

Rochdale Pupil Referral Service

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133409
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	360506
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rosemary Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Kate Connolly
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 14 teachers and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the chair of the management committee, school leaders and managers and two educational welfare officers. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning for lessons, school leaders' health and safety documentation and samples of pupils' work. They also took into account the views of the eight parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment of pupils across the four key stages.
- Whether the attendance of pupils is good.
- The quality of the health, safety and welfare documentation and the associated systems.
- Whether the management committee is effective in supporting the headteacher.

Information about the school

Rochdale Pupil Referral Service serves the whole of the Rochdale authority and is located at Darnhill and Saxonhall resource bases. The service is part of the Brownhill Learning Community, which also includes Brownhill School. It provides for the needs of pupils who are excluded from or are unable to attend mainstream school or whose social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are being assessed. The great majority of pupils are boys from a White British background. A small number come from different minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority are known to be eligible for free school meals. All pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and a significant number have additional literacy and numeracy needs. Seven of the pupils currently are in the care of the local authority. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The service, through its home tuition provision, supports the needs of a small number of pupils who are unable to access school because of medical needs. These pupils are taught in their homes or at the base dependent on their level of need. The service has gained Healthy School status. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in Key Stage 1.

The service is due to be relocated to a purpose built site in September 2012.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Rochdale Pupil Referral Service is a good service that provides a good quality of care and guidance for all pupils. As a result, pupils make good social, emotional and academic progress. The views of parents and carers are reflected well in the comment: 'My child is enjoying school at last'.

The headteacher and senior leaders on both sites have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and deliver the quality of provision necessary for them to do so. Self-evaluation of the unit's effectiveness is accurate and rigorous and findings are acted upon to good effect. Because staff are good at supporting the complex medical and behavioural needs of pupils, barriers to learning are minimised and pupils achieve well and make good progress. Since the last inspection, the service has sustained its good levels of provision and has improved in several areas, for example, by introducing an effective system for tracking pupils' progress, which has enabled the majority of teachers to set more effective learning targets. As a result, pupils are now more successfully challenged by their work. This, coupled with the successful implementation of good quality systems and policies to safeguard pupils at all times, has shown that the unit has a good capacity to improve further.

Attainment is low for some pupils arriving at the unit, often because of their low self-esteem and significant gaps in their learning. As they re-engage with learning their rates of personal and academic progress improve and they grow in confidence. Pupils say they enjoy school, sometimes for the first time, and are clear about how to stay healthy and safe. Behaviour is good overall because the majority of pupils learn how to improve the control of their emotions and make the right choices. Effective transition arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or a return to mainstream school. As a result, the number of pupils not in education or employment after leaving the unit is low. Attendance is average for the majority of pupils and improves significantly for many during their time at the unit. However attendance for a small number of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3 remains low.

The majority of teaching is good and is based on a thorough assessment of pupils' learning needs which enables all groups of pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs to make equally good progress. However, in a minority of lessons, planning for learning is insufficiently detailed and does not use assessment data sufficiently well to ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils. In these lessons pupils make less progress. The curriculum offers exciting enrichment activities, which aid pupils in developing their skills in being independent.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' planning for learning is securely based on assessment information about the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve levels of attendance, especially in Key Stage 3 by:
 - developing stronger links with parents and carers to enable them to ensure their children attend regularly
 - developing carefully monitored and robust links with outside agencies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils often attend the pupil referral service for a short period of time. The levels at which they are working when they arrive are generally lower than those expected for their age. This is often because of previously low patterns of attendance due to their learning, medical and behavioural needs. Pupils do not always possess some of the skills required for good learning, such as being able to sit and listen. Attainment for those that attend for a significant period of time is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 4, which represents good progress and achievement for many pupils.

Behaviour is good both inside and outside lessons, largely because pupils respond positively to their individual learning programmes and the high expectations of staff. These enable pupils to work consistently and achieve well in different subjects. This was demonstrated in a very good English lesson in Key Stage 4, based around Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men*. Although the text initially looked daunting, pupils showed an exceptional level of thought and empathy as they answered questions around the central characters of Lenny and Curley's wife. This, coupled with their enthusiasm and respect for the views of others, confirmed how much progress in their personal development and attitudes to learning many of these pupils had made in a relatively short period of time.

Staff ensure that pupils use every opportunity to gain accreditation. At the end of Year 11, the vast majority of pupils leave with a number of qualifications and accreditations despite some having attended the unit for a short time. Last year's school leavers successfully gained accreditations in English language and literature, mathematics, information and communication technology, science, motorcycle maintenance, hospitality and childcare. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are looked after by the local authority, make equally good progress.

