

# Mossbrook Primary School

Mossbrook Special School, Bochum Parkway, SHEFFIELD, S8 8JR

<b>Inspection dates</b>	25/11/2013 to 26/11/2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is adequate because

- The residential provision is an area of excellence within the school. Residential pupils thrive from the child-centred approach delivered by passionate care staff who are energetic in wanting to make a positive difference to children's lives.
- Meticulous attention is paid to ensuring every residential pupil is afforded optimal opportunity to enhance their communication and to develop socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. The rich, varied and often imaginative approaches used by residential care staff mean every child is flourishing as a consequence of their residential experience.
- The school's leadership is highly committed to ensuring every child receives the very best residential experience and acts quickly to address shortfalls in provision.
- Residential pupils feel safe, protected and valued during their short stays.
- The vast majority of essential safeguards are in place and set at high thresholds to protect residential pupils. However, shortfalls in reviewing fire precautions, self-evaluation and one small area of staff training, means some elements of safeguarding are less rigorous. This has resulted in six elements of the national minimum standards not being fully met.

### 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 school was informed about the inspection at 08.45 on the first day. During the visit, observations of practice were undertaken including speaking with staff and residential pupils. A tour of the school was completed. A visit to the residential unit at key times, morning and evening was undertaken. A selection of policies, records and written guidance were sampled, including parents' and children's surveys. Individual and group discussions took place with managers, senior staff, residential workers and residential pupils. A range of evening activities were directly observed.

## Inspection team

Michelle Moss

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Mossbrook is maintained residential special school for up to 81 boys and girls aged 4-11 years. Around 18 pupils choose to stay one night a week at the residential accommodation, between Monday and Thursday. The residential provision is linked to the main school premises, and usually between four to five pupils stay on each night. The school is situated on the outskirts of Sheffield and caters for children with special educational needs, including communication difficulties and autism. It was last inspected in July 2012.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
  - Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidences of challenging behaviour or bullying. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties which result in challenging behaviour. Staff training is regularly refreshed. (NMS 12.3)
  - The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the Headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)
  - Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)
  - The Headteacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: its Statement of Purpose, its staffing policy, the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these Standards. Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school. (NMS 20.4)
  - The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 7.1)
  - In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'residential time'. (NMS 7.2)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Good**

Residential pupils are achieving good outcomes. Residential pupils feel valued and respected and their self-esteem is promoted. This is particularly visible in the way they run their own school residential council.

Residential pupils show in their interaction with care staff that they are happy and feel safe. They thoroughly enjoy their residential short stays and this is demonstrated by their excitement shown to their families when they know a stay is coming up. Every short stay is full of stimulating activities, which enables residential pupils to explore interests, grow in confidence and have endless fun. This immense enjoyment is particularly visible during periods of active play.

Residential pupils are thriving from their residential experiences. For instance, they are hugely benefiting from the creative and inspiring use of communication which is helping them make informed choices. For example, residential pupils are able to access familiar symbols, objects of reference, photographs, and are able to use their learned sign language with staff and each other.

Residential pupils are benefiting from receiving individualised support that is helping them to stay healthy. For example, they are encouraged to wash their hands after play and before meals. Their meals are designed to encourage them to try different types of foods, including fruit and vegetables, which in turn helps them achieve their recommended 'five a day'.

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Adequate**

The quality of residential provision and care is adequate. Residential pupils identify a strong sense of association with their residential provision. The relationships among residential care staff and residential pupils are very positive. This is demonstrated when residential pupils talk or express opinions about their residential provision experiences, especially around being able to have lots of fun.

Residential care staff are diligent in their work to make sure every child's stay is a rewarding and positive experience. The wrap-around care ensures every residential pupil receives simply the best experience. For example, from the moment residential pupils arrive, they are able to engage in positive and inclusive activities that involve imaginative play, leisure, sport and recreation opportunities. The vast majority of these activities involves sensory stimulation to enable every child, regardless of ability, to have an enriched experience. Residential pupils report enjoying all activities, although the ball pool and games arranged in the hall come out on top.

Parents describe the residential provision as 'excellent', 'brilliant' and, 'an invaluable part of promoting my child's development'. Parents see their child's short stays as an opportunity to experience fun, to have a 'sleepover with friends' and 'be afforded the opportunities in which to build up life skills and develop independence'.

Top priority is given to ensuring residential pupils receive any prescribed medication which is important to their health. On-going liaison with multi-agencies means a shared understanding is established around the health and communication needs of individual children. The implementation of any recommendation is seamlessly communicated between school, residential provision and home, so that children experience consistency in their care and learning experiences.

Care plans are meeting the needs of the short stay placements of residential pupils and are

implemented by staff appropriately to ensure individual needs are met.

Mealtimes are a delightful occasion, in which residential pupils receive good quality and plentiful food. Special diets are well catered for, and the dignity of residential pupils is always at the forefront of staff practice.

