

Ramsden Hall School

Ramsden Hall School, Heath Road, Ramsden Heath, BILLERICAY, Essex, CM11 1HN

Inspection dates	26/06/2013 to 28/06/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The school provides high quality, well planned residential care that supports individual progress extremely well across all areas of learning and development.
- Good safeguarding procedures and effective behaviour management plans ensure pupils are safe and contained.
- The school proactively advocates for individual's rights and regularly seeks the views of pupils. Pupils benefit in terms of access to academic support and wider opportunities.
- The school provides safe and secure accommodation, although, there are shortfalls in the maintenance and decoration of the residential accommodation.
- The leadership and management of the residential provision provide strong support and a clear focus for staff. The monitoring of records in some instances is poor. Senior managers have identified further development plans, which require more definition.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of the residential provision, took place within three hours of notice given to the school. The inspection activities included meetings with; pupils, the residential care staff, the Chair of Governors, parents, the Head Teacher, the Senior staff and the Head of Kitchen. Observations of the premises, activities, meal times and residential routines formed part of the inspection. Information was gathered from documents, policies, records, monitoring reports and discussions with external professionals.

Inspection team

Deirdra Keating	Lead social care inspector
Gwen Buckley	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Ramsden Hall School is a maintained residential special school for 128 male pupils aged between eleven and 16 years. The school is situated on the outskirts of Billericay and Colchester with residential accommodation on both sites. Thirty eight pupils reside at the school for between one and four nights a week. The school caters for pupils with Statement of Special Educational Needs that deems them to have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- develop induction procedures further to ensure that all aspects of practice are fully covered
- ensure the development plans specify the arrangements to provide effective management and monitoring arrangements to oversee the proposed changes to school sites.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Accommodation is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any children with restricted mobility. The accommodation contains suitable specialist facilities to support children whose disabilities require them. (NMS 5.4)
 - The records specified in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Pupils relish the residential experience and benefit from highly individualised care. They develop new interests and skills by taking part in a wide range of stimulating activities that are inclusive, well organised and promote individual choice. These include art club, fishing, swimming, camping, basketball, kayaking, crabbing, and a range of traditional celebrations. This helps pupils develop a broad range of skills such as turn-taking, fitness, social skills, and creativity.

Residential pupils take pride and ownership in the provision. They are represented on the school council, taking forward agenda items that are pertinent to residence. They actively contribute to menu planning and ideas for activities. Pupils engage extremely well with staff; they are consulted and their views are influential. This has empowered pupils in that they have excellent knowledge of the school procedures and routines. Pupils confidently share their positive views of the school and the personal benefits of the residential provision.

The atmosphere in the residence and communal areas of the school is calm and orderly. Pupils show an excellent understanding of agreed rules and treat one another with respect. They accept one another's differences, demonstrating tolerance. Residential pupils have built strong attachments to staff; they greet staff with unmistakable enthusiasm and warmth as they arrive on shift. The strong affiliation with staff provides individual support for pupils, helping them build emotional resilience to the difficulties they face. Quotes from pupils include: 'Whatever problem we have we can tell the staff and they help us.'

Residential pupils' behaviour during residential time is very good. They make significant progress with their social skills, independence, self-control and self-belief. This helps pupils overcome difficulties and barriers to learning. Residential pupils build strong foundations for sustaining learning and making academic progress. This is celebrated by the school, building pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. For example, one residential pupil who confidently read aloud to the school recalled: 'When I came to the school, I said, I can't do reading, no point in trying, so you might as well send me home now.'

Health care plans are comprehensive and ensure that all pupils' health needs are met. This means. Outdoor activities, sports fixtures and good facilities including a swimming pool encourage pupils to engage in physical activities. Residential pupils are often encouraged to try new foods and as a result the diet and physical well-being of residential pupils has improved.

Pupils gain a number of life skills while at the school. This is tiered well to individual age and ability. Pupils learn to manage personal care needs, make light snacks and keep bedrooms tidy. This helps them develop beneficial routines that will support them in later life. Pupils benefit from good transitional support as they reach the end of their time in residential provision. The support and development of pupils' life skills builds self-confidence and helps support pupils as they return home.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of the residential provision is good. The continuous sharing of information between academic and residential staff works well. Handover meetings detail key points from the school day. This informs residential care staff who provide care tailored to the individual needs of pupils. This supports pupils' emotional development, building secure foundations on which they can learn and build academic achievement.

Induction to the residential provision is structured well. This gives pupils a chance to stay for an activity and a meal and ensures that they know what to expect. All individual requirements are detailed in care plans, ensuring that health needs are met by staff who are trained and competent. Medication is administered safely; staff complete regular medication audits to ensure systems are safe and work effectively. The school employs a Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist at one site who provides therapeutic interventions in the school. This helps pupils' engagement as they do not have to leave the site and are allocated therapy time to build trusting relationships on which interventions can be based.

