

Summarised inspection findings

Rockwell Learning Centre

Dundee City Council

19 March 2019

Key contextual information

Rockwell Learning Centre is a special school based in Dundee. It caters for young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs from across Dundee City Council.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
 - strategic planning for continuous improvement
 - implementing improvement and change
- Following the creation of Rockwell Learning Centre (Rockwell), the headteacher has largely concentrated on supporting the newly established school community. With the support of his senior management team (SMT), he has made a positive start in bringing together staff from across three centres and creating a child-centred approach based on mutual respect between staff and young people. Many young people, parents and partners spoke highly of the positive ethos within the school. However, many staff are still having difficulty settling into the new environment and continue to associate themselves with their previous setting. Led by the SMT, there is a need to support staff to fully align themselves to Rockwell and help the school to move forward. Improved communication amongst staff and an increased understanding of everyone's role at the school would aid this process. More collaboration between staff across the school in the planning, delivery and evaluation of learning activities and new initiatives would also be beneficial.
- Led by the headteacher, the school has created a vision, values and aims which is child-centred and takes account of the unique features of the school. However, the vision, values and aims are not a strong feature of the life of the school and are not understood by all members of the school community particularly young people and their families. There is a need to revisit the vision, values and aims to better reflect the purpose of the school and the key outcomes that are sought for young people and their families. Following this process, the vision, values and aims should be better displayed across the school and be a more visible aspect of school life. They should play a more prominent role in influencing school improvement notably curricular development and improving outcomes for young people.
- The headteacher and SMT are well liked and respected by the school community. In particular, parents and partners speak very highly of their leadership and the positive impact they are having on young people's lives. Collectively, the SMT set a positive example in how they interact with young people at all times including when young people are anxious or distressed. This has helped contribute to less instances of challenging behaviour in the school and a reduction in exclusions this session. The SMT now need to focus more on providing a clearer strategic sense of direction in taking the school forward based on continuous improvement.
- There are examples of staff leading on new initiatives and taking responsibility for aspects of school life such as work placements, girls' groups and nurturing approaches. Staff are consulted on school priorities such as approaches to positive behaviour, timetabling and the

vision, values and aims. However, there is a need for staff to lead and contribute far more to whole school improvement, share their ideas, reflect on their current practice and work collegiately to improve outcomes for young people. During the inspection, young people spoke confidently with inspectors and voiced their opinions in a measured and articulate fashion. Young people would benefit greatly from increased leadership opportunities and a more prominent role in reviewing and evaluating the quality of the school's work.

