

The Rowan Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135743
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	341692
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Clifton
Headteacher	Mrs Lorraine Lichfield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons; spent 30% of the time observing learning; saw five teachers; and held meetings with the chair of the management committee, a representative from the local authority, members of the teaching staff and with students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's Developing Excellence Plan, safeguarding documentation, curricular plans and data for tracking targets.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the amount of progress students made while attending the pupil referral unit
- students' attendance
- the way in which staff support students before and after they deliver their babies.

Information about the school

The Rowan Centre is a small pupil referral unit which supports pregnant school girls and school-aged mothers, aged between 11 and 16, and who live within the Rotherham area. It is funded jointly by Barnardo's and Rotherham local authority. The unit opened in September 2008 as a single unit having previously been amalgamated with Redbarn pupil referral unit. At the time of the visit there were 14 girls and 10 babies on roll at the centre. The Rowan Centre has an onsite nursery which is integral to the provision and allows girls to return to study after the birth of their babies. At the time of this inspection the nursery was caring for seven babies aged between four and 13 months old. This was also inspected as a single inspection event at the time of the pupil referral unit inspection. None of the students were identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. None were from minority ethnic groups. The centre has Healthy Schools Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Rowan Centre provides a satisfactory standard of education for students in a caring environment. Funded by a partnership between Barnardos and Rotherham local authority, it offers support to vulnerable students and their babies in term time and beyond through an outreach programme. One of its main strengths is in the high-quality support it provides for students' care and welfare, both throughout their pregnancies and in looking after their newborn babies. The headteacher and all staff work hard to promote the highly caring ethos of the centre. This, alongside very good relationships with outside agencies and with a range of professionals, enhances students' understanding of how to look after themselves and their babies. However, links with students, parents and carers are not as well developed. As a result, not all students receive sufficient support at home. Despite this, and because of the nurturing ethos at the centre, most students develop into caring parents who recognise the needs of their babies.

Students really value the support they receive and say they enjoy attending the centre. One young mum described how attending the centre had made her realise that, as she said, 'I've got to work hard for her [the daughter's] future.' As a result, she is now studying for seven GCSEs and is rightly very proud of her achievements so far. Many students improve their attendance considerably while at the centre as they re-engage with learning. This is supported by the provision of taxis for girls in the later stage of pregnancy and after delivery.

Most students arrive at the centre with academic attainment well below that of their peers, largely because of gaps in their education. Once at the centre most students make good progress. Many students gain GCSEs, but not all achieve the grades of which they are capable. This is because, although teaching is generally good across the provision and target setting is in place, it is not always used sufficiently rigorously to stretch more-able students. Some curriculum areas lack resources. Cramped teaching areas impact negatively on learning for all students, particularly in sessions that take place in the nursery area, where crying babies frequently distract students.

The leadership of the newly appointed headteacher has been very effective in bringing about a number of improvements over the last term. However, many of these improvements are at a very early stage of development and their full impact has yet to be felt. While staff and other senior leaders have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre, self-evaluation processes currently lack rigour. Data on students' achievements are not yet sufficiently well used to identify precisely where improvements are needed and staff sometimes lack an understanding of current practice.

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The headteacher has worked with other senior leaders to develop an improvement plan which includes a move to new premises. The management committee, which includes representatives from both the local authority and Barnardo's, is working with them to achieve these objectives. As all involved with the centre have a real commitment to ensuring that students receive the best possible care and education, the centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all lessons take place in an environment that allows students to concentrate on learning without undue distraction.
- Improve the attainment of more-able students, by:
 - consistently setting them challenging targets and work which match their needs across all subject areas.
- Further engage parents and carers, particularly those who are hard to reach, to ensure better support for students and their babies.
- Develop planning within the nursery to ensure that all areas of learning and particularly regular access to outdoor play are effectively promoted.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students' attainment on arrival at the setting is often low. This is because many have had long periods away from school and, as a result, they have large gaps in their knowledge and understanding. However, a combination of a nurturing environment and a focus on their strengths ensures that many students gain confidence quickly and make good progress. Some students are reluctant to learn when they first start at the centre. However, with persistent and continuous support from staff they re-engage with learning because they understand the importance of education for themselves and their babies' futures. Several commented that they wanted to do well for the sake of their babies. Many gain passes in GCSEs and entry-level accreditation and for most this reflects good progress. However, not all more-able students attain the levels of which they are capable because the targets and work set for them are insufficiently challenging in some subjects.

Students clearly enjoy their time at the centre. Most arrive on time, often having completed long journeys with small babies. They really appreciate that staff will always listen to their concerns and worries and, as a result, feel safe and valued. Attendance at the centre is in line with the national average before and after students' period of maternity leave. This often reflects a marked increase for individuals from previous school settings. One girl showed such determination to succeed that she attended an examination a few days after delivering her baby. As a result of many effective strategies, there is little unauthorised absence. While the unit has the Healthy Schools

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Standard, students do not always eat healthily. This is largely to do with the lack of choice in school lunch menus which lack a salad option, but offer burger and chips. Physical education is delivered as part of the curriculum and some creative choices have included street dancing, swimming and computer-generated fitness programmes. Behaviour is good and systems to support students who have difficulties are well established. Students participate well in the school community and are involved in decision making through regular meetings. Their involvement in the local and global community is less well developed, but satisfactory overall. Most students are making good progress in acquiring the basic skills for later life and learning and they are adequately prepared for life when they leave the centre. However, records show that disappointingly only 60% went on to further education last year.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use questioning well to encourage students to focus their ideas and gain confidence in their abilities. For example, a good range of questions was used during a mathematics lesson on the likelihood of an event taking place. Questions directly related

