

The Rowan Centre

Estate Road, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S62 7JD

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. She has made positive changes since the last inspection.
- School leaders create a calm and nurturing environment where pupils feel safe, secure and are able to focus well on developing their social and personal skills.
- Staff have a very strong commitment to safeguarding. The school has a clear, proactive approach in dealing with local safeguarding issues.
- Leaders have ensured a broad curriculum offer that enables pupils to experience a wide range of new experiences. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils.
- Teachers and support staff work hard to help pupils overcome their difficulties. They use their skills and experience to shape and change their teaching to meet pupils' needs.
- As a result of effective leadership, teaching is good and pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons that meet individual pupils' needs.
- Staff and pupils have excellent relationships. Staff are friendly and caring, and pupils have a great deal of respect for them.
- Behaviour at the school is exemplary. Pupils show empathy to one another and provide support to their peers when they may experience difficulty.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour with highly developed skills so that there is a meaningful learning environment. School leaders provide frequent and targeted training to make sure that this continues.
- Pupils have a very positive view of the school and appreciate the support that staff give to them. They are polite and settle quickly to enjoy their lessons.
- Some teachers have a high level of subject knowledge; however, this is not consistent enough across all subjects.
- Governors on the management committee provide the school with some support; however, due to recruitment difficulties, this is not always at a high enough level to include the necessary challenge for leaders.
- Teachers do not always plan activities in mathematics that provide a high level of challenge for pupils.
- Middle leaders are not yet providing the necessary support required for the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - making sure that staff improve their subject knowledge to achieve consistency across all subjects
 - ensuring that teachers provide further stretch and challenge for pupils in mathematics so that they make more progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of the middle leadership in supporting the headteacher to improve the school further
 - improving systems so that all staff are held accountable for the work they do towards school improvement
 - increasing the capacity of governors on the management committee to challenge and support leaders further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively with a clear vision and ambition. Staff, pupils and the local authority share and support her vision.
- Leaders and staff share a common purpose to provide the very best for their pupils. Together, they have built a strong culture of respect and appreciation of each other. Leaders have high ambitions and expectations for all of their pupils.
- The well-being of staff and pupils is paramount to the leadership of the school. Many processes are in place to support them, including access to an on-site therapist.
- Leaders and staff promote pupils' personal development well. The pupils use their knowledge of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively to display an understanding of others and the world around them.
- Leaders have an increasingly accurate view of the school and have firm and targeted plans for improvement. Clear training takes place to allow staff to have a greater understanding of how the school will improve further.
- Each pupil is seen as an individual and leaders make sure that bespoke support and interventions are in place when needed. Resourceful and skilled staff carry out these interventions. The impact of this can be seen in the strong progress pupils make from their individual starting points.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is highly effective in bringing about change for pupils. The SENCo continually evaluates practices in the school and because of this practices are increasingly effective. For example, new methods of assessing pupils' needs ensures that behaviour, social and emotional targets are regularly set and reviewed. The SENCo has provided specific training for staff around the education, health and care (EHC) plan. Staff understand the plans and the statutory requirements around them.
- The SENCo is forging positive links with mainstream schools in the local authority. She is sharing good practice. Staff are receiving information that provides them with necessary information so they understand the support some pupils need when preparing to attend The Rowan Centre. This helps pupils get off to a good start when they arrive at the school.
- The deputy headteacher has very strong knowledge of pupils' needs and care and guidance they need to improve and be successful. This knowledge is shared with staff and pupils, the impact of the successful use of her strategies is clear to see in the decrease in behaviour-related incidents and exclusions.
- Staff feel supported by leaders and recognise the respect that they receive for the, at times, difficult work that they do. Staff are happy with the high level of training they receive and appreciate the opportunities that are available to them.
- Parents and carers fully appreciate the work of the school. Some describe it as 'life changing' when considering the positive impact on not only pupils, but also on their families.
- Middle leaders are not yet providing the necessary support for the headteacher to

rapidly improve the school.

