

The Rubicon Centre

Raincliffe Street, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 4AN

Inspection dates

15–16 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not always check carefully enough that they meet all aspects of their statutory duties
- Leaders do not always recognise the impact of weaker aspects in teachers' practice on outcomes for pupils. As a result, leaders have an over-optimistic view of the centre's effectiveness.
- Development plans do not specify the hoped-for difference new activities will make to pupils, so the success, or otherwise, cannot be measured.
- Teachers' lesson planning does not take into account pupils' different starting points in terms of what they already know and can do.
- The activities that teachers plan are not always well matched to the ways individual pupils learn, thereby making work less accessible to some pupils.
- Pupils do not make fast enough progress to make up for the time they have missed in their previous schools.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe in the centre and make good progress in how they manage their conduct and relationships with others.
- Pupils make significant gains in their reading skills owing to highly effective programmes.
- The increasing range of subjects offered in Key Stage 4 and the developing approach to learning in Key Stage 3 is motivating previously disengaged pupils to learn.
- Leaders' and teachers' work with parents and other services successfully supports the well-being of vulnerable pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so pupils' progress speeds up in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan lessons matched to what each pupil already knows, understands and can do
 - teachers understand how to help each pupil overcome the difficulties that prevent them learning, and use this knowledge when planning and delivering lessons
 - teachers consistently follow the centre's policies for all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders always make decisions based on a solid understanding of statutory requirements and guidance
 - leaders strengthen systems and processes for managing information about pupils' learning, behaviour and social needs
 - leaders check, and ensure that all teachers consistently use the centre's policies and procedures
 - the centre's development plan is tightly focused on activities that will improve the outcomes for pupils and written in a way that governors can check if planned improvements have been successful.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not always check how their approach to some aspects of the centre's work complies with statutory requirements and guidance. Although this has not led to any serious incidents, and concerns were rectified during the inspection, it remains the case that leaders have not taken a strong approach to managing risk and therefore leadership and management require improvement.
- Leaders recognise that in order for the full range of pupils to achieve good outcomes, the support for pupils' emotional well-being must be better matched to the challenge of helping pupils to make rapid academic progress. However, leaders' view of the centre's effectiveness is over-optimistic because they have not recognised the impact of teachers' inconsistent use of systems and procedures on some pupils, both in terms of their progress and attendance.
- In other areas, leaders have been effective in bringing about change following the last inspection. Although the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils still require improvement, determined use of performance management and professional development led to positive outcomes for 2015 Year 11 pupils.
- Leaders have extended the range of subjects offered to pupils. As well as English, mathematics and science, pupils can now opt to study work-related qualifications in outdoor education, food and hospitality, art and design, media and construction. This choice is motivating pupils who disengaged with learning in their previous schools.
- Teaching in Key Stage 3 is developing through involvement with the 'REAL' project. The aim is to develop learning in real-life situations for a real purpose. Some pupils have recently made noteworthy progress through this approach. As well as being the proud authors of a published cookery book, they have made significant progress in their reading and writing skills and have developed more confident attitudes towards learning.
- The extension of the therapeutic team at the start of this academic year is appreciated by parents, pupils and schools working in collaboration with the centre. At this early stage, the team is not able to fully provide evidence of the impact it is making in terms of pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that the very small number of pupils using alternative provision are safe and making progress in line with pupils at the centre.
- As the centre still requires improvement, the support provided by the local authority has not been fully effective. It is of concern to Her Majesty's Inspectors that the local authority supported the headteacher's decisions that needed to be rectified urgently during the inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - requires improvement because members of the management committee have not challenged some decisions the headteacher made that did not follow some statutory guidance
 - shows in other areas, particularly in planning for the centre's longer-term development, a good understanding of how the centre can do even more to support vulnerable pupils in mainstream schools; planning for short-term developments is not described in measurable terms so the impact of different activities cannot be easily checked
 - ensures that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively so that identified pupils make progress in line with other pupils in the centre.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and staff work effectively with other services to safeguard extremely vulnerable pupils. Leaders recognise that how they manage pupils' records requires improvement and that they need to revisit aspects of safeguarding training with staff more frequently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching is not always planned to make the best use of the information teachers have about what pupils already know and can do, particularly in mathematics and science. In lessons with one, two or three pupils, teachers often plan work at the same level, even though the pupils are at very different points in their learning. This limits the progress pupils make, so teaching requires improvement.

