

Rossendale School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Robert Curr
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Date of last inspection	25 September 2008

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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

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

This setting is an independent residential special school, providing education for 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 8 years old and fifteen years old.

The residential provision is spread between two sites approximately four miles away from the school. The accommodation consists of single bedrooms and each house offers spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing.

Each of the houses are staffed appropriately and organised to offer a more independent lifestyle.

Summary

This was a short notice full key inspection, all key standards were inspected and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is an outstanding service with many strong features in that the outcomes for children are well met and they enjoy their stay.

This resource provides a flexible approach to residential provision and parents and children make their own choices when it comes to deciding if they want to stay over in the residential services.

Children enjoy warm and fruitful relationships with the care staff team based on mutual respect and there are sufficient experienced and competent staff who are well supported.

Parents and carers declared their appreciation of the service and had every confidence that their children were well cared for in every respect.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person was asked to take action in relation to aspects of being healthy and organisation. These included matters related to training.

All staff have undertaken training in relation to the safe handling of medicines.

Although a great deal of progress has been made in relation to staff training, National Vocational Qualification ratios do not meet current standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual health and intimate care needs are identified and assessed as part of the admission process. This is recorded in a clear, easily accessible plan for each child detailing how specific and general health issues are to be addressed whilst they are in residence.

Particular health needs which may impact on future outcomes for young people are identified at the earliest opportunity and staff actively ensure that the services needed to address these needs are met. For example, the psychologist or speech and language therapist. The school has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that includes intimate and personal care guidance for staff working with the young people. This ensures that young people receive exceptional care that actively promotes their well-being and health.

Health issues that relate to ethnicity, race or belief are fully assessed in respect of each child and these are explicitly identified in the care plan with any actions that may be needed to address them.

The food provided for young people shows that the staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals have a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet. Young people learn about the principles of healthy eating as they enjoy an interesting and varied range of meals. Young people choose and decide the menu and have a variety of dishes to choose from. The cook ensures that alternatives are also provided for those young people who are unable to eat the planned menu. In addition, fresh fruit is always available. Menu planning is adventurous, integrates culturally appropriate food and encourages young people to try new dishes. The young people are seen to treat mealtimes as enjoyable social occasions and accept good standards of behaviour as the norm. These are excellent practices and ensures young people's health and well-being are extensively promoted and developed.

Policies and procedures are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication and the staff take full responsibility for ensuring safe practice. Young people's health and welfare is safeguarded because staff are made aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. One young person is administering their own medication. There is no clear risk assessment in place to confirm that staff are confident that this young person is sufficiently responsible to do so.

Young people's well-being is further promoted as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication, and all staff are trained in basic first aid. Medication records are seen as key to the effective management of healthcare matters, staff are aware of the importance and necessity of them always being up to date and fully comprehensive.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff show a high regard for the privacy of the children and intimate care tasks are carried out in a sensitive manner ensuring that dignity and privacy is upheld. There are also clear policies in relation to maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

Children's welfare is further promoted because the school has a well-written policy about how to make a complaint. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by children.

Young people's welfare is fully safeguarded because the school has excellent, robust child protection policies and procedures. These policies are well established and understood by staff

and there are good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Training around safeguarding is very broad and updated regularly. This ensures safeguarding in its widest sense is promoted.

Although young people choose to stay in residence, there are clear policies with regard to young people who are absent without authority.

Children are protected from bullying as there are clear procedures in place to deal with incidents effectively, which staff are knowledgeable about. Young people agree that they do not always get on with each other but confirm there is no bullying in their house. One young person stated 'they don't allow bullying here'.

The school's overall behaviour management policy and strategies have, as their prime objective, promoted the creation of a safe, supportive learning environment. The policy aims to gain achievement of a successful learning outcome for the child in recognising and responding to their individuality. Children's well-being is positively promoted.

The school has regularly updated risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire, and children's behaviour and activities. These assessments are taken into account in the daily activities of the school as well as in the houses and any activities off site. This further ensures the overall health and safety of the children.

The school has sufficiently robust arrangements for visitors to all sites, and recruitment procedures, including checks on applicants, to ensure that children are protected from exposure to potential abusers. The school is aware that it is good practice to retain photo ID on all staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive a high degree of support. The residential care staff value, promote and encourage all young people to make the best of their educational opportunities. Young people explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and activities are excellent.

Young people receive individualised assistance, with the appropriate assessments and plans in place. Considerable effort is put into creating a seamless transition from being at school and combining social, educational, care and health needs into a package which, will not only meet identified needs but promote development within the service as a whole.

Young people freely initiate interaction and seek help from various staff members on duty. Young people's well-being is positively promoted to ensure their continual care needs are met. Thus, young people benefit from staying in residence because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements. Young people's welfare and safety is well supported because care plans and risk assessments are in place and include, in detail, young people's social, sexual and health education.

Young people's social skills are extremely well promoted as they are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities. For example, staff share their own interests and enthusiasms with the young people and encourage them to try out new activities and interests. Young people's

comments and conversation clearly shows that they enjoy these activities and the time they spend in each residence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Consulting with young people, listening to them, discussing decisions affecting their welfare with them, talking to them about their residential stay and helping young people make decisions on matters that affect them are all fully integrated into the care practices of the school and in each house. Parents stated clearly that they feel listened to and are communicated with about their child.

Staff clearly demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the young people in their care and every effort is made to assist with their communication.

There is an evident warmth in the relationship between the young people and the staff team, who have been working within the residential section for many years, and have built up strong bonds with the young people and on occasions their siblings. Staff are very comfortable with their role of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and the young people.

Each young person has a clear plan when they use the residential service that has been drawn up between parents, staff and the young person. This clearly details how young people's needs are to be met during their overnight stays.

Young people only stay in residence for a few nights during the week so contact is not a major issue. However, parents or carers are encouraged to visit should they choose to do so and young people are able to telephone home as and when they wish.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are encouraged to develop life skills that prepare them for adulthood and independence. The residential staff are clearly dedicated to supporting young people to make informed choices about their lives and young people begin to feel empowered, motivated and more confident.

The residential houses are set away from the school. Each house has been sensitively adapted to meet the needs of the young people. The accommodation is homely and decorated, maintained and furnished to a very good standard and there is ample space for young people to undertake a variety of activities.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a prospectus that includes the philosophy of care and the expectations of the school and the residential support services. A guide to the service and each of the houses is given to all young people prior to their first visit.

Young people are making immense progress because of the care management systems that are in place. Their learning is effectively monitored for their continued progress and this is discussed

regularly within staff handovers. Staff observe young people regularly and use observations to detail their progress. Young people also benefit because of staff's commitment to regularly attend training to update and improve their knowledge and practice.

The number of staff on duty is more than sufficient to meet the needs of the young people and there has been a consistent staff team in place for some time. Having an established staff team creates a consistent approach for the young people.

There are a number of staff who have successfully completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in caring for young people and young people. Further members of staff are currently undertaking these awards. This means that currently overall the qualification recommendation is almost met and appears to be on target.

There are a number of quality assurance processes, including monitoring by the Area Manager. Visits are made to each residence as part of the overall monitoring of the whole school. The head of care also produces a monthly report and ascertains the views of placing authorities and other stakeholders in relation to the current operation of the service. This practise enhances the quality assurance process already in place.

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):

- assess the ability of any young person keeping and administering their own medication (NMS 14)
- ensure that 80% of the staff team achieve the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent (NMS 29).