- The SMT undertake a range of self-evaluative activities including gathering data on attendance, exclusions and attainment and achievement; observations of learning and teaching; examining the quality of plans and young people's work and seeking the views of stakeholders at review meetings. However, these self-evaluative activities need to be completed more systematically and not be overtaken by operational matters. Stakeholders need to play a greater role in reflecting on the work of the school. Staff would benefit from increased opportunities to review and evaluate their own practice. The school does gather some valuable data and intelligence through self-evaluative activities but this information needs to be better analysed and contribute more fully to influencing future change and improvement at the school.
- There is a school improvement plan (SIP) in place which is in line with key national priorities and has a focus on raising attainment, improving wellbeing and building skills for life and work. However, as yet, there has been very little impact on improving outcomes for young people. The current SIP is very generic and does not reference some of the immediate priorities for improvement. The school needs to focus on key areas requiring improvement including curriculum development, expectations of what young people can achieve and consistency of learning and teaching.
- The school is using their allocated Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) funding to provide extended work placements at a local provider. Young people speak highly of this opportunity. The SMT need to analyse the impact of these interventions with a clear focus on whether they are raising the attainment and achievement of the most disadvantaged young people attending the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the school, there are examples of teaching staff adopting a range of creative learning and teaching approaches to help motivate and engage young people in their learning. In the best lessons, young people enjoy their learning, are enthusiastic learners and work conscientiously through tasks and activities. They respond well to organised, structured learning activities which incorporate a variety of learning approaches including independent tasks, collaborative working and a mix of practical and desk-based activities. However, this level of motivation and engagement is inconsistent across the school. Overall, young people's school attendance and engagement with their learning is a major concern particularly in the 'Big End' of the school. Young people are opting out of certain classes, absconding and engaging in non-timetabled activities. All staff across the school need to support young people to improve their attendance and encourage them to engage in their timetabled learning activities.
- Across the school, almost all staff have positive and caring relationships with young people. They help young people to feel safe, happy and confident in seeking support when required. Most young people are well behaved, polite and speak highly of the school particularly in comparison to previous educational placements. Staff now need to increase their expectations of what young people can achieve. In many learning activities, young people are not sufficiently challenged with their learning and the pace of learning is too slow. Young people also engage in too many activities which are not purposeful and do not provide any skills progression or accreditation particularly the activity-based learning. Young people are too frequently given opportunities to participate in alternative ad hoc activities rather than attending timetabled classes. Staff need to work together to minimise unnecessary changes to timetabled activities and support young people to attain as fully as possible.
- Young people benefit from occasional opportunities to take responsibility, express their views and influence decision making across the whole school. Tutor time provides a way for young people to share thoughts, ideas and concerns with staff. However, there is considerable scope to increase pupil voice. Young people should have a greater say in evaluating the work of the school including the curriculum and quality of learning and teaching. This would potentially identify ways to improve school attendance and engagement with learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is variable. Inspectors observed high quality teaching at times which included activities which were real and relevant to young people's interests and aspirations. In these lessons, teachers use a variety of scaffolding approaches built on prior learning and use a range of resources well to motivate and engage young people. However, this is inconsistent across the school. Some lessons can be over-reliant on worksheets and desk-based activities. Across the school, most learning activities are reliant on programmes and courses. Teachers should identify ways to introduce more learning activities across the four contexts for learning. Teachers in the Big End need to ensure that young

people in S1 – S3 receive their entitlement to a broad general education (BGE) and do not follow National Qualifications intended for the senior phase. In order to help improve this position, teachers would benefit from an increased focus of what constitutes effective learning, teaching and assessment. This will support consistently high-quality learning and teaching experiences for all young people across the school.

- In most classes, instructions and explanations are clear and most young people are aware of the purpose of learning. In some lessons observed, teachers make effective use of questioning to encourage young people to think and build on prior learning. There are a few examples of young people developing skills for life and work by relating their learning to real life contexts. There is now a need to further develop opportunities for young people to apply their skills and understanding more in this area.
- In a few classes, teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance learning. However the use of digital technology is at an early stage across the school. Teachers should continue to explore ways in which learners can independently access digital technology.
- Teachers use a few formative assessment approaches to let young people know how they are doing in their tasks in class. Effective questioning is used well in some classes. Teachers now need to develop a more coherent and consistent use of approaches to assessment across all classes. However, overall, teachers use a limited range of assessment approaches. The school's approaches to assessment requires further development to ensure that assessment forms an integral part of the planning process. Staff need to continue to develop their understanding of assessment to enable them to use a range of evidence to identify what learners need to do next. For example, the provision of helpful oral and written feedback would help young people become more aware of their next steps in learning and improve consistency across the school.
- Teachers are confident at tracking young people's progress through programmes and courses at the senior phase. Systems to track learners' progress at the BGE is at an early stage of development and are not consistently applied across the school.
- The school has identified the need for systems for moderating practice and understanding of standards to be introduced. However, there is not yet evidence of this being taken forward. Staff should be supported in the development of their understanding of shared standards in order to improve consistency across the school. Working with neighbouring mainstream schools would help take this forward.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- A range of partners support the delivery of the curriculum, such as Police Scotland, National Health Service (NHS), and a range of voluntary organisations. There has been a significant amount of focus on developing approaches to Developing the Young Workforce which is providing more flexible learning pathways for young people in the senior phase. This includes practical experiences in the world of work as well as college placements.
- Activity based learning provides opportunities to focus on the development of social and emotional skills which underpin self-regulatory behaviours. This should be reviewed to ensure there is a clear purpose to this learning for individuals and groups.
- Young people in the 'Wee End' have opportunities to learn across a range of curricular areas, using interdisciplinary learning approaches. The focus is on addressing gaps in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, and supporting young people to re-engage. Information about prior learning is insufficiently detailed which makes it difficult for teachers to ensure progression based on experiences and outcomes. They would welcome opportunities to plan with mainstream colleagues.
- In the 'Big End' the focus of the curriculum is on National Qualifications. Young people who are in the broad general education are not receiving their entitlement. Further work is needed to plan learning that incorporates literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across all areas of the curriculum.
- Overall, senior leaders need to review their curriculum rationale and ensure that young people are receiving their entitlements. They need to continue to develop personalisation and choice so that individual pathways are relevant, appropriate and progressive.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- See Choice QI 2.7

