

RBWM Alternative Learning Provision

Maidenhead Project Centre, Reform Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8BY

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has been through a period of considerable changes in senior leadership. This has disrupted the school's improvement work.
- Some aspects of leadership and management require improvement. Performance management is inconsistent and the website is not compliant.
- The role of the school in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities across the range of providers is not clear.
- Information regarding pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress from the different alternative providers is not always used well enough to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils' progress sometimes slows because teachers do not always use assessment well enough to address pupils' different learning needs.
- The pupil premium is not always well spent.
- Occasionally, staff do not have the necessary subject expertise, particularly in English and mathematics at secondary level.
- Not all pupils receive timely careers advice. Arrangements for pupils moving to the next stage in their education are not consistent.
- The management committee is in the early stages of developing a longer-term strategic vision for the school. Members have not received clear enough information from the school to enable them to fulfil all of their duties effectively.
- A few pupils do not attend regularly enough to get the full benefit of the opportunities on offer.

The school has the following strengths

- Rapid improvements have been secured since the acting headteacher's arrival. These include greater communication between the alternative providers and this school. There are also now frequent checks on the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum enables pupils to study for a large range of qualifications, while also developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Some pupils make good progress, particularly in English, mathematics, science and art.
- Pupils are safe and well looked after. Staff are passionate about improving pupils' life chances. They provide caring support and advice.
- Pupils behave well. Many make marked improvements in their behaviour and attendance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that those with governance responsibilities receive helpful information so that they can fulfil their duties more effectively and agree a longer-term strategic vision for the school
 - creating greater stability of leadership so that agreed plans can be fully implemented
 - ensuring that all staff have well-defined roles and responsibilities and effective procedures for performance management are in place
 - ensuring that there are effective procedures for the transition of pupils that include timely careers advice and guidance
 - supporting those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium by developing and implementing a strategy to address their needs
 - ensuring that the school's leaders have a clear understanding of their role in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and ensuring that all related statutory requirements are met
 - working with parents to ensure that pupils' attendance continues to improve
 - using information from the alternative providers regarding pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour to better support pupils' personal development and learning
 - ensuring that the website complies with the requirements of the Department for Education.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make good or better progress by:
 - ensuring that assessments accurately identify pupils' learning needs and teachers use this information to provide greater challenge to pupils
 - making sure that staff in all alternative provisions have the specific subject expertise necessary to ensure that good progress is made, particularly in English and mathematics at secondary level.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the school opened in 2013, there have been a number of changes in both leadership and in the provision offered. These have reduced the school's effectiveness. The management committee is keenly aware that there needs to be greater stability. It is now in the early stages of developing a clear long-term strategic vision for the school.
- Due to the frequent changes, some aspects of leadership and management have been overlooked. There is no special educational needs report or pupil premium strategy. The school's website is out of date and does not comply with requirements.
- Between the school and the alternative providers there is often a duplication of both records and staff roles. This includes the leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is therefore unclear about its role and how additional funding for these pupils is used. However, despite these drawbacks, pupils' needs are usually met appropriately because the alternative provisions have their own effective policies and support in place.
- Leaders have recognised that the current system to measure the progress of pupils who attend the different alternative providers is not effective enough. Currently, staff at this school are not fully aware where each pupil is in their learning or the amount of progress that has been made. This is because they are unsure how to interpret the different assessment information from the various alternative providers. They are therefore not able to identify those who are making less than rapid progress and provide the right support quickly.
- The school's use of pupil premium funding has a variable impact on disadvantaged pupils' achievement. Although funding is received for each eligible pupil from their previous school, it is not always effectively spent. However, case studies show that in previous years funding has been well spent to improve pupils' attendance and progress.
- School procedures regarding pupils' transfer to the next school or provider are not always defined clearly. However, those pupils spoken to during the inspection all had clear plans for their future school or college placement. They talked with enthusiasm about their futures and the help they had received from staff.
- The acting headteacher has considerable knowledge and expertise and has used her skills well to bring about significant positive change. Pupils' attendance has improved. She visits the alternative providers regularly and checks that teaching and learning are effective across the different sites. The acting headteacher has the confidence of the alternative providers, who praise the greater communication that now exists. As a result, pupils receive more support, particularly with their behaviour and personal development.
- Parents who were spoken to during the inspection are full of praise about how their children have progressed since joining the school. They were delighted that staff had quickly found the right alternative provider for their child. Typical comments included:

'I can't find enough good words to say how wonderful it is to see the change in my child. The people who work there are amazing.'

