

Rossendale School

Inspection report for residential special school

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| Inspector | Graham Robinson |
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| Address | Moor Side Farm Bamford Road Ramsbottom BURY Lancashire BL0 0RT |
| Telephone number | 01706 822779 |
| Email | rossendale@priorygroup.com |
| Registered person | David Gordon Duncan |
| Head of care | David Gordon Duncan |
| Head / Principal | |
| Date of last inspection | 7 June 2006 |

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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| Outstanding: | this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality |
| Good: | this aspect of the provision is strong |
| Satisfactory: | this aspect of the provision is sound |
| Inadequate: | this aspect of the provision is not good enough |

Service information

Brief description of the service

Rossendale School is an independent special residential school, providing education for up to 56 pupils who display Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). Pupils are subject to a statement of need under the 1996 Education Act. The school admits pupils of mixed gender between the ages of eight to 14 years. Boarding is provided for up to 23 pupils of mixed gender, for a maximum of five days, four nights, term time only. All boarding pupils return to their home base for weekends and school holidays. Residential provision is spread between three sites. The on site provision accommodates up to nine pupils. Bedrooms are normally shared and staffing levels are high to cater for the individual needs of pupils. Further accommodation is located approximately four miles away from the school. The first site consists of two adjoining properties both capable of accommodating up to three pupils. The third site is located in a different area. This is an eight bedded property split into two units of four. Each of the off site units are staffed appropriately and organised to offer a more independent lifestyle.

Summary

The aim of this inspection is to make judgements about how the school organises and operates only the residential side of its provision. Judgements are assessed against the outcomes for pupils who are resident, underpinned by the National Minimum Standards for residential special schools. The educational provision does not fall within the jurisdiction of this inspection, therefore no judgements have been made regarding pupils education. This has been a full inspection with each of the six outcomes assessed. The inspection took place over a three day period from the 26 to 28 September 2007. A further visit took place on the 4 October 2007 to provide feedback. Each of the residential units were visited during out of school hours when pupils were present. At the last inspection the school was judged that it provided a high quality service. This has been maintained. There is a clear sense of direction and purpose to everything that staff are asked to do. A committed staff group understand and recognise the individual needs of the pupils in their care and work consistently to address those needs. Feedback from pupils was positive. Most are comfortable living within a structured and safe environment that has clearly defined boundaries. Those spoken with described some area of recent achievement. Good relationships exist between pupils and staff. A relaxed happy atmosphere prevailed in each of the residential provisions. This report contains no actions or specific recommendations.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

A strength of the school is its ability to re-examine itself with a view to improving all aspects of its operation. Areas where it feels it could do better are identified and specific plans with target dates are set. It has improved in the way it collates and presents evidence to reflect outcomes for pupils. A previous recommendation for the school to ensure it obtains all references when appointing staff has been addressed. A new health plan and promotion document has been devised and completed for each individual pupil.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health of the pupils is being promoted positively. The school has good links with local doctors, dentist and opticians. It has also had considerable success accessing specialist medical services. Since the previous inspection a specific health plan format has been devised and completed for each pupil. They are comprehensive, thorough documents that reflect the health histories, needs and outcomes of the individual. The schools staff core training programme includes a number of initiatives linked to promoting health. For example, first aid, infection control, suicide or self harm prevention and safe handling of medicines. There is a medical room on site. It has appropriate facilities to store medication safely. Off site medication is stored in a locked medical cabinet, located in the staff sleep in room which is also locked. Medication is recorded immediately as it is given out. Pupils gave positive feedback about the quality and quantity of food provided. All meals shared with staff and pupils were pleasant social occasions. Menus included choice and resident pupils are given the opportunity to shop locally and choose foods they wish to be cooked.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Privacy was not an issue of concern to pupils. All sensitive information is stored securely. Staff demonstrated an awareness around issues of privacy and this was evident during the early morning routine. The facilities exist to allow pupils privacy when making or receiving a telephone call. Pupils demonstrated an understanding of the complaints system. Most were able to name at least one member of staff they could talk with if they have worries or concerns. A supply of complaints forms are available on notice boards located in each residential unit. This allows pupils to make a formal complaint without having to ask for a form or explain their actions to a staff member. The complaints records were made available. One complaint has been made since the last inspection and records show it was resolved appropriately. Records show that all care staff have completed training on child protection matters within the last year. There have been no safeguarding issues requiring external investigation since the last inspection. Written records are kept on any incident that may lead to or have safeguarding issues. Since the last inspection, one referral has been made to external agencies. They decided the matter did not require a full child protection investigation. The school revised and updated its child protection procedures and guidance in June 2007. In surveys, seven pupils out of 17 said they had experienced some form of bullying, most of it being verbal. They all acknowledged that staff respond quickly to any incident of bullying. The school has a pro-active attitude towards bullying. For example, high staffing levels with good supervision goes some way to minimising opportunities to bully. Minutes from a recent staff meeting provide a further example of how staff respond to such incidents. None of the pupils spoken with had any serious concerns or worries for their own safety. The schools bullying policy and guidance has recently been referred to the student council for their observations, comments and ideas. All staff spoken with demonstrated a consistency of practice and a knowledge of the schools policies, procedures and guidance linked to both child protection and bullying. There have been no incidents of a resident pupil absconding since the last inspection. All pupils recognised the boundaries in place and this was evident when observing a group from the main house, playing out. There are appropriate written procedures and records in place regarding unauthorised absence. Comprehensive recording takes place of all incidents of physical intervention. They consist of a record of the use of reasonable force, incident report, post incident monitoring form, self review and young persons reflection form. This is underpinned with a central record logging all incidents along with outcomes. Detailed monitoring takes place allowing the school to analyse each incident, with a view to reducing the number that take place. All young people