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The wellbeing of young people who attend Rockwell is an important aspect of the work of the school. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and supportive. Staff demonstrate care and respect towards each young person. They have a sound knowledge of learners, their home situation and wider community context. As a result, almost all young people feel welcome and are developing a sense of belonging at Rockwell. Young people feel safe in school and almost all have someone in school to speak to if they have a concern or worry. There are a number of examples of the school helping to improve wellbeing outcomes for young people and their families. These are tracked well using the Rockwell wellbeing tracking tool. The school should build on these successes and look to improve wellbeing outcomes for all young people.
- The principles of Getting it Right for Every Child are understood by staff and are integral to the Team Around the Child (TATC) plans. We have discussed with senior leaders the need to embed the wellbeing indicators into the day to day work of the school. This will support young people to understand their relevance and take responsibility for their own wellbeing.
- In the past 15 months, a significant amount of time has been invested in developing nurturing approaches across the school. This has led to a greater staff awareness of the impact of trauma, and adverse childhood experiences. Staff are now more attuned to the young people and are supporting them to improve their self-regulating behaviour. As a result, exclusions for all young people are lower than previous placements in mainstream schools. As recognised by senior leaders, work needs to continue to develop consistency in the understanding and application of nurture principles. Overall, there needs to be raised expectations of young people and greater consistency in how staff respond to challenging behaviour. Almost all young people are happy with how staff deal with bullying. Senior leaders should take into account recent national advice related to the recording and monitoring of all bullying incidents, such as those related to protected characteristics. They should also ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place for all young people who require this.
- Almost all young people feel that the school is teaching them to make healthy choices. In home economics, young people have a number of opportunities to learn about healthy food choices such as understanding food labelling and a balanced diet. Young people learn about how to stay safe online and an acceptable use agreement is discussed with young people as part of their transition into school. National Health Service staff lead good quality smoking cessation education groups. This is helping young people to be more aware of the impact of smoking on health, such as understanding the risks from passive smoking. In support of this work, the current arrangement for permitting smoking in the school grounds must be stopped. Further work now needs to be done to develop the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure that young people learn in a progressive and relevant way.

