with 'Barney', included remaining in his

seat, putting his hand up when needing attention, compliance with instructions regarding his work, and a reduction in the incidences of physical and verbal aggression. Over the course of a year, 'Barney' made good progress against the targets and was more co-operative, willing to come to school, and to take an increasing amount of responsibility for the management of his behaviour.

4.4 It was evident that the best practice was directed by a written policy and common procedures which were discussed and consistently adhered to by all members of staff. In the Ardcarnet Project, for example, the policy was well prepared: the creation of an executive steering group consisting of the principal educational psychologist, the chief education welfare officer and the principal youth worker to oversee the implementation of the policy was a key feature of the good provision observed. In Bayview Educational Guidance Centre, the staff meet at the end of each day with the pupils to discuss, and to celebrate, the progress made by each pupil; long and short term goals are set and strategies agreed to help the teachers maintain progress. Similar good practice was found in Longstone School EBD Unit where a detailed assessment of pupils' work and behaviour, through structured observation, was carried out to help identify targets, and to integrate the management of the pupils' behaviour into the daily routines of the day. By contrast, in a number of centres, it was found that some part-time and temporary staff had no clear indication of the strategies, and consequently found the control of the pupils to be a major problem on occasions.

4.5 Several issues emerge from the evaluation of the rewards and sanctions used throughout the service. There is wide variation in the type and range of rewards and sanctions in use, and consequent variation in their effectiveness. There is general agreement that the system should enable the pupils to continue their education while at the same time learning to cope with their behavioural problems. Where rewards and sanctions were found to be successful in promoting good behaviour, a number of factors were evident. These include:

- a non-threatening and consistent approach;
- clear communication between the teachers and the pupils;

- a wide range of rewards reflecting individual needs and the age of the pupils;
- a clear understanding by the pupils of the system of rewards and sanctions;
- recognition of the need to encourage responsibility for the improvement of personal behaviour.

4.6 In a few instances, the survey found that the system of rewards and sanctions was too complex for the pupils to comprehend. One school, for example, offered a points system beyond the numerical understanding of some of the pupils; in another school, the rewards and sanctions were poorly designed to foster an interest in school work, with pupils given additional reading to do after school as a sanction for poor behaviour. In other instances, pupils achieved well in class, but any misbehaviour during break and lunch time lost them all credit gained; pupils were frequently put outside the classroom unsupervised where they continued to cause serious disruption; some pupils received money, and were given free time to do as they wish, but without much positive response in terms of improved behaviour. By contrast, in one centre, pupils worked and behaved well, receiving only points, badges and certificates for their good behaviour. This variation in practice reflects the lack of adequate discussion about the system of rewards and sanctions at centre and board level.

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 5.1 Pupils with EBD often have learning difficulties and low self-esteem. Many are regarded as seriously disruptive, have a history of poor attendance and often come from dysfunctional homes. In these circumstances, it is commendable that the overall quality of teaching observed was mostly good, often excellent and generally satisfactory. In only a minority of cases was the quality poor.
- 5.2 The majority of teachers planned the content of their lessons conscientiously, and in accord with the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) programmes of study and the needs of the pupils. Most were careful in their assessment and recording of pupils' progress. Where the

teaching was consistently good, the activities challenged the pupils to think and to achieve the targets set for them. There was also evidence of effective discussion of the range of teaching and behaviour approaches, and resources to be used. The teachers were found to be sensitive to the pupils' needs, and adept at diffusing difficult situations. Other features of good practice included:

- effective planning, which links teaching and the promotion of appropriate behaviour;
- detailed assessment, based on observation and background information, which helped to establish both short and long term goals;
- consistent and flexible working routines reflecting sound teacher/pupil relationships;
- challenging tasks which were interesting and relevant, and which contributed to external accreditation;
- regular review and evaluation.

5.3 Much of the external teaching support provided to mainstream schools (outreach) inspected was carried out in the pupils' mainstream schools, and served to act as an additional school strategy and resource to maintain the pupils in mainstream education.

The most successful teaching approaches were linked firmly to the curriculum of the mainstream schools, and the quality of the majority of the work was of a high standard. One good feature of this provision is the advice the outreach teachers give to mainstream staff on devising useful strategies to encourage the pupils to settle to work and behave appropriately.