- Leaders are not yet holding staff to account for the areas of school improvement identified in the school improvement plan. Staff are not always held to account for their responsibilities or position at the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors on the management committee are committed to the school and its development.
- The governor for safeguarding visits the school on a regular basis and uses her experience to assess and advise on safeguarding matters.
- Governors are keen to ensure that the pupils achieve the best they can, but recognise that, currently, they do not have all of the necessary skills they need to thoroughly monitor, challenge and support all areas of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding practice in this school is exemplary. Relevant high-quality training and a knowledgeable understanding of local issues, along with clear lines of whole-school communication, ensure that any concerns are recognised by vigilant staff and immediate action is taken by the designated safeguarding lead.
- Procedures are well documented. Leaders ensure that they keep records safely and securely.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils receive education on sex and relationships, the dangers of substance misuse and how to stay safe online.
- Pupils from all key stages report that the school teaches them how to stay safe in a variety of situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Most teachers structure their planning well and use a variety of teaching strategies to address the learning needs of each individual pupil.
- Teachers and support staff have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils' learning is stronger in lessons where teachers' expectations of pupils are clear. Staff work well together to identify and target pupils who require extra support and guidance in lessons, while encouraging pupils to be independent in their learning.
- Lesson content is purposeful, and teachers address difficult themes with sensitivity and understanding. Pupils acknowledge the breadth of the information they are given and see this as a positive way of experiencing more of the world.
- Higher level teaching assistants are highly skilled and are used effectively to make a significant impact in the outcomes of the pupils they work with. Evidence demonstrates that pupils in the school working with higher level teaching assistants make rapid and

sustained progress.

- The science curriculum includes a range of practical lessons, despite the lack of formal science facilities. However, science lessons are well resourced and teachers use their knowledge to ensure that practical sessions are understandable and engaging.
- Teachers plan learning in key stage 2 well, using a thematic approach. Staff expertly teach a range of stimulating, motivational and exciting lessons with humour and enthusiasm. Pupils in key stage 2 are happy and understand the need for the boundaries that they have. They talk about how much they have changed and credit the staff in their classroom for helping them to succeed.
- Most teachers and support staff use a variety of questioning techniques to encourage pupils to think independently and use a variety of vocabulary to explain their reasoning to others. Opportunities for pupils to write at length are evident throughout the curriculum and the impact can be seen through the improvement of their writing skills over time.
- Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to show their books to visitors. Some pupils are aware of their targets and are happy to share them with others.
- Key stage 4 pupils are prepared well for their examinations. An academic learning mentor spends time working with them on how to interpret and answer different types of questions. This is valuable work and enables the teacher to concentrate on teaching the subject content to pupils, who often have a considerable amount of work to catch up on.
- Teachers use assessment information accurately to prepare tasks that are accessible for a wide range of abilities. However, teachers should ensure that work is set that challenges or encourages pupils to build resilience.
- Staff do not always demonstrate consistently high levels of subject knowledge across all subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. All staff are skilled in enabling pupils to understand their emotions and they teach a range of strategies for pupils to handle them.
- Staff treat each pupil as an individual who is valued and respected. Pupils have strong, positive relationships with all of the staff at the school. Pupils show empathy and support for each other. They are open about their feelings and share information about the range of difficulties that they have faced before coming to the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They can discuss a variety of topics from lessons that are providing them with the tools to keep themselves safe outside of school. Pupils talk freely about anxiety and strategies they can use to help in difficult times.
- Pupils are incredibly polite and friendly. Pupils who have been at the school for longer periods of time confidently engage visitors in conversation. Those who are newer to

the school receive staff support to rapidly build their self-confidence.