- There are significant differences in the way teachers plan for the progress they expect pupils to make. Not all teachers follow the school's identified practice of planning clear objectives for learning for each lesson, which are shared with the pupils and can then be checked at the end to see if they have been achieved.
- Many pupils have difficulties that prevent them learning easily and these are not always fully assessed or understood by teachers. This means that planning does not identify the most effective ways each pupil learns. As a result, pupils' progress is slowed and for some their anxieties about learning remain.
- Some teachers and vocational tutors plan for pupils to develop their literacy skills in different subjects, but this does not happen often enough to make sure that pupils develop skills as well as possible. Chances for pupils to develop their reading skills in a variety of ways are missed. Leaders are aware of the need to develop this aspect of teaching.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly by using standardised tests and past GCSE papers. In the last academic year, the results were checked by other teachers in the centre and in other schools. This approach has not been as evident this year but inspectors agree that assessments are accurate.
- Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the quality of teaching. This is most evident in improvements in effective feedback and marking by teachers, particularly in English. In most subjects, marking helps pupils move on to their next step. Some pupils develop resilience as they review and revise their work to improve it.
- For some pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3 and Year 11, the special reading programme is proving very effective. There are examples of pupils making exceptional gains in reading over a short period of time.
- Teachers set homework that reflects each pupil's needs and circumstances. There is a range of online learning programmes available to pupils on the centre's website.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The centre's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils arrive at the centre having experienced, for either behavioural or medical reasons, considerable disruption to their lives and education. The care and guidance given to each pupil, with their families and other services, is effective. Most pupils after a short time at the centre do re-engage with learning.
- Parents and pupils really appreciate the support given to them by the key tutors and the therapeutic team. They believe the centre makes a significant difference to the emotional well-being and confidence of pupils. Inspectors share this view.
- Pupils show respect and a growing understanding of the rule of law. Leaders make sure there are opportunities for pupils to raise money for others less fortunate than themselves. This promotes their social and moral development. Their spiritual and cultural development is less well catered for. However, the recent project involving a small number of Key Stage 3 pupils that led to the production of the cookery book does demonstrate progress in this area of the centre's work.
- Pupils learn to keep safe online and during practical activities. Very effective guidance was given to ensure that pupils learnt how to make 'spun sugar' in a food technology lesson without burning themselves. Through the work of the therapeutic team and work with other agencies, pupils are supported to recognise and avoid risky behaviours outside the centre.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection pupils were well behaved and courteous to the inspectors. Some pupils found the presence of inspectors hard to manage but did so. However, leaders asserted that this led to some pupils being more passive in lessons than is usually the case. This has been taken into account when judging all aspects of the centre's work.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that there is no bullying in the centre. The centre's records indicate that there are occasions when pupils use derogatory language. However, this is managed effectively when it occurs.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have made sure that there is a wider range of activities for pupils to enjoy during break and lunchtimes. Combined with shorter lunchtimes, this means that pupils are learning how to use unstructured times well. Adults discreetly support pupils when the challenges of turn taking and accepting defeat in games of table tennis threaten to overwhelm them. This means that over time most pupils develop self-control.

