The Rubicon Centre

Raincliffe Street, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 4AN

Inspection dates	10–11 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are ambitious for the school and have a clear vision of how they want the school to be. Their leadership has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

- Staff know and understand pupils' needs. Teachers' planning of learning is well matched to the different abilities and interests of pupils and therefore most pupils make good progress.

- The curriculum is adapted to individual needs with a strong focus on skills required for independent learning and next steps into employment, education or training.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of care and education their children receive.

- Behaviour is good. The school provides pupils with high-quality therapeutic provision. This is making a positive contribution to pupils' well-being and self-esteem.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils following reading intervention programmes make exceptional progress. However, there are limited opportunities for all pupils to read frequently and widely.

- In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to tackle more challenging work but this is not yet consistent across all subjects, and therefore progress is stronger in some subjects than others.

- There are frequent opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues. However, senior leaders are not yet monitoring this closely enough to ensure that the breadth and balance are meeting the needs of all pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils, particularly in literacy, by:
  - ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to read frequently and widely
  - further developing language and vocabulary acquisition
  - developing an enjoyment of reading to better equip pupils for their futures.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers challenge all pupils to make good and better progress
  - ensuring that pupils make rapid progress in all subjects by sharing good practice
  - focusing on the most able so that they reach their potential.
- Develop leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the social, moral, spiritual and cultural provision so that it contributes fully to meeting pupils' needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Leaders have developed robust systems to assess pupils when they arrive at the school and to track their progress in English and mathematics. This is in the process of being embedded across the curriculum.

- Leaders effectively manage the complexity of the consistently changing school population by developing a flexible curriculum model for a wide range of pupil needs. The focus is on core subjects, and there are additional vocational subjects and real-life projects, which engage and stimulate pupils.

- Relationships between staff, pupils and parents are impressive and fundamental to the success of this school. Pupils feel safe and secure. Staff have a deep knowledge and understanding of the many challenges these vulnerable pupils face, which enables them to support pupils' development extremely well.

- Leaders have a good understanding of pupils' learning and welfare needs. They support pupils effectively in all of these areas.

- Leaders create a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils contribute to the appearance of the school and respect the school environment.

- Pupils are in small classes, which allow teachers to spend more time with individuals. Through this, relationships are strong. Pupils stated that they know staff will always support and listen to them.

- Pupils who are eligible for extra support through pupil premium funding have their needs met well. This is because leaders understand the needs of pupils and have developed therapeutic services which target those needs, such as drama therapy and anxiety management.

- Parents very much appreciate and value the work of the school. Some consider it a 'lifeline', which has given their child their life back.

- All staff actively and noticeably model positive behaviour. This includes tackling the use of derogatory language and actively promoting equality. As a result, pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain and their lives after school.

- Leaders have introduced a robust system for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is supported by regular visits from the local authority school improvement adviser. Leaders follow up areas which need development and closely match staff training to those areas.

- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) topics are regularly planned for in lessons, and teachers promote appropriate discussions and debates. However, senior leaders do not yet monitor these closely enough to ensure that all pupils receive the most appropriate breadth and balance and to check how effectively these are supporting pupils' development.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the school and its development.

- Governors have undertaken extensive training to enable them to better support and challenge senior staff.

- Governors with key responsibilities now visit regularly to scrutinise processes such as safeguarding and teaching evaluation so that they have a better understanding of the strengths and areas to be developed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Leaders ensure that training for staff is up to date. Leaders have a strong knowledge of the particular risks that pupils at the school face. As a result, they have made sure that staff have appropriate training in a variety of important areas such as child sexual exploitation.

- Safeguarding procedures are followed and well documented. Leaders ensure that they keep records securely.

- Staff know how to raise a concern. Leaders log these concerns in detail, and actions are recorded. Leaders ensure that all concerns are dealt with promptly.

- Leaders ensure that the vetting of staff and the single central record are accurate and complete. However, senior leaders need to ensure that they fully understand the rigour of safer recruitment processes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- The relationships between staff and pupils are good. This means that most pupils learn well, listen to their teachers and make progress. Pupils feel confident to ask their teachers questions when they do not understand. Teachers' understanding of pupils' social and emotional needs means that they effectively enable many pupils to overcome these barriers and be successful in lessons.

- Inspectors saw examples of lessons which engaged, challenged and motivated pupils to do well. Teachers choose interesting tasks, which meet pupils' needs, allow them to be successful and equip them with the personal skills to make progress. In some lessons, pupils are not as challenged and therefore progress is not as rapid.

- In some subjects, teachers utilise real-life projects, linked to an end product, such as the display of written work at a community location, to engage and motivate pupils. Through these projects, pupils learn to value peer critique and multiple draft techniques to publish or present their work.

- Teachers plan their lessons well, taking into account individual targets. This results in pupils feeling very well supported to learn appropriate skills and fill gaps in their learning. However, sometimes the focus on engagement can distract from ensuring that pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary in line with their subject skills.

- Many pupils arrive at the school with low reading ages. Staff use a range of reading interventions to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in basic reading skills. However, the school has yet to develop strategies to ensure that pupils read widely and frequently.