5.4 There were also examples of weak teaching, and a number of factors contributed to this: the teachers had a limited range of skills to deal with the pupils' behavioural difficulties; their expectations of the pupils were too low, and the work planned was unduly repetitive and lacked purpose. As a result, a small number of the pupils constantly and successfully disrupted lessons, and were dealt with ineffectively. In one instance, there was no information about the pupils available to the teachers to help them plan an appropriate programme.

- 5.5 In the majority of instances, the teachers and pupils were well supported in their work by classroom assistants who had clearly defined roles and responsibilities which they carried out to good effect. In the most successful arrangements, the assistants were well briefed about their work, were fully involved in the teaching activities, and complemented well the role of the teacher. For example, in Harberton EBD Unit, the deployment of classroom assistants in mainstream schools to support the work of the outreach teacher, and, in the Bayview Centre, the appointment of a trained educational guidance auxiliary, were both significant contributory factors to the good practice observed.

6. THE CURRICULUM

- 6.1 In all schools and centres inspected, the staff were aware of the requirements to teach the NIC. However, attempts to do this varied from a generally broad programme to that in which there was an over-emphasis on English and mathematics. In a small number of schools and centres, breadth and balance in the curriculum was achieved through the range of subject specialisms the teachers themselves could provide. Most schools and centres, however, brought in part-time staff, while others arranged to share specialist staff to broaden the curriculum experiences of the pupils. Some difficulties were noted in providing a broad curriculum at key stage 3 (KS3) and key stage 4 (KS4).
- 6.2 A common finding was the poor specialist facilities and accommodation to teach science and technology, physical education (PE), and art and design. As a consequence, these subjects were not offered in some schools and centres. In one school, for example, science was taught in a room which lacked basic services such as sinks, gas or water. It was evident that the possibility of the pupils successfully re-integrating into mainstream education was severely inhibited by the narrowness of the curriculum caused by this lack of facilities. In some schools and centres, the practice of placing pupils for one or two days a week in their mainstream schools helped, to some degree, to rectify this gap in provision, but it was not always possible to compensate for the limitations of the curriculum in this manner. A small number used the facilities of local leisure centres, secondary schools or further education colleges (FECs) to provide subjects they could not offer themselves.

- 6.3 In the majority of schools and centres, great efforts were being made to ensure that the curriculum was relevant to the pupils. Suitable themes, associated with visits to places of interest, were introduced to make the work interesting, and to help pupils respond positively to it. In one school, the theme of teenage life, drugs and relationships was used effectively to encourage the pupils to participate in discussion, to express their opinions, and to tolerate the views of others. In contrast, the survey also found examples of lessons and schemes of work with inappropriate content.

- 6.4 The provision for career guidance and work placement, information and communications technology (ICT) and health education varied considerably. Careers education was limited and given insufficient time on most timetables. Most schools and centres reported difficulty providing the pupils with a range of work placements. Examples of organising and running mini-companies in a few centres gave the pupils useful opportunities to develop appropriate business skills. In many of the centres, good efforts to provide ICT proved highly motivating to the pupils while, in a few, the pupils had little opportunity to develop skills in this area. Health education programmes were generally well developed, and provided good opportunities for discussion on a variety of relevant themes. Instances of good work in home economics were not sufficiently widespread.

- 6.5 In most schools and centres, English and mathematics were well established. The programmes in these areas of study were reasonably broad and balanced, and a variety of approaches and materials was used. In English, examples were found of carefully planned units of work designed to give a good balance of talking, listening, reading and writing. Novels, for example, were frequently chosen to match the pupils' interests. In Ardmore School, the use of the CD-ROM to research topics ensured the effective participation of the pupils. In the best work observed during the survey, the teachers planned individual programmes after discussion with the pupils. Word processing facilities were generally used well to enhance the presentation of written work, and to develop the pupils' skills in form-filling and job application training. However, it was common to find insufficient opportunities for the pupils to write for a variety of purposes. There was, in addition, evidence of good levels of discussion in many centres and schools, though significant examples were also found of reticence among the pupils to engage in

conversation. Similarly, a good breadth of work was found in mathematics and, in most instances, adequate attention was given to the need for practical work and problem solving. In a minority of cases, too much time was spent on paper and pencil exercises, and some of the activities planned had little practical application or relevance.

