

Inspection of Connie Rothman Learning Centre

107/109 Belle Vue Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset, Dorset, BH6 3DJ

Inspection dates:

19–21 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education provided for pupils is not yet good. Expectations of what pupils could achieve are not consistently high. Pupils do not study a broad enough curriculum. The reading curriculum is underdeveloped. Teachers are not helping pupils remember what they learn in the long term.

Nevertheless, pupils benefit from a range of useful experiences. Consequently, they are keen to learn. Pupils feel happy and safe. They know that staff care for them. Most pupils learn to revalue their education and themselves through positive and respectful relationships. Pupils behave well. They trust staff and want to do their best for them.

Pupils develop character and self-confidence. They learn about themselves and how to support their peers. Pupils also learn ways to keep themselves healthy. This means that bullying is exceptionally rare.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are still developing the curriculum. Despite some areas of strength, the impact of the curriculum remains too variable. Leaders' planning is weak in some subjects. However, leaders ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet the individual needs of pupils. They have a clear understanding of how they expect knowledge to be sequenced and assessed. This has been more successful in some subjects than others.

Pupils and students respond well to the caring and attentive approach of teachers, including those in post-16 education. There are times, though, when teachers do not demand enough of pupils to think for themselves. As a result, some pupils become overly dependent on their teachers when learning is hard. This means pupils do not independently remember enough of what they are taught.

Leaders have not established an agreed approach to teaching reading. For pupils who do not know how to decode, there is no formal teaching of phonics. Leaders are looking to address this. For example, there is now daily dedicated time for pupils to focus on literacy. Leaders make effective use of assessment. They ensure pupils learn with others who have a similar reading level. These sessions focus on key literacy knowledge, such as grammar and punctuation, but not enough on reading. There are too few opportunities for pupils to read, or to explore language through different texts. As a result, pupils do not learn to like reading or to love books. This limits their ability to learn the rest of the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Pupils arrive having often had poor experiences of education in the past. Many lack self-confidence and struggle with anxiety. However, the strength of relationships and the appropriate focus on pupils' individual needs helps them to be much better prepared for life in modern Britain and the world of work. Pupils' social development is particularly strong. The

curriculum promotes high-quality opportunities for pupils to work together and help solve each other's challenges. Pupils learn to respect each other and understand diversity. Work experience is a fundamental element to pupils' programmes of study.

Post-16 students benefit from bespoke study programmes. These are often linked to students' interests and aspirations. For example, some students study child development courses with linked work experience and planned routes into employment. However, this is not always the case. Some study programmes are less ambitious and do not provide meaningful support towards pupils' career aspirations.

Leaders understand what the school must do to improve and are taking the right steps to do this well. The trustees, who act as the proprietor of the school, include knowledgeable and experienced members. They have helped secure an inclusive school. Policies and practice reflect the expectations of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Trustees understand and carry out their strategic role well. For example, they are diligently looking to secure more appropriate premises for the school. Trustees provide effective challenge and support for leaders.

The chief executive officer (CEO) has been instrumental in building the strength of leadership. For example, he has ensured appropriately qualified and experienced appointments to the posts of headteacher, head of teaching and learning, and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Together, leaders at all levels ensure that the independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a clear structure for the management of safeguarding. The safeguarding policy is up to date and features on the school's website. Staff are fully aware of the policy, what they need to know and what is expected of them. Leaders and staff have completed appropriate safeguarding training. High ratios of staff to pupils mean that there is strong oversight of pupils. This, along with the strong relationships, means that staff know pupils well. Staff know who to talk to and how to record concerns if they are worried about a pupil. Parents and pupils rightly agree that the school is a safe place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Leaders have ensured that pupils experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious. It does not provide pupils with a deep or thorough body of knowledge in all subjects. Leaders need to ensure that pupils learn a broad and rounded curriculum.
- Pupils benefit from bespoke programmes of study according to their needs and starting points. These are sometimes linked usefully to future pathways for further education and employment. However, for some students, particularly in

the sixth form, these programmes are sometimes not ambitious enough. Leaders must ensure that programmes of study match the aspirations and interests of all pupils and students.

- Pupils' attitudes to reading are negative. The approach to early reading and phonics is also underdeveloped. These issues compound weak reading in the school, and some pupils find it difficult to catch up. Leaders should implement an agreed approach to teaching pupils in the early stages of reading. They must also ensure that they implement effective strategies to promote a wider love of reading.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	148069
DfE registration number	839/6014
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10201923
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Connie Rothman Learning Trust
Chair	Haymo Thiel
Headteacher	Rozanne Parsons
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,000
Telephone number	01202 433673
Website	www.crlt.org.uk
Email address	hello@crlt.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Connie Rothman Learning Centre was registered as a school in October 2020. This was the first standard inspection since the school opened.
- The school is based in two converted commercial units in the Southbourne area of Bournemouth. Most pupils learn in the main school building, 107/109 Belle Vue Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH6 3DJ. Post-16 pupils learn in the 'hub', at 11 St Catherines Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH6 4AE. Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The proprietor of the school is the Connie Rothman Learning Trust. The proprietor does not run any other school.
- The school caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 19. Most pupils either have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or social, emotional and mental health needs, including anxiety.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior and subject leaders, including the headteacher, the leader of teaching and learning and the SENCo. Inspectors also met with four trustees, including the chair of trustees and the CEO. They discussed leaders' work since opening the school, systems for monitoring and accountability, the promotion of pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes and the curriculum.
- Inspectors did deep dives into four subjects: English; mathematics; personal, social and health education; and art. They met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils. They reviewed subject planning and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 14 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online parents' survey and the free-text responses from those parents.

- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement and paperwork relating to the independent school standards. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, health and safety, premises and the trust.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewing safer recruitment processes, and speaking to staff and to pupils. Inspectors also scrutinised school policies, governance arrangements, records of concern and links to other agencies.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lydia Pride

Her Majesty's Inspector

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