

Rossendale School

Moor Side Farm, Bamford Road, Ramsbottom, BURY, Lancashire, BL0 0RT

Inspection dates	17/06/2013 to 20/06/2013
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Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils continue to receive outstanding levels of support and care in a comfortable and stimulating environment that meets their individual needs. As a result pupils experience outstanding outcomes socially and emotionally.
- Residential pupils benefit from living in a safe environment, with clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour which they are comfortable with and reassured by.
- Residential pupils live in an inclusive, child-focussed environment where achievement is celebrated, the promotion of equality and diversity is strong and disability is not seen as a barrier to experiencing a full, enriching lifestyle.
- Flexible packages of residential care, designed to meet pupils' individual needs are available. As a result, the high levels of support provided by staff are appreciated by both pupils and their families.
- The school has high aspirations, expectations and standards for all pupils, including those in residency, its staff and itself. This is underpinned by a strong, hierarchal, child centred management team who provide outstanding organisation and management throughout all areas of the school including the residential provision. There is a continued quest to improve all areas of practice with the sole aim of meeting pupils' complex and demanding needs.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Graham Robinson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Rossendale School is an independent residential special school, providing education for pupils who display behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils are subject to a statement of need under the 1996 Education Act. The school admits pupils of mixed gender, between the ages of 7 to 15 years old. There are currently 64 pupils on roll of these 57 are boys and seven are girls. Six pupils are currently residential pupils, which comprises of four boys and two girls. 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 communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. The school was last inspected in November 2012.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They benefit from living in an inclusive community where individual need and differences are accepted without prejudice. Residential staff develop solid, meaningful relationships with them and often, their families. The excellent support provided by staff is recognised by all. For example, one parent encapsulated this opinion about staff by stating; 'They work flexibly and holistically with my son whilst at the same time catering for and meeting all his cultural and religious needs.' Another parent says; 'Both my son and myself get fantastic support from staff at the school. They understand his needs and I am happy his needs are being met.'

Residential pupils say they enjoy their residential experience and it is helping them when planning for their future. For example, two spoke about developing specific interests whilst in residence and are looking to pursue those interests when they leave through potential college courses. Their view of their own future provides evidence of their personal growth, development, ambition, self-confidence and esteem. Based on their personal starting points, outcomes are outstanding.

The behaviour of all pupils around the campus and residential provision throughout the inspection was observed as excellent. Pupils understand the structure, clear boundaries and high expectations of behaviour set by the school. They are comfortable, safe and secure with them. Pupils live in an environment that responds positively to individual need. As a result a strong sense of community is apparent where individuality is promoted and respected. This is recognised by many parents. For example one captured this feeling by saying; 'We believe the school structure has been of great help for our daughter. She has a positive attitude about continuing attendance. We are impressed with the way the school is handling her challenging behaviour.'

The diverse and complex needs of pupils is fully understood by a knowledgeable and fully committed team of residential care staff. The care given provides pupils with a sense of security where they can grow and develop in a supportive environment that meets their needs. Disability is not viewed as a barrier and pupils enjoy being active in the local and surrounding communities. Alongside developing and following their own interests, pupils are involved in many fund raising events to support local and national charities. For example, the school sponsors a child in Africa and receives regular feedback. Activities such as this give pupils a feeling of worth and the realisation that there are others less well off than themselves.

Staff are skilled in communicating effectively with pupils which results in high levels of on-going, daily consultation where the views and wishes of pupils are known and understood. As a result pupils contribute effectively to aspects of the residential provision such as the food they eat, activities and the appearance of the living areas. This provides them with a feeling of worth and with the experience that their views are important to others and can be used constructively to plan for change.

Residential pupils are very well prepared for life beyond the school. From first entering the residential provision, all pupils work with staff to improve and develop both practical and social skills. For example, one pupil can now tie his own shoe laces and another is very proud of the fact that she has learnt to tie her own tie and has the ability to keep her bedroom tidy in the way she requires it to be. More detailed planning for the future is introduced from year nine onwards, where plans for independence are formalised.

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. Residential pupils are provided with accommodation which is of a high standard and provides the flexibility to meet their needs. Pupils feel safe and secure and are proud to show off where they live to visitors. Bedrooms are personalised to suit the taste and interests of the occupant. Furnishings, fittings, equipment, décor and general state of repair is of a high standard.

The health needs of residential pupils is being promoted positively. Everyday health needs are well catered for and the school employs a number of staff who provide specialist input such as art, speech and language therapists. The school is also successful in accessing external specialist input when required. Health needs are identified and addressed through individual health plans which are updated regularly. The arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils are effective and ensures their health needs are well met.

Residential pupils benefit with improvements to their general health and fitness levels as they are encouraged to modify previous lifestyle through exercise and diet. Pupils choose much of the food consumed in residential units as they plan and participate in shopping. However, staff ensure nutritional needs are met. All staff are fully briefed on any specific dietary requirements a pupil may have and those needs are met in full. Festivals and religious events continue to be celebrated.

Pupils are guided towards community based activities and interests that serve and meet their specific needs. For example, some young people speak enthusiastically about their introduction and participation in horse riding. Another described how he is encouraged to make journeys on public transport, something he had never done and was apprehensive of previously. Activity plans are in place which not only identify specific activities, but also note the thinking and benefit the activity has to the individual concerned. As a result of the individualised leisure arrangements in place, pupils benefit enormously from experiencing an improved, healthy lifestyle.