- The curriculum offered by the various alternative providers caters for pupils' needs well. It includes basic skills in English, mathematics and science, together with a strong emphasis on pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. The curriculum offer varies between the providers; however, across the provision, pupils have the chance to study a wide range of subjects including: farm skills, art and design, work skills, information technology and music. These contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection were pleased with the range of subjects that they could study.
- The school currently does not have any primary-age pupils so it does not receive the PE and sports premium funding. Due to changes in leadership, it is not possible to determine how effectively this money has been spent in the past.

Governance of the school

- Those responsible for governance have not ensured that the school's main website contains the required information regarding the responsibilities of the management committee. The website does not list governors' individual business and financial interests.
- The management committee has been unable to fulfil some aspects of its role well enough in the past, particularly relating to the oversight of learning and progress of all groups of pupils and the use of additional funding. This has been due to the poor quality of information provided by some of the school's previous leaders.
- The current management committee consists of a highly professional group of people and includes leaders of local schools. Minutes of meetings clearly show that they are fully aware of the changes that need to be made. They have acted swiftly to prioritise the improvements needed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of vigilance at both the school and the alternative provisions to ensure that pupils are kept safe. All take a rigorous approach to making sure that pupils from this school are well cared for. There are regular external checks of safeguarding at the various alternative providers to ensure that their practice meets requirements. During the inspection one of the providers was in the process of an in-depth safeguarding audit.
- The single central record of checks on the suitability of staff meets requirements. Training is fully up to date and covers a range of current safeguarding issues, including the signs and symptoms of neglect and the issues associated with children missing from education.
- There are close links with a range of agencies and staff are diligent about making the appropriate referrals when needed to keep pupils safe. Staff are not afraid to challenge some services to ensure that pupils get the rapid support they need.

- Pupils are confident that they are safe and well cared for. Parents say that leaders and staff are always available to talk to and know the appropriate sources of help if pupils ever have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment mean that some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- The school does not make full use of any information provided from pupils' previous schools. Many pupils arrive at the school having spent time out of formal education. While there is an assessment of pupils' skills when they join the school, it is often not detailed enough. Staff do not yet make good enough use of assessment information to ensure that pupils have the right challenge and support that they need. This reduces the progress that they make.
- At one alternative provider, staff teach English and mathematics at secondary level, but do not have all of the necessary subject expertise to provide the depth of knowledge that pupils require. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection said that teachers did not tolerate behaviour that disrupted learning.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. This was seen during the inspection when some pupils had to complete an individual art assessment. Pupils had the confidence to complete the assessment due to the support and encouragement provided by staff. In the majority of alternative providers most pupils are making good progress, particularly in English, mathematics, science and art.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of life skills through the personal, social, emotional and health education programme. For example, pupils show a good understanding of budgeting and personal finance.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not given a strong enough steer about how to be a successful learner because staff at this school are not fully aware what a pupil already knows or the progress they have made.
- There is some variability when careers advice and guidance is available to pupils. While most receive timely guidance, others have to wait longer.
- When spoken to, pupils said that attending the alternative provisions had clearly improved their confidence and behaviour. They said it had given them a greater appreciation of the value of learning.

- Some pupils in the past have experienced bullying at their previous schools. They are all emphatic that now they feel safe and say that there is no bullying at the alternative providers. They said that this was 'a weight off their shoulders' because they were now able to study again and plan their futures.
- Staff at this school are highly effective in making sure that all pupils are well supported emotionally. In the different alternative providers planned work for personal and social education includes topics designed to develop pupils' maturity, resilience and tolerance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Systems for managing information about pupils' behaviour and attendance from the different alternative providers are all totally different. This affects the ability of leaders from this school to identify what needs to change and demonstrate the improvements that pupils make.
- Levels of attendance are still too low for a very few pupils. However, since January attendance is now monitored much more effectively, staff have higher expectations and overall levels of attendance have improved.
- Behaviour seen during the inspection was good. Pupils were polite and keen to talk to inspectors about their future plans and ambitions. Pupils respond quickly to staff's instructions and listen carefully in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils usually have low attainment when they join the school. The progress they make over time is variable. Often this is due to teachers not using assessment well enough to provide challenging work for pupils.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils are given the skills to build their resilience for learning and they make good progress. However, for a few, this is not the case. Therefore, the impact of the pupil premium funding on improving pupils' attainment and progress is variable.
- There are too few most-able pupils or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently on roll to report on their progress without them being identified.
- A focus on English, mathematics, art and science at the different alternative providers is helping some pupils to make good progress in these subjects. Pupils' work showed that for a few, achievement was limited by some teachers' weaker subject knowledge in English and mathematics.
- In 2016, almost all pupils in Year 11 achieved passes in GCSE A* to G, together with a range of functional skills qualifications. Most pupils successfully completed GCSEs in English and mathematics. The breadth of the curriculum on offer enables pupils to take a range of qualifications. Last year pupils completed GCSE qualifications in subjects such as art and design, geography, history, religious studies, sports science, catering and media studies.