Through the work of effective partnerships with health-care professionals, pupils learn to feel safe. They know that staff are there to support and guide them to make safe choices. They say they enjoy their time at the unit. As one pupil commented, 'I can talk to my teacher at any time'. Through participating in the wide range of sporting opportunities and healthy eating options offered, pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a contribution to the school and local community by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. For example, pupils are involved in fundraising activities for local and national charities. Pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen, for example, in the way in which they react to each other and take care of the environment. Through outside visits and links with schools in Africa, pupils develop an awareness of communities beyond those represented in the immediate locality.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teachers use assessment information effectively to set achievable targets for pupils. The planning of lessons is conscientious and in the majority of lessons, good attention is given to ensuring work is modified to meet the different needs of pupils within the class. However, in a small number of lessons, assessment information is not used well and planning is insufficiently focused on the needs of all learners. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give good guidance on how improvements can be made. As a result, the majority of pupils are clear about how to improve their work which helps to ensure pupils make good progress. Support staff are well deployed and work closely and effectively with teachers to meet pupils' needs. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and this, coupled with strong relationships, ensures pupils re-engage with learning quickly.

The curriculum is well organised and imaginatively enhanced by many visits and activities away from the classroom which develop pupils' independence and self-esteem. For example, a group of pupils, with the help of staff and a youth worker, completed the Three Peaks challenge in one weekend. This was described by one pupil as 'the hardest thing I have ever done –but the best weekend of my life'. Staff are adept at developing partnerships with a wide range of organisations which help to promote learners' understanding of the world of work. For example, links have already been forged with companies involved in erecting the new building and pupils' workshops and on-site

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training and work experience opportunities have already been organised. This, coupled with a strong focus on outlining career opportunities, ensures that pupils are well prepared to make informed choices about their future.

As a result of good care, guidance and support, pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and help. A thorough assessment is undertaken when pupils arrive at the unit, which is used to target support effectively. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported, helped by strong links with many outside agencies. Attendance was low in the past. It is currently rising rapidly as a result of an imaginative array of actions. For example, on-line learning has been piloted for both pupils receiving home tuition and those who are particularly hard to engage. The headteacher and senior leaders recognise that there is further work to be done to build on these actions, particularly by developing stronger links with parents and carers so their children attend regularly and through better monitoring and links with outside agencies. Transition arrangements are securely in place and are supported by good partnerships with Connexions advisors and college providers. The majority of last year's leavers remain in education or employment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and other senior leaders has moved the service forward well, ensuring good outcomes for pupils on a well-controlled budget. This, coupled with strong partnerships forged with outside agencies, is driving improvement further. The current management committee includes a good range of partnership organisations and offers a satisfactory level of support and challenge to senior leaders. Policies and procedures ensure all safeguarding requirements are met and that practice is of a good standard. As a result, safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively by service leaders. The senior leadership team and staff have ensured that the service is an inclusive community. Systems to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination within the unit are good. The unit leaders work successfully to eliminate any gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils.

Leaders have built successful links which benefit pupils and the local community, including participation in local events. For example, pupils have recently been involved in supporting and mentoring local primary school pupils at sporting events. Links with other schools and communities to promote community cohesion have developed pupils' satisfactory understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society. Staff make much effort to engage all parents and carers and ensure they are kept well informed about their child's successes.

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However a small minority of parents and carers are not sufficiently supportive of the service's efforts to improve the attendance of their children. As a result, attendance for some pupils remains low. The majority of parents and carers appreciate the ongoing work of the service.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire. The majority of responses were positive and supported the work of the pupil referral service.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rochdale Pupil Referral Service to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 8 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	25	2	25	1	13	2	25
The school keeps my child safe	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	5	63	3	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	38	3	38	1	13	1	13
The teaching is good at this school	3	38	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	50	3	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	38	3	38	0	0	1	13
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	38	3	38	0	0	1	13
The school is led and managed effectively	3	38	3	38	0	0	1	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	38	4	50	0	0	1	13

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Rochdale Pupil Referral Service, Heywood and Rochdale, OL10 3PY

Thank you all for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. A special thanks to those of you in Key Stages 3 and 4 who came to meet with us and took the time to tell us your thoughts about your time at the unit. We agree with those of you who told us your school is good. These are the things we think your school does especially well.

- It ensures everyone is welcomed into school and is given help and support to make a new start.
- It makes sure you all have a good understanding of how to keep safe and how to develop healthy lifestyles.
- It helps you all to understand how important it is to manage your feelings and behaviour so that you make the right choices.

In order to make your school even better we have asked your school to:

- ensure that the work you are asked to do in lessons matches your ability and helps you to make progress
- make sure that you all attend as frequently as possible, even those of you who have to travel a long distance.

We feel that you can help your teachers best by making sure you attend regularly and work as hard as many of you are doing now. We also wish you good luck for the future, particularly those of you who are starting college or an apprenticeship.

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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