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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to students' own lives, which led to both much hilarity and a better understanding of probability. The marking of students' work is regular and detailed and good verbal feedback is given in all lessons. However, the lack of challenging enough work and learning targets for more-able students means that they do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do to meet their full potential. In most lessons there is generally good teamwork between teachers and the teaching assistant, who supports less-able students well.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad to enable students to improve their skills and gain accreditation in subjects such as information and communication technology, and art and food technology, as well as in English, mathematics and science. Pastoral care staff link well with teaching staff to support students in learning how to bring up their babies as part of the child development course.

The good care and welfare of students underpins the ethos of the centre. Staff work very hard to ensure that students are supported and well cared for. The very effective links with a range of agencies support students well in looking after themselves and their babies. Procedures for risk assessment and evacuation of the centre are effective and ensure that students and babies are safe. Students are set appropriate personal development targets, which include a strong cessation of smoking programme that has had significant success. The centre staff work closely with outside agencies to ensure the safety of girls and their babies, many of whom are vulnerable. The systems for supporting good attendance are robust. When students are absent, phone calls and home visits are made and work is sent home in an effort to ensure that students do not fall behind.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the newly appointed headteacher has resulted in a strong vision for the future of the provision. Many changes have taken place in a short space of time, although much is still 'work in progress'. The impact of these changes is beginning to be measurable in some areas, for instance students' behaviour has improved. Further planning for improvements is well focused and is clearly outlined in the unit's Developing Excellence Plan, which has improving outcomes for students at its heart. Senior staff are newly involved in the self-evaluation process and the regular monitoring of teaching and learning is now in place. Teachers regularly discuss the progress made by students and

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consider how best to meet each student's needs. This ensures that all have full access to the courses offered. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily.

The management committee is supportive of the centre and is beginning to take a more active role in supporting and challenging the unit's leadership. For example, members of the management committee have been influential in ensuring the good quality of child protection. However, they have not always challenged the centre sufficiently well and have been too reliant on feedback, rather than being actively involved in monitoring provision. Safeguarding systems are secure and ensure that students and their babies are well cared for. Child protection training is of very good quality and staff are well trained to recognise potential risks for vulnerable students. There are appropriate plans in place to develop more effective links with the local and wider community as well as with students, and parents and carers, but evaluation of these is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The nursery staff offer support and guidance to young mothers who return to study after a short period of maternity leave. This was judged as a satisfactory provision which meets the needs of babies and children in its care well. The open plan layout of the nursery allows students the opportunity to observe staff and this helps them to develop their parenting skills further.

Students are responsible for their babies during break and lunchtime and this allows staff the opportunity to offer advice and guidance. Good relationships are formed

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between staff and students and, as a result, babies are calm and happy to leave their mothers. Nursery staff use a Barnardo's based framework to evaluate babies' progress and plan activities. As a result, babies' development is well monitored and recorded and planning effectively links to individual welfare and development needs. Links with the Early Years Foundation Stage six areas of learning are beginning to be made but this has not yet been fully implemented. This is due in part to a lack of staff training. Opportunities for physical development through play are limited for toddlers as the outdoor provision is difficult to access.

Since the last inspection the nursery has updated the operational plan and all welfare regulations, policies and procedures are in place. The requirements for registration are met. Satisfactory hygiene standards are adhered to, including, for example, the good use of antibacterial spray on surfaces. As a result, babies are well cared for and protected from the spread of infection. Record-keeping procedures are well established and inform parents daily.

The management committee of the unit with responsibility for the nursery provision, are developing their role in overseeing the work of the nursery. The nursery's manager who has responsible for its day-to-day running, recognises the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and, as a result, ensures that the babies' care is to a satisfactory standard and that staff are suitably qualified.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Four questionnaires were returned from parents and carers out of a possible 14. Those who responded gave overwhelmingly positive responses to all questions and felt that the staff at the centre supported their daughters very well. One felt that without the centre's input their daughter would not have achieved any qualifications.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Rowan Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 24 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	25	3	75	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 January 2010

Inspection of The Rowan Centre, Rotherham, S60 3NW

Dear Students

Thank you very much for making my colleague and I so welcome when we inspected the centre recently. We really enjoyed seeing you in lessons and meeting your babies, who were very well behaved. Thank you for giving up your meeting time to allow me to talk to you so that I could find out your views which have contributed to this report. The Rowan Centre is providing you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the most important parts of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about.

- The centre supports you well in looking after yourselves and your babies.
- There are good links with lots of specialists and agencies who help you learn and care for your babies.
- You are proud of the fact that you are taking examinations and will get qualifications when you leave.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and help you to learn by asking you useful questions.

I have asked the centre to do three things to help it improve further. They are:

- to ensure that all lessons are taught in a quiet area away from the Nursery so that you can concentrate on learning more easily
- that those of you who find learning easier than most get the examination grades of which you are capable
- to ensure that your parents and carers understand what you are doing at school and how they can help you to do even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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