have a behaviour management plan and individual risk assessment. Trigger points and ways to deescalate behaviour are identified. Positive handling training is mandatory. Records show that all staff have received either an introductory or refresher course within the last 12 months. Four staff are qualified trainers. The care and control policy was revised and updated in June 2007. Staff were observed dealing with incidents of spontaneous and challenging behaviour. They did so calmly, professionally, safely and with the minimum of fuss. One incident observed was dealt with quickly, without major disturbance to others and with the pupils dignity intact. A full range of risk assessments exist to identify hazards in and around the whole campus and for activities. This includes a fire risk assessment completed in 2005 by an external company. All recommendations have been addressed and the school had a satisfactory visit by a fire officer in April 2007. A range of agreements to maintain and service fire equipment, boilers, gas and electrical equipment are in place. The procedures for recruiting and clearing staff are satisfactory. A random selection of staff files were reviewed in order to evidence this matter. An outstanding recommendation to ensure that all references are received has been addressed. The school has devised a monitoring document covering the areas addressed in the standards of this outcome. It reflects on practice within each area and identifies where supportive evidence can be found. This is used to reflect on current working practices and to identify areas for improvement. This is a good example of the self review and analysis processes used by the school to build on practice and identify areas for development.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The whole ethos of the school is to encourage and support both social and educational progress. For example, arrangements to facilitate homework are given priority when pupils return to their place of residence. Time and space for study is set aside and staff both organise and undertake a supporting role. Each pupil has a written educational plan that has aims, individual needs and requirements assessed. The latest set of examination results show the positive outcomes achieved by year 11 pupils who were resident during the last school year. The individual support given to pupils is excellent and a number of factors contribute to this. For example, identification of pupils individual needs and comprehensive planning all supported by high numbers of well trained staff. Each pupil has a significant amount of written documentation identifying need and future planning. This is underpinned with specific aims and targets setting. There is evidence of regular review and updating. Pupils are expected to involve themselves in meaningful activities. Most are community based. Pupils described a range of activities, some individual to themselves such as Duke of Edinburgh award and snowboarding to group and sporting activities like football and visiting local youth clubs. In the evenings, good organisation and communication by staff allows for groups and individuals to be transported to their chosen activity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils feel they can contribute positively towards certain aspects of the working practices adopted by the school. They gave examples of the young people's meetings held regularly in each residential unit. Here, staff and pupils discuss issues and choices are made. One pupil spoke about the student council and how it has been influential with the recent introduction of a new school uniform for year 10 and 11 pupils. Parents and other professionals are asked to provide opinions and views regularly. For example, specific consultation takes place both

before and during statutory and educational reviews. A review was observed as part of the inspection process and all present were encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions and views. Assessing the needs of young people is a strength of the school. Three pupils were case tracked and all the documentation reviewed provided evidence of this. This included psychiatric, psychological, educational and social assessments. They are underpinned with comprehensive planning documentation and individual risk assessments. Maintaining contact with home is not viewed as a problem by pupils. All resident pupils go home each weekend and for school holidays. Some, as they progress, have a midweek stay. Contact is encouraged and telephones that offer some privacy are available in each residential unit. Contact arrangements and records are held in pupils case files.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The standard of repair, décor, fixtures, fittings and equipment in each residential unit is good. The main house on the school campus caters for group living, but offsite units are designed to improve privacy and promote independence. Pupils are proud to show off where they live to visitors and take pride in their accommodation and surroundings. They are at ease and relaxed within their surroundings.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school recently revised and updated its Statement of Purpose. It provides an accurate description of its working practices, philosophy, policies and procedures. Pupils are looked after by a committed staff group who are well organised and supported by senior staff. Formal supervision and staff appraisals take place regularly and staff are happy with the levels of support they receive. Staffing levels are high and there is appropriate overnight cover in each of the residential units. Good levels of communication and regular opportunities to meet give the staff group a team centred approach that is child focussed. Pupils are managed and looked after with consistency. All staff take part in a mandatory core training programme covering areas such as child protection and positive handling. This is supplemented with training designed to develop professional practice based on the individual needs and interests of staff. Regular supervision and appraisal is used to identify training needs. The training programme is comprehensive. It is designed to arm staff with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to look after a group of pupils with complex needs. The school is a busy environment where there are high expectations of pupils and staff. It purposely creates a structured environment with set routines to cater for the needs of pupils. It is well managed with regular internal and external monitoring taking place. Identifying individual needs and identifying how those needs are to be met is a particular strength. So are the systems in place to monitor its own performance, coupled with a willingness and drive for improvement. It is a child centred environment with all aspects of its working practices designed to recognise and improve outcomes for pupils.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

| Standard | Action | Due date |
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for residential special school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

Annex A

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.