- The school provides a range of activities for young people to be active through physical activity in school, as well as activity based learning and outdoor learning. Young people are positive about these experiences, and it is helping them to develop relationships with staff and other young people. Senior leaders should consider how developing the outdoor areas of the school can further contribute to outdoor and active learning opportunities for young people.
- Senior leaders have an understanding of the main statutory duties related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Partners are positive about their involvement in planning meetings such as Team Around the Child (TATC) meetings, and communication between agencies is strong. Senior leaders recognise that further work is needed to improve the quality and consistency of information which is provided upon placement at the school. Recent work to improve transition planning, including the development of pupil profiles, is providing useful information about strategies to support young people. This now need to be built upon to improve planning to meet individual additional support needs.
- Specific targets, which are clearly understood and owned by individual young people, need to be identified and actions with clear responsibilities and timescales should be identified. Staff should further strengthen their autism-friendly approach, taking fuller account of sensory needs. Overall, young people need to have increased participation in decision-making across the school, and approaches to rights need to be strengthened. This includes having a greater say in what additional support they need to help them to progress in learning. This will help them to develop self-confidence and responsibility. A few parents said they would welcome the opportunity to be more involved in discussions about the support their child needs.
- Young people have an entitlement to high quality personal support where they can have regular conversations with a key adult to review their targets and progress being made, and discuss next steps. The school takes this forward through daily tutor time sessions. At present, tutor time is a highly variable experience for young people. Its purpose is not clear and requires review including the 'key worker' roles of teachers and support staff. Greater clarity of roles and responsibilities around planning to meet individual learning needs would help to ensure that all young people are making progress. It would also help senior leaders to have a more strategic approach to oversee the effectiveness of interventions and supports. For example, building on the work of the girls' group which is showing signs of a positive impact, such as improving peer relationships and ability to work with others.
- Young people generally improve their attendance and reduce exclusions compared to their previous placements. Overall, the school is successful at re-engaging young people with their education. However, average attendance of young people at the school remains below the national average and exclusion rates are still relatively high compared to other special schools. Senior leaders should continue to build on the approaches which have proved successful in re-engaging individual young people and reducing exclusions, so that attendance and exclusion rates continue to improve. At present, many young people are not receiving their full entitlement to education and a few learners are on part-time timetables. Senior leaders need to address this.
- Staff have a sound understanding of the need to support young people to understand and value diversity. There are a few examples of work which has improved young people's understanding of different religions, and for a few young people this has led to a reduction in racist behaviours. As the curriculum develops, staff should consider how learning about equality and diversity is planned in a progressive and coherent way, including learning about all protected characteristics. Senior leaders also need to monitor gender specific activities to ensure all young people have equal opportunities to participate.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment over time

- In recent years, according to the school's own data, most young people gained a small number of National Qualifications course awards and units predominantly at National 3 and National 4. Young people consistently perform strongest in literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics and hospitality. Projected results for this session expects young people to achieve an increased range of National Qualification course awards and units with a number predicted to achieve qualifications at National 4 and National 5. The school recognises there is a need to further improve pupil attainment both in terms of National Qualifications and wider achievement awards.
- According to their own figures, the school has been successful in improving levels of attendance for the majority of young people, many of whom have well-established patterns of non-attendance at previous educational placements. The school has also been successful in lowering exclusion figures. As recognised by the school, there is still a need to further improve school attendance and continue to reduce the number of school exclusions.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- All young people accessing Rockwell have had interrupted learning within education which has had an impact upon their attainment of prior Curriculum for Excellence levels. Overall young people within the broad general education are making satisfactory progress with literacy and numeracy when compared to their prior levels. Almost all of the young people in the senior phase are working toward National 3, National 4 and National 5 accredited English and mathematics courses. The poor attendance of the majority of young people in timetabled classes is having a direct impact upon their literacy and numeracy progress.
- From information provided by the school, almost all young people have achieved levels appropriate to their chronological age. Young people are being offered learning experiences within levels appropriate to their age although examples of work evidence suggests that young people are still working towards achieving first, second or third level. Therefore the accuracy of teachers' professional judgements can be variable at times. Teachers are beginning to engage with the benchmarks and are developing using these to make professional judgements. Moderation activity within the school, as well as across a wider range of schools, would support teaching staff improve their confidence in making professional judgements when assessing achievement of a level.

Listening and talking

- Most young people accessing the broad general education are able to consistently communicate and respond to staff when in the classroom environment. Most young people are able to take turns to talk and demonstrate growing confidence when sharing their views with

staff. The staff teaching English ensure that there are interesting contextualised learning opportunities to promote levels of interest and engagement. In some groups young people are actively involved in activities that demonstrate their presentation skills through persuasive arguments. Young people require further support to develop skills to communicate confidently when in a larger group.

Reading

- Most young people can read paragraphs independently albeit with a few young people requiring adult support. The young people have opportunities to engage with texts across all aspects of their learning and are able to answer contextualised questions. Young people are demonstrating increased confidence in reading to others across most aspects of their learning.