- Teachers strive to develop pupils' independence in their learning, which pupils value and which enables them to accurately self-assess how well they are learning in lessons.

- The newly introduced assessment system is enabling teachers to set individual and accurate targets for all subjects. For pupils in key stage 4, these are linked to accreditation criteria so that these pupils feel better prepared for examinations. Leaders analyse the assessment data every half term and teachers provide intervention when pupils are not on track. Analysis does not yet consider the progress of the most able to ensure that teachers challenge them sufficiently.

- For pupils who attend on a part-time basis for a short period, teachers are skilled at assessing quickly in order to enable those pupils to start learning straight away.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare — Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are confident that they have someone to speak to if they have a problem. Key staff greet pupils every morning, and pupils have the opportunity to resolve problems before learning starts.

- The dedicated staff understand the needs of pupils well. This enables them to reduce barriers to learning.

- Pupils are well supported by therapy staff. Pupils are encouraged to identify their own development needs and consider the impact on their next steps.

- During social times, staff make time to talk to pupils about their day and often sit and eat with them. As a result of this, pupils learn from positive role models and are ready to learn, develop their social skills and become better prepared for life after school.

- Pupils have a well-developed knowledge of bullying, know how to report it and are confident that when reported it is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils feel safe in school. Inspectors spoke to pupils who had recently arrived and, while they acknowledged that they were nervous about coming to the school, they had quickly settled into school life and felt more confident.

- Careers guidance and work experience are an integral part of the provision. Pupils value work experience and the opportunities to visit college and apprenticeship placements.

- Leaders closely monitor the progress, behaviour and welfare of pupils in alternative provision or on outreach programmes of study.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils show respect for the school environment, and books reflect adherence to clear expectations.

- Outside lesson times, pupils are generally calm and sociable. For example, pupils have the opportunity to play table tennis, have some quiet time in the library or socialise in

the dining area. Staff are on hand to model positive behaviour, and this helps pupils develop good social relationships.

- Sometimes, pupils struggle to cope with the demands of school life. Staff respond quickly and calmly to make sure that disruptions rarely escalate and that pupils are quickly reintegrated into their lessons.

- For pupils with high levels of anxiety, staff use a range of strategies to gradually integrate them into social situations, which enhances their learning.

- Leaders analyse data on behaviour incidents and use this to adapt strategies. Through this, pupils receive personalised support to improve their behaviour.

- While pupils' attendance is below the national average, it is improving because leaders put measures in place to support regular attendance. For example, absences are followed up with phone calls and, where appropriate, home visits. Leaders identify the specific barriers to pupils' attendance and work closely with parents, carers and professionals to reduce absence. Sometimes, home visits are organised during school holidays in order to maintain close links with pupils who find returning to school difficult.

- The attendance of the vast majority of pupils at the school improves considerably compared to their attendance at their previous schools.

Outcomes for pupils   Good

- There is no published data for this school as most pupils remain on the roll of their home school.

- From their starting points when they arrive at the school, pupils make good progress. Leaders make sure that they have accurate baselines and half-termly assessment points so that they can plan interventions when pupils fall behind in English and mathematics.

- Progress from starting points is good for most pupils, but some most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve their potential.

- Inspectors evaluated samples of work in English, mathematics, science and a range of other subjects. This showed that pupils make good progress over time. For example, in English pupils learn to redraft pieces of descriptive writing multiple times, based on peer critique, in order to produce extended writing to a high standard.

- There is an improving trend of pupils gaining GCSEs in English and mathematics, making good progress from their starting points in these subjects. There is also a rapid increase in the number of accreditations that pupils gain by the end of their time at the school. These accreditations build up a portfolio of proven skills and knowledge that pupils can be proud of and share with prospective further education providers and employers.

- The work that leaders carry out to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education is effective for many of them. Parents are especially grateful for the work of the school.

- The school is effective in enabling outreach pupils to gain sufficient confidence so that many start to attend school regularly.

- The vast majority of temporary key stage 3 pupils develop skills that enable them to

return to and succeed in their original schools.

■ Many pupils at the end of Year 11 develop their skills and knowledge sufficiently to go on to further education and apprenticeships.

School details

Unique reference number	137751
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10042177

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	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Claire Horsfield
Headteacher	Les Bell
Telephone number	01609 533951
Website	www.therubiconcentre-northyorks.co.uk
Email address	admin@selbyprs.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 Dec 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- 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 The Toolbox Centre – an alternative provider.

- 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.

- Pupils experience a range of complex health needs that lead to their admission to the centre.
- Around a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium.
- There are approximately three times as many boys as girls.
- Pupils follow a curriculum that includes a range of GCSE and vocational qualifications.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons covering a range of subjects, several jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

- Inspectors talked with pupils and their parents, and reviewed pupils' work, assessment records and information about the reasons why they attend the centre. There were very few 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, the therapeutic team, the vice chair of the management committee and a representative from North Yorkshire County Council.

- Thirteen 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.

Inspection team

Pauline Rowland, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Millard	Ofsted Inspector

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.

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