Residential pupils live and thrive in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. High quality individualised planning documents and risk assessments marry together to identify need as well as determining strategies to meet those needs. They are monitored, reviewed, evaluated and updated regularly to keep them current. Key workers support pupils to evaluate their own plans, which ensures pupils views and wishes continue to be incorporated in them.

The ethos and working practices which continue to develop and grow in the residential provision, are child-centred and designed to meet specific and complex individual needs. High levels of communication and transparency ensures pupils develop appropriate relationships with adults who act as excellent role models. As a result, they are well supported, stimulated and develop skills which help them to participate in community life effectively.

The school also works with and supports many families of pupils attending the school. Key workers take an active role in this and where necessary, specific therapeutic input is provided. No issues or concerns were raised about the care of pupils in any of the communication undertaken or viewed during the inspection from either parents or other professionals. Indeed the feedback received was extremely positive and consistent about all aspects of care. For example, one parent says; 'The staff know exactly what my child's needs are and are working to help him even after a short time at the school. There has been such a change for the good and I can't praise the school enough.' This is supported in comments made by a visiting professional who says; 'The annual review reflected how well the Head and staff know the pupil in question; the analysis of his needs and the appropriateness of the strategies being implemented to meet needs is impressive, Outstanding.'

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The school has retained its outstanding arrangements which keep pupils safe at all times. Working practices are constantly being evaluated and reviewed to ensure the current needs of pupils are being met in a safe environment. For example, any serious incident is quickly monitored and reviewed effectively to look at cause, with risk assessments and individual plans updated in order to avoid similar incidents re-occurring.

The school maintains excellent links with external agencies tasked with keeping children safe. Staff have the necessary training, knowledge and experience to implement and recognise any potential safeguarding issues. Records show that safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively, ensuring young people are protected.

Residential pupils confirm they feel safe within both their placement and residential environment. This view is fully supported in the communication undertaken or viewed during the inspection from parents and other professionals. Behaviour management in the residential units is well managed by creating a warm, calm and relaxing atmosphere where needs are addressed and met. As a result, serious behaviour management incidents occurring in the residential provision are extremely rare.

Pupils confirm that bullying is not an issue of concern and say it only happens occasionally. They recognise that staff are quick to step in which makes them feel safe. The school works pro-actively with all pupils to raise awareness around bullying and its potential affect. For example, pupils recently contributed significantly to the re-design of a bullying questionnaire used by the school to elicit pupils views on bullying. The new form is brighter and more child-friendly as a result of their input.

Another excellent example of pro-active work is in pupils contribution to exploring the dangers of cyber-bullying. This has resulted in bright information leaflets, designed by young people, being displayed around the campus. In addition the school has also produced a leaflet for parents advising them of the dangers and giving them techniques to manage the dangers of cyber-bullying. Both examples show the schools willingness to go that extra mile in gaining views of pupils, raise awareness of dangers that exist and support parents as well as pupils. These examples are deemed to be outstanding pieces of work.

Residential pupils are protected with a range of risk assessments that identify hazards both in and away from the school campus. Pupils participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the residential areas when needed. Checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken. Pupils individual risk assessments, coupled with coping strategies, promote a safer environment for all. Individual strategies are updated as required, based on each pupils identified risk and progress.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Outstanding

The management, organisation and strong leadership of the school and residential provision, remains outstanding. There is a positive, child-centred focus around the whole school campus, resulting in an energetic commitment to the school's continued quest to improve. This is achieved in part through high levels of monitoring and evaluation of practice which ultimately translates into improvements in the way pupils' needs are met. For example, in the residential units, staff complete termly self-evaluation forms noting areas of success and what they could do better. This information is collated and new targets are set for the forthcoming term.

Residential pupils benefit from being looked after by a skilled, well-trained staff team. They are fully supportive and committed to the ethos, aims and working practices developed in the

residential provision. They fully understand their own role and responsibilities and work together with a team-centred approach, providing residential pupils with a consistency of care. Staff work collaboratively with other school staff, parents and professionals to ensure pupils needs are fully addressed.

Residential staff improve their knowledge and working practices through regular supervision, appraisal and participation in the schools active training programme. There are high aspirations, expectations and standards in place for staff who possess the competences and skills to effectively meet the diverse needs of each pupil.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the provision takes place systematically. Monitoring reports are evaluative and quality assure all areas of the schools operation. They provide action points and identify areas for improvement. They subsequently translate into written plans for future development. For example, one of the living areas was identified for improvement following a recent monitoring visit. Appropriate steps have been taken to complete those improvements which will take place during the forthcoming summer break. The monitoring processes allow for the views of pupils to be taken into account.

Residential pupils enjoy living in an environment that is focussed on meeting their needs. The residential units provide a stimulating, lively atmosphere, where care and support is paramount. This is summed up by the views of a parent who says; 'I am so impressed by how professional everyone is and that they are so positive about my child. I know he is in the best possible place.'

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	119845
Social care unique reference number	SC009656
DfE registration number	888/6020

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	6
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	8 to 15
Headteacher	Mr D G Duncan
Date of previous boarding inspection	27/11/2012
Telephone number	01706 822779
Email address	rossendale@priorygroup.com

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