Writing

- Young people accessing the broad general education were observed writing for a variety of purposes, for example, note taking, creating persuasive texts, subject based articles, personal experiences and introductions to stories. The majority of young people are able to organise sentences into paragraphs although they required adult support to complete written tasks. Most young people are able to spell commonly used words correctly and are able to spell unfamiliar words with adult support. Young people would now benefit from more opportunities to write at length rather than short paragraphs or single sentences. As the young people move into their senior phase they demonstrate improved capacity to engage in writing activity. The staff will use word processing programmes to support young people appropriately.

Numeracy:

- Most young people in the broad general education are able to add and subtract numbers with four digits. A minority of young people are able to multiply and divide using four digits by one digit. Young people are able to confidently describe two-dimensional shapes, three-dimensional objects and angles. The majority of young people could tell the time using digital clocks and transfer this into real life contexts. A few young people could tell the time using an analogue clock. As young people move through their broad general education into their senior phase most young people have successfully learned aspects of mathematics that they had previously missed in previous educational placements. There is evidence that young people are extending and applying their numeracy skills in a minority of other curricular areas. The school requires to continue to improve the development of numeracy across other aspects of learning.

Achievements

- Young people are making good progress with their skills development through participating in an increasing range of personal achievement opportunities. This includes working with a range of partners to provide learning experiences in, for example, the outdoor environment and learning about the world of work. Young people attending Murton gain a certificate which recognises their learning in animal husbandry, estate maintenance and animal handling. Young people also gain valuable skills and accreditation through taking part in the Young Firefighters scheme. They can also gain certificates in first aid and food hygiene. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop opportunities to accredit young people for more of their personal achievements. For example ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and Saltire Awards have recently been introduced. Staff should also support young people to recognise the skills they are developing as a result of taking part in wider achievement experiences. They should also support young people to engage in more personal achievement opportunities beyond the school day.
- There are a good range of opportunities for young people to take part in activities in the local community. This includes a developing range of work placements and college links. This is

helping young people to develop relationships and confidence, as well as skills for learning, life and work. Staff work closely with Skills Development Scotland and other key partners to tailor programmes for young people. This is helping to prepare learners for positive post-school destinations.

Equity

- Staff know and treat young people as individuals. They are dedicated to meeting their needs and overcoming any barriers to success. The school works diligently in ensuring that no young person is disadvantaged due to their personal circumstances.

QI 2.7 - Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnerships
 - Collaborative learning and improvement
 - Impact on learners
- Feedback from partners demonstrates that positive progress has been made by the school and this is beginning to have an impact on learners. Partners commented that there is regular communication from school staff which supports them in delivering an effective service. This regular communication promotes a responsive approach to planning and focuses on the needs of young people. The partners feel part of the school community and have been supported to develop their understanding of the needs of young people attending the school. The school contributes to the education authority's Champions Board which promotes opportunities for care experienced young people to make their needs known.
- Partnership agreements create a shared understanding of the purpose of service delivery and ensure consistency of input from partner agencies. Agreements that are in place are reviewed within agreed timescales. Partners have an appropriate awareness in relation to needs of young people and adapt their practice to ensure meaningful support is provided. Partners are committed to improving outcomes for young people particularly supporting their transition to a positive post-16 destination.
- The school works closely with partners to provide meaningful learning around health and wellbeing. This includes work with Police Scotland and Barnardo's to reduce risk taking behaviour. The school ensures that young people engage with events and activities led by the Developing The Young Workforce and work experience team. Partnerships developed by the school results in partners delivering meaningful learning activities. Such partners include Skills Development Scotland, Discover Opportunities and Ancrum Outdoor Education.
- Some outdoor activities are accredited such as Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and informal centre certification. The school is beginning to design a partnership agreement with Street Soccer to target young people with low attendance. The school now requires to develop processes for tracking partnerships and how these partnerships improve outcomes for young people.
- Almost all parents and carers commented favourably on the support their children receive from Rockwell. They feel that the daily communication is supportive and that they can ask for advice or help from the staff. Parents and carers also reported that their child has improved their school attendance and behaviour since being placed at Rockwell. The school supports young people and families to improve school attendance through undertaking home visits at the request of parents and carers. A few parents and carers felt that they are not fully included in the wider assessment, planning and decision making surrounding their child's needs.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.