Residential pupils and their families are able to access a complaints procedure which is clear, effective, user friendly and readily accessible. This transparency ensures residential pupils and their families can exercise their rights.

The residential accommodation and facilities provide residential pupils with a pleasant and stimulating environment, well designed to match individual needs. The cleanliness of the accommodation is well maintained. Fixtures, fittings and furniture are all tailored to match needs and preferences. For example, each bedroom is set up to reflect children's personal interests and home comforts. These small touches make a real difference to their overnight stay experience. However, some of the safeguarding checks around fire safety are not as rigorously secured to ensure every aspect of the accommodation is well maintained.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Adequate**

The school has adequate arrangements for keeping residential pupils safe. Residential pupils are cared for by staff who are trained in safeguarding and are aware of individual vulnerabilities which can make them at risk of harm. Care staff are knowledgeable about how to implement the school's child protection procedure and of the importance to alert the designated safeguarding officers in the school to the smallest of concerns. These measures ensure residential pupils' welfare and well-being are given a top priority in the delivery of care.

Bullying is infrequent. Nevertheless, care staff are highly vigilant in monitoring the slightest change in mood or behaviour which could be an early trigger of bullying. However, despite this strong commitment, care staff have not received appropriate training aimed at helping them to recognise and deal with incidences of bullying. This shortfall in training hinders care staff having a more in-depth knowledge around countering bullying.

Parents report that they feel their child is kept safe and feels safe at the residential provision, especially through the care and attention they receive from care staff.

Recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous to create a high threshold to deter abusers. These effective measures enhance the safeguarding of residential pupils.

The school's leadership team takes safeguarding residential pupils from going missing from care very seriously. Measures are in place so that all staff remain aware of residential pupils' individual vulnerabilities. The school ensures it holds copies of local set protocols and works to these guidelines to ensure the safety of residential pupils remains paramount. As a consequence of these effective measures, no residential pupil has gone missing.

Residential pupils are polite and courteous. If they become distressed, a sensitive and caring approach is always taken to help modify behaviour. The excellent use of techniques such as re-direction and de-escalation means residential pupils are supported in a manner which enables them and others to be kept safe and without the need for any form of physical intervention.

Health and safety checks including electrical, gas and some elements of fire safety equipment are routinely completed. Nevertheless, residential pupils are not routinely involved in practicing fire drills during residential times. Although there are individual evacuation plans in place for each residential pupil, these are not a detailed document. This hinders having a clear understanding

about how residential pupils react to the fire alarm sounding and the support they need to stay safe. Upgrading the fire alarm system is identified as an area of school improvement. However, bringing about the necessary improvements is proving to be fragmented, and auditing of completed work is absent from records held at the school. As a consequence, fire precaution measures do not provide sufficient rigour to ensure residential pupils' safety is not being compromised.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision Adequate**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are adequate. The headteacher commenced his post in September 2013 and has already started to set out a clear strategic direction for the school, which fully takes into account the needs of residential pupils. The headteacher, alongside the head of care, takes personal responsibility for the residential provision and demonstrates a high level of professional competence. Where shortfalls are identified such as fire safety, immediate action is being taken.

The approach to self-evaluation of the residential provision lacks rigour and is not sufficiently systematic. For example, half termly visits are not always achieved. The visits do not secure the views of residential pupils or staff in any consistent manner. This leaves missed opportunities where residential pupils are able to contribute towards the assessment and measuring of the performance of the residential provision. There is no up-to-date annual headteacher's report in place to demonstrate how senior leaders are evaluating how well the residential provision is doing to meet residential pupils' needs. This includes how well it is meeting national minimum standards, to checking areas such as placement plans, to establish if these are matching individual residential pupils' needs. These shortfalls in self-evaluation hinder senior leaders having sufficient levels of quality assurance to help inform all stakeholders on the quality of the school's residential provision. This includes demonstrating the difference it is making to residential pupils' and their families' lives. More positively, headteacher's reports for governors' meetings are completed. These are helpful in informing governors on how well the residential provision is doing to enhance outcomes for children.

Residential care staff are making an effective contribution to the learning and development of residential pupils, especially through their deployment, which gives residential pupils individualised support. This ensures residential pupils are able to thrive physically, emotionally, socially, educationally and enhance their communication.

There is a good balance of experience among residential care staff. Individual staff members are well qualified and have undertaken relevant training to match their roles and responsibilities.

All required policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively so that residential pupils' health and welfare are appropriately enhanced.

The school has acted on the one area of improvement from their last inspection. This has meant developing a wider range of activities which enables residential pupils to access the wider community. This has included residential pupils accessing local parks in the summer months.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107182
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC003048
<b>DfE registration number</b>	373/7036

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	4 to 11
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Dean Linkhorn
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	04/07/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 237 2768
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@mossbrook.sheffield.sch.uk

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