- In each lesson pupils are scored for meeting their individual targets, which are mainly based on improving attitudes to learning. Staff discuss each pupil's responses to every lesson at the end of each day. Pupils are motivated by financial rewards linked to achieving their targets.
- Attendance remains low with ups and downs over time. Persistent absence remains high. However, records show that for a significant number of pupils their attendance improves as a result of the work of the centre, when compared with their attendance, or non-attendance, at their previous schools.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science are assessed when they are admitted to the centre and then checked every half term. The centre's information indicates that pupils are currently not making fast enough progress to help them make up for the time they have lost during their earlier education. This information was confirmed by work seen in pupils' books and folders. This is why outcomes for pupils require improvement.
- In 2015, the outcomes for Year 11 pupils were strong with many making progress over short periods of time to secure GCSEs and BTEC qualifications. For most pupils, these were at low grades and for a limited range of subjects but included English, mathematics and science.
- Improvement in pupils' conduct and confidence are much stronger than improvements in their academic progress. Parents, staff and pupils agree that the centre has a positive impact on how pupils conduct themselves and this is going some way to improving progress. However, sharper teaching that is more tailored to individual needs is now needed to build on pupils' improved attitudes to learning.
- Leaders' work with other services is a strength. They secure positive outcomes for pupils who have offended or are at risk of offending, and for pupils who move into the area at short notice with very complex and challenging life experiences. In particular, leaders' work to secure tuition for looked after children being placed in the area through the 'No wrong door' programme is seen as effective by the local authority.
- Work to ensure that pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education is effective. The vast majority of 2015 Year 11 pupils remain in education and training or employment with training. In the light of the difficulties the young people have faced during their education, this is a significant achievement.

School details

Unique reference number	137751
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10002083

This inspection 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Claire Horsfield
Headteacher	Les Bell
Telephone number	01609 535703
Website	www.therubiconcentre-northyorks.co.uk
Email address	mailto:lbell@selbyprs.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2013

Information about this school

- The Rubicon Centre provides education for pupils who have been or who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools, and for pupils who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons. The centre works in collaboration with six secondary schools in Selby and the surrounding area.
- The majority of the pupils on roll attend the centre either full time or part time, and a small number of pupils receive their education on an outreach basis at home. A very small number of pupils access education through alternative providers. At the time of the inspection pupils had placements at ADASTRA – an alternative provider.
- The centre facilitates tuition for children and young people who are in care and move into the area in conjunction with the 'No wrong door' programme.
- The nature of the pupils varies throughout the year as the pupils on roll change frequently. However, the vast majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds reflecting the communities served by the centre. All of the pupils are disadvantaged by some aspect of their life experiences. Just over half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium grant. This is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who have free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils experience a range of complex health needs that lead to their admission to the centre. On admission very few pupils are recognised as being disabled or having special educational needs. During their time at the centre, assessments indicate that a significant number do require additional support for their special educational needs. A few pupils are referred for an education, health and care plan assessment, resulting in a plan which leads to a placement at a specialist school.
- The staff team includes teachers, specialist work-related tutors and a therapeutic team. The therapeutic team includes an occupational therapist, educational support worker and drama therapist.
- Senior leaders and the occupational therapist work with the collaborative schools to support pupils who may be at risk of exclusion and those with emerging mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons covering a range of subjects, one jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and their parents, and reviewed pupils' work, assessment records and information about the reasons why they attended the centre. There were no responses to Parent View or Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher to discuss the centre's own evaluation of its work and development plans; the deputy headteacher to discuss pupils' progress and how leaders support improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and the assistant headteacher who leads the school's work on behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with teachers, work-related tutors and the therapeutic team, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Management Committee, and a representative from North Yorkshire County Council.
- Seventeen responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.
- Centre documents and records were considered including the minutes of management committee meetings, leaders' monitoring records of the quality of teaching, behaviour and incident logs, safeguarding records and lesson plans.
- The pupils were only in lessons on the first day of the inspection. The second day was a pre-planned review day for the pupils. Just under half the pupils attended the centre with the parents during the day for review meetings with the centre staff and other services who support them.

Inspection team

Susan Hayter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Whittaker

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Text phone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