- Pupils have a contagious enthusiasm for their learning. They are excited to be at the school and take part in their lessons with renewed optimism. They understand and embrace the opportunity they have been given.
- Pupils are effusive in their praise for the staff at the school. Pupils learn from the positive role models at school and as a result, they are ready to learn, develop their social skills and become better prepared for life after school.
- The clear and well-thought-out transition process ensures that new pupils have a positive and steady introduction to the school. When they begin, they already have a thorough understanding of how the school will help them. Many see this as a positive new start.
- The staff at the school work closely as a team. They provide support and treat each other with warmth and respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour at the school is managed well with positive systems in place to manage any poor behaviour. Staff are good at using praise and rewards for pupils and these are used appropriately and effectively.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes are brought about by the high expectations and support of the school staff. The staff provide a warm, caring welcome to each pupil throughout the day. Pupils know that staff understand them and will never judge them if incidents occur.
- The school is calm and provides an encouraging and well-ordered environment for learning. Pupils listen well and talk confidently about what is happening around them.
- Pupils show respect for the school environment and most books reflect adherence to expectations.
- Outside lesson times, pupils have opportunities to take part in a variety of activities. They play well together and are generally calm and sociable.
- Pupils settle down to work very quickly, very little learning time is lost, and minor or low-level disruption is rare. Pupils are excited to learn and state, 'The more I learn, the more I can do when I leave school.'
- Occasionally, pupils can find school life difficult. At these times, staff are quick to intervene and calmly make sure any disruptions are dealt with effectively. Pupils are returned to their activities quickly with minimum fuss. Escalations of inappropriate behaviour and physical interventions are rare.
- While pupils' attendance is a little 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 by the attendance officer or family liaison officer.
- Leaders identify the specific barriers to pupils' attendance and work closely with parents and professionals to reduce absence. The attendance officer and parent-liaison

officer have had a positive impact at the school. They both work tirelessly to make sure all pupils attend school; those that do not are visited and counselled to resolve any difficulties. Parents have a close bond with the school and support it well during events such as parents' evenings, performances and collections for charity.

- Pupils' attendance has significantly increased in comparison to their attendance at their previous schools. One pupil commented, 'My attendance was 1.6% and now it is more than 90%.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Assessment information, pupils' books and the quality of teaching show that outcomes for pupils throughout the school are good.
- Assessment of pupils' learning on entry shows they often arrive at the school with standards of attainment well below their expected level. This is immediately addressed by staff, and through well-planned and targeted learning, pupils quickly begin to make progress.
- Regular reading, independently and to adults, helps pupils in the school to acquire skills to support them in developing their reading.
- The development of literacy skills is encouraged across all subjects. Pupils use the skills learned in English lessons throughout the curriculum.
- There is no difference in the progress of different groups of pupils. This is due to each pupil being treated individually by staff and successful support interventions are put in place where needed.
- Most pupils at the end of Year 11 develop their skills and knowledge sufficiently to go on to further education, employment or apprenticeships.

School details

Unique reference number	135743
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10049029

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	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Williams
Headteacher	Vicky Woodrow
Telephone number	01709 523407
Website	therowancentre.wixsite.com/rowancentre
Email address	rowancentre@rotherham.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 November 2012

Information about this school

- The Rowan Centre is a pupil referral unit that educates pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have an EHC plan.
- The number of pupils on roll has almost doubled since the last inspection and there has been a significant change in the pupil profile. Pupils attending the school have a higher level of need associated with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Most of the pupils have an EHC plan.
- Recently, the school has expanded to include a small number of key stage 1 pupils.
- Pupils can join the school at any time during the school year across all year groups.
- The school serves the Rotherham area, with a small number of pupils coming from neighbouring authorities.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms and 10 lessons were formally observed.
- Three learning walks were carried out, one jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' book across all key stages. They observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around school at breaks and lunchtime. Inspectors also observed the arrangements that are in place for pupils as they arrive to school and as they leave at the end of the day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff, teachers and support staff. Meetings were also held with the chair of the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally to discuss their experiences of school.
- The inspectors considered the views of 11 members of staff. Too few parents responded to the online survey, Parent View, to take account of their views in preparation for the inspection or during it. Inspectors took account of views expressed in the school's own recent surveys and from three individual parents.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including those relating to: children looked after; case studies and pupils' plans; individual pupil progress information; governors' records of meetings; the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness; school improvement and pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors also examined arrangements for safeguarding, checked procedures and scrutinised records relating to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Sara Roe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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