6.6 Another significant finding was the increasing practice of entering the pupils for accreditation in external examinations. Courses leading to the Associated Examinations Board (AEB) accreditation in literacy and numeracy, ICT accreditation, GNVQ foundation courses, GCSE, and KS3 assessment were offered throughout the schools and centres. In a small minority of instances, the pupils had no opportunity to gain external accreditation.

6.7 Features of effective curriculum provision included:

- **providing a broad and balanced curriculum;**
- **the contribution of external expertise to enhance the breadth of the curriculum;**
- **the successful match of the curriculum to the individual needs of the pupils;**
- **effective liaison between EBD provision and the pupil's mainstream school;**
- **well constructed programmes to promote literacy and numeracy;**
- **increasing opportunities for the pupils to participate in external accreditation;**
- **appropriate opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their work.**

6.8 Limitations in the curriculum were noted when:

- **there were accommodation difficulties which prevented the teaching of PE, art and design, science and technology and music;**
- **there was insufficient teacher expertise to deliver the full curriculum;**
- **ICT was given insufficient priority to ensure its effective use;**

- **there were poorly prepared programmes for careers education;**

- **there were insufficient links with FE and training for pupils leaving school.**

7. MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

7.1 Provision for pupils with EBD varies across the Province, with each of the boards meeting pupils' needs through a range of provision and initiatives:

- i. In the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), provision for primary-aged pupils is well established through placement in centres, and through outreach support to primary schools. No outreach support is provided at secondary level, but support is available from two newly established discipline centres, and from the EOTAS service from Jaffe.
- ii. The North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) makes provision for EBD pupils of secondary age in three EGCs. While one of the centres provides some outreach support for primary children and another has introduced provision for supporting pupils in secondary schools, the outreach provision is not consistently available for all geographical areas throughout the board.
- iii. The Western Education and Library Board (WELB) provision includes outreach support from the special schools, partial or full-time placement in a primary behaviour unit or secondary EGC based in Londonderry. Support is not uniformly available throughout the board area.
- iv. In the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB), provision is made for both primary and secondary pupils with EBD in schools, from outreach provision and in group tuition centres. There is good geographical coverage throughout the board.
- v. In the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB), provision includes a special boarding school for pupils with EBD drawn from all the other boards, an EGC dealing

with secondary aged pupils, and some outreach provision from the peripatetic service. Lack of overall co-ordination of the service inhibits long-term development especially where the needs of primary pupils are concerned.

These findings suggest that the boards should review their current arrangements for coping with EBD to ensure that provision is available for primary and secondary aged pupils requiring it, and geographically situated to avoid undue travel or over-concentration in one area. The review of provision might also involve consultation among the boards, and with other agencies, to formulate guidance on establishing a level of consistency where appropriate and, at the same time, accommodating the diversity that exists.

- 7.2 Within the schools and centres, there is no overall consensus as to how best to provide for the range of EBD pupils' needs. This has led to pupils with very different needs being accommodated in the same type of support programme or placement where it is clear that their individual needs are not catered for sufficiently.
- 7.3 The survey revealed many examples where other professional services collaborate successfully with the teaching staff in providing effective support for pupils. In the St Vincent's Centre, for example, the pilot programme about rights and responsibilities in the community, carried out in conjunction with the Probation Board, helps to develop the pupils' relationships with their peers, adults and authority figures. Educational psychology support for schools and centres varies considerably. In addition, there were several examples where the role of the educational psychologist in managing the EGC centres conflicted with that of the senior teacher. The boards should review the level and form of educational psychology support which they offer. In particular, they should ensure that the present support is adequately helping schools and centres to develop strategies and programmes to meet the special demands of this provision.
- 7.4 There is considerable variation in the aims and approaches among the schools and centres regarding the re-integration of pupils into mainstream education. Some see their role as aiming for re-integration while others regard placement in a special school or centre as permanent. In a few, the option of re-integration is stated but, in practice, it is often given low priority. Each board has indicated that the aim of its EBD provision is to re-integrate the pupils where appropriate into mainstream education.

In practice, the achievement of this goal ranges from 67% success to none. It is mostly inadequate.