- Almost all Year 11 pupils in 2016 found either college placements or employment with training in areas such as sports, hair and beauty, travel and tourism or building skills. Current pupils all have plans for college placements or employment with training in subjects such as art and design, catering and childcare. Most pupils progress to sustained education, training and employment.

School details

Unique reference number	131596
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10032487

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Kevin McDaniel
Acting Headteacher	Sonia Kay
Telephone number	01628 685 788
Website	www.risealternativeprovision.org.uk
Email address	rise.admin@rbwm.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium, special educational needs and governance, on its website.
- RBWM Alternative Learning Provision (RISE) opened in 2014. The predecessor school, St Edmund's House, was situated at a different location in Maidenhead. The last inspection of St Edmund's House took place in June 2013, when the school was judged to be good.
- Initially, RISE offered an alternative provision for pupils who found themselves at risk of permanent exclusion or who had been excluded from school. Now it offers provision primarily for two groups of pupils: those who have been permanently excluded from school and those who are unable to attend school because of their identified medical need. At the time of the inspection a few pupils on roll were refugees who had limited skills in English.

- The school operates as a gateway. It commissions a range of alternative providers to support pupils, through a combination of short-term programmes, one-to-one tuition or full-time alternative provision. Placements are provided both within and outside the borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- Typically, pupils enter with attainment that is significantly lower than expected for their age, often owing to extended periods of absence from their previous schools.
- The school is registered for 30 pupils. The number of pupils frequently changes because some stay on roll for a few days whereas others stay for longer. Currently, there are 21 secondary-aged pupils on roll. The majority of the pupils are in key stage 4. Over 50% of the current pupils are in Year 11.
- Pupils in the younger year groups often transition back into mainstream schools. Those pupils in Year 11 usually stay at their alternative provision until the end of the academic year to complete their GCSE courses or other qualifications.
- Alternative provision is currently provided by Haybrook College, through The Springboard and Rotunda, The Link at Manor Green School, College Hall, East Berkshire College and Path Hills. The alternative providers offer a range of qualifications including functional skills, ASDAN, BTEC and GCSEs.
- There have been several changes of staff at senior leadership level since the school opened. The current acting headteacher started her role in January 2017. She has been seconded from Haybrook College. Other staff include an administration assistant, a learning mentor and a qualified teacher.
- Sometimes, before moving to their alternative provision, a very few pupils are educated on site at Reform Road.
- The proportion of pupils registered as having special educational needs and/or disabilities fluctuates but all pupils have some identified need. No pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The management committee is responsible for most aspects of governance except pay and human resources, which are the responsibility of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. A senior officer of the borough is the chair of the management committee.
- The school's aims are to help pupils to succeed by encouraging respect, inspiration and re-engagement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited four of the alternative providers. They engaged in observations of learning, some of which were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and other leaders and staff both at this school and at some of the alternative provisions. Inspectors also met with the chair and other members of the school's management committee. The chair also provided information on behalf of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised work from secondary pupils across several of the alternative providers in English, mathematics, science, art and information communication technology.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its development plan, minutes of the management committee meetings, safeguarding records, alternative provision information, information on pupils' progress and school policies and procedures.
- An insufficient number of surveys were completed on Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View), so inspectors spoke to some parents via the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their experiences of working at the provision.
- No pupils completed Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at the different alternative providers to gather their views.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Yates

Ofsted 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.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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 children looked after, 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/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
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017