The food is good and food on one site is extremely good. Catering arrangements work very well to meet pupils dietary needs and provide them with balanced and healthy options. However, some is more innovative and responsive to pupils' needs while other arrangements provide adequate food. This has resulted in feedback from pupils that is mixed and reflects the quality of each provision. These arrangements do meet requirements and no shortfalls are identified.

Staff have a good rapport with parents and carers. The two way sharing of information promotes continuity of care and enables staff to understand pupils changing needs. The activities provided are exciting and varied. Staff utilise both school sites and local amenities well to provide pupils with a wide and varied range of activities.

The residential accommodation is spacious and clean. It reflects pupils' tastes and preferences through displays, themes and resources. Communal areas are comfortable and homely. However, there are areas that require decorating and are not maintained to an high standard which results in parts that have an institutional and unwelcome appearance.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of the residential pupils is good. The safety and welfare of residential pupils are central to practice and given a high priority throughout the school. Staff are committed to the protection of residential pupils and keeping them safe at all times. An external audit on safeguarding procedures by a visiting professional concluded: 'They have been diligent and tenacious in trying to ensure that their pupils are safe.'

Staff are aware of actions to take if there are any concerns about staff's practice. Designated persons have appropriate training and are aware of the process to follow in the event of a concern about a pupil. Staff vigilance, child protection training and careful awareness keep residential pupils safe.

There is an agreed protocol for pupils who go missing from the school. However there have been very few incidences of this. Pupils who experience difficulty managing their feelings are able to use the large grounds and benefit from the space these offer as opposed to leaving the site.

Residential pupils are knowledgeable about the differing forms of bullying. However, they report that bullying seldom occurs and that they know staff will take action to keep them safe. A quote from a pupil concluded: 'The staff here are brilliant, they keep you safe and you can talk to them at any time about issues you have.'

Behaviour is managed extremely well; this has enabled residential pupils to develop an understanding of how their behaviours can affect others. Close links with the local police ensure pupils at risk of offending behaviour receive assistance to make informed choices and understand the consequences of their actions. Residential pupils learn to manage their anger, anxiety, and prejudices. They understand their personal targets and how they will achieve these. Residential pupils with a history of non-attendance in school have been supported to attend and consequently make good progress. Residential pupils make good peer friendships, building their

confidence and social skills.

There are regular occasions where physical interventions and sanctions are used. Generally sanctions are given to remind pupils about safe and acceptable conduct while out on school trips. This helps pupils learn about safety and keeping themselves safe. The records relating to restraint and sanctions generally contain the information required although there are reports that lack detail. Recruitment procedures are safe and effective. As a result, residential pupils are cared for by adults that are thoroughly checked for suitability.

The school is safe clean and well maintained. Risk assessments for the school ensure that pupils benefit from a safe environment that is free from hazards.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. Senior managers are readily available to both staff and residential pupils. The management team has an extremely good understanding of the school and residential provision, which is central to the whole school. Development plans detail the separation of the sites and individual aims. The governors have subcommittees in place to support each of the school's sites in preparation for this separation. However, a written plan is not in place that clearly identifies all the actions and management required to support this transition.

Residential pupils contribute to the development of care practices and parental views are obtained. Both residential pupils and parents are complimentary regarding care. External monitoring takes place routinely and monitoring reports are written. This provides a critical overview and drives improvement. The school has a missing from home protocol, which the police have agreed to. The police report that there are good working relations with the school.

A dedicated high calibre staff team maintains a good focus on residential pupils' individual progress. Regular supervision supports staff development and promotes reflection on practice. This ensures staff have the skills and competence to meet the diverse needs of the pupils they care for. All care staff hold relevant Level 3 diploma training or are booked to commence training. However, the induction for new staff could be developed further. Staff take an active role and treat one another and residential pupils with respect and consideration. This promotes positive adult role models for pupils.

Records are securely stored ensuring confidentiality. However, the monitoring and overview of records are at times inconsistent. For example, debrief sessions undertaken with young people following a restraint may be recorded in different places. On one occasion, the expected reporting process was not fully adhered to, and the use of staff recruitment checklists is inconsistent. Although information required is available, monitoring of records is not robust which does not ensure that practice is in line with expectations.

Equality and diversity are promoted well. Good communication throughout the school ensures support needed for individual pupils is in place quickly. Residential pupils receive support from professionals according to need. Food and activities on focus on celebrating different customs which helps to develop an understanding of the wider world.

Complaints are well managed and residential pupils get a swift response to any complaint made. Staff work extremely well with parents; they are proactive, and look for ways to resolve issues before there is any need to complain.

The views of residential pupils are central to practice development. Residential pupils are represented on the school council, and older residential pupils undertake mentoring training to

support younger pupils. This enables residential pupils to support one another using their own experience. Overall, residential pupils benefit greatly by having a child-focused staff team who seek their views and develop systems to support their individual needs.

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	115449
Social care unique reference number	SC018026
DfE registration number	881/7021

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	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Yvonne Goouge / Emma Paramour
Date of previous boarding inspection	13/07/2011
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