- 7.5 Some schools and centres receive detailed reports and background information on the pupils, and others operate with little or no relevant information. In one centre, a pre-placement meeting is held to collate information, and to allow planning to take place in advance of the placement. While it is not always possible to do this, for example, when a placement is sought urgently, it is, however, important in all cases that information is made available as soon as possible to enable suitable programmes to be planned for individual pupils.
- 7.6 There is a general lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of the provision by the boards and by the schools and centres. Staff are able, in most instances, to provide evidence of attendance rates or numbers returning to mainstream schools, and to indicate progress made in behaviour and learning. However, this information is not used adequately to inform the system or to provide evidence of the long-term effectiveness of the provision. There is, in many instances, a reliance on methods which have been in place for a considerable length of time, and many teachers express concern at the continued lack of progress of a small number of pupils. In one school, for example, it was clear that the teachers, too frequently, were faced with extremely difficult situations where the pupils' abusive language and challenging behaviour made teaching very difficult. In this instance, the system used to contain poor behaviour was ineffective and frustrating, and often exacerbated the situation. This provision was not adequately monitored and, as a consequence, the number of incidents of negative behaviour was disturbing. Good practice was, nevertheless, identified in three centres where sound procedures exist to monitor pupils' progress.
- 7.7 During this survey, teachers were asked to rate pupils' progress against a range of factors including attendance, attitudes to learning, improvement in the quality of work, progress in curricular areas, ability to work with others, development of other interests, desire to return to mainstream school, and overall behaviour (see Appendix 2). A number of points arising from an evaluation of the data provided by the teachers are summarised below:

- the majority of pupils (85%) make progress overall, particularly in attitudes to learning, quality of work, and ability to work with others. Significantly less progress (50%) is noted in the desire to return to mainstream schools;
- improvement in the quality of work reflects progress achieved in curriculum areas;
- poor attendance is generally associated with lack of progress;
- 16% of the pupils make significant progress in attitudes to learning, but of these only 8% develop significantly their ability to work with others;
- some pupils make significant improvements early in the placement period, but little consideration is given to their early re-integration into mainstream schools;
- approximately 18% of the pupils make significant progress in both English and mathematics while approximately another 33% improve considerably;
- some 14% make no improvement across the areas of study.

One of the main conclusions drawn from the teachers' ratings is that the majority of the pupils make progress in all areas of the curriculum taught, and show improvements in their overall behaviour. The findings also show that a significant number (55%) of pupils show no desire to return to mainstream schools. Attendance rates vary greatly ranging from 100% to 20%, with an average of around 70%. Rates are significantly lower for the older pupils. Variable attendance rates are a major issue which should be addressed by the schools, centres and the boards.

- 7.8 In reviewing the provision of in-service training (INSET), a number of points emerge. The majority of teachers have attended short courses to improve their knowledge and expertise in the area of EBD. In the Little Oaks Unit at Belmont House School, for example, the teachers are training as leaders in an externally verified training programme. The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) and the Regional Training Unit (RTU) provide continued support for schools and centres in this sector. However, a considerable level of INSET support is still required. There is, for example, little INSET to

induct new members of staff into the work of this area, and insufficient opportunities for staff generally to meet to discuss current practice and trends in this area of provision. Consideration should be given to the training needs of teachers and other professionals in respect of work in EBD, particularly as the changes to the service take effect.

- 7.9 There are waiting lists for each school and centre, and variations in the length of time pupils have to wait before placement. In one school, it was noted that 60 pupils were on the waiting list, with some waiting up to 18 months for placement. This situation is unsatisfactory, and has serious implications for the effective planning of the service.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

- 8.1 Throughout this report, a number of issues are identified as being important considerations for the boards, the schools and the centres in supporting the effective development of provision for pupils with EBD. Accordingly, the boards, schools and centres, at their respective levels, should seek to create the procedures and structures whereby effective provision can be established and developed effectively for all in need. Planning could include the following:

AT BOARD LEVEL

- a review of the appropriateness of provision for the wide range of EBD which is emerging;
- clear and comprehensive policy statements which guide the implementation of EBD provision throughout board areas;
- an emphasis on maintaining pupils in mainstream education where appropriate;
- the integration of outreach provision more fully into the spectrum of EBD provision;
- a review of provision for EOTAS for pupils with EBD to clarify its purpose and improve its quality;
- the development of an inter-agency approach to EBD provision in general and, in particular, to address the issue of poor attendance;

- the increased involvement of educational psychologists and education welfare officers to complement the work of the teachers;
- a review of provision for the small percentage of pupils for whom re-integration is inappropriate;
- the establishment of links with FECs and training organisations;
- a review of the levels of staffing and quality of accommodation;
- the establishment of clearly defined procedures to monitor the effectiveness of provision and to make changes where necessary;
- the provision of regular training for staff working in this area and, in particular, for senior members of staff to ensure that their knowledge, skill and expertise are up-to-date.

AT SCHOOL AND CENTRE LEVEL

- the development of an ethos in which pupils feel secure, know that they are valued as individuals, and are supported in their learning, personal growth and social development;
- the development of co-ordinated and suitably differentiated programmes and structures, understood by all staff and pupils, to meet the individual educational, emotional, and behavioural needs of the pupils;
- the development of effective policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are returned to mainstream education as soon as possible or prepared for further education or training;
- a focus on accreditation at KS4;
- the provision of suitable work experience;
- the development of effective contact with mainstream schools;
- a review of arrangements to encourage parents to visit the school or centre, to share their concerns about their children, and to collaborate in dealing with the issues and problems which their children experience;

- the establishment of procedures for monitoring and reviewing individual pupil progress against set targets.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This survey includes the findings of inspections of EBD provision across the five board areas; it presents a range of factors which characterise good practice, and seeks to raise other issues which the survey evidence has brought to light. It is hoped that the report will bring EBD provision into sharper focus, and assist boards, senior management and classroom teachers to audit and evaluate their practice and, where necessary, effect improvements.

APPENDIX 1

GENERAL INSPECTIONS

Jaffe School, BELB
Jaffe EOTAS, BELB
Lindsay School, SEELB

FOCUSED INSPECTIONS

Ardmore School, SEELB
Ardmore School Outreach Provision, SEELB
Ardcarnet Project, SEELB
Bayview EGC, WELB
Bayview EGC, Outreach Provision, WELB
Kinnego EGC, SELB
NEELB EGCs, Sunlea, Rathmore and Newtownabbey, NEELB
St Vincent's Unit, BELB
Peripatetic Service, SELB
WELB Outreach from Belmont House School (including Little Oaks Unit), Erne School,
Heatherbank School and Greystone Hall School
Group Tuition Centres in Bangor, Lisburn, Newtownards, and two in Downpatrick, SEELB

STRUCTURED VISITS

Longstone School EBD Unit, SEELB
Longstone School Outreach, SEELB
Fallowfield Residential School, SELB

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTIONS

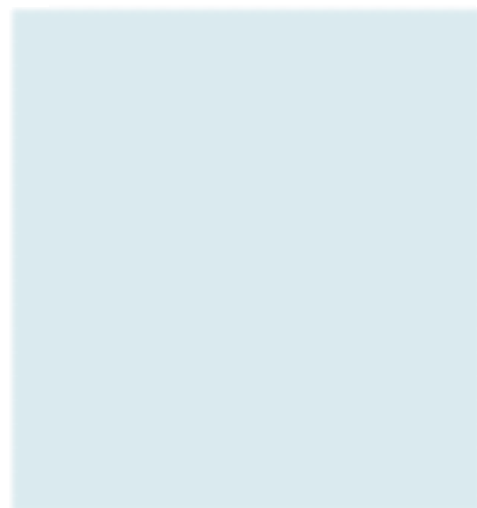
Harberton School EBD Unit, BELB
Harberton School Outreach, BELB
Clarawood School, BELB

GRADING PUPIL PROGRESS

Pupils	Length of Placement in Months	Attendance	Attitudes to Learning	Improvement in Quality of Work	Progress in Curricular Areas			Ability to Work with Others	Development of Other Interests	Desire to Return to Mainstream Schools	Overall Behaviour
					E	M	O				
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											

KEY: IN THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

- 1 = no improvement
- 2 = improved a little
- 3 = improved a lot
- 4 = improved significantly



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