

# Rossendale School

Bamford Road, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire, BLO 0RT

**Inspection dates** 30 September– 2 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school because

- Teaching is good and all subject teachers promote and improve pupils' literacy skills effectively.
- Pupils make good progress because individualised programmes and highly positive educational experiences meet their specific needs.
- The sixth form curriculum is very effective in developing students' personal, social and employability skills and preparing them to work and live in modern Britain.
- The quality of residential provision and care of pupils is outstanding. Pupils develop resilience in preparation for a more independent lifestyle.
- The leadership and management of the school and the residential provision are outstanding. Leaders are highly responsive to change and challenges.
- The residential provision is an integral part of the school. As a result, the school is highly successful at engaging with parents. It is tenacious when working with other agencies to ensure the wellbeing of young people.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and make excellent improvements in behaviour over time because of the support and encouragement they receive from the whole staff team.
- The professionalism of staff, at all levels, reflects their drive for constant improvement in the achievement and personal development of all pupils at Rossendale School.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The accuracy of assessment is not yet sufficiently robust and consistent to ensure that pupils make swift progress in all subjects.
- A small proportion of teaching is not maximising pupils' academic capabilities. As a result, some pupils' progress is not meeting the expectations set by the school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools (if RSS)

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent standards') and associated requirements. The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed teaching and learning in twelve lessons, covering all key stages taught in the school. She scrutinised pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- All areas of the school were visited, including all residential sites and the new off-site sixth form education provision.
- Regular meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of care. Meetings were also held with other senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers and care staff.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils and inspectors spoke with other pupils in lessons, around the school and in the residential areas.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 22 staff who returned inspection questionnaires.
- Fifteen responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and telephone calls and emails from parents, received during the inspection, were taken into account.
- The views of some local authorities who refer pupils to the school were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, monitoring records, external reports. They also examined policies, including those on behaviour and safeguarding, as well as information about pupils' progress and attainment.
- All documents and evidence to ensure compliance with the independent residential special schools standards were checked.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' targets, records of achievement and their past and current progress, including the destinations of pupils when they had left school.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the Priory Group board member who has oversight of Rossendale School.

## Inspection team

Christina McIntosh, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Robinson

Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rossendale School is an independent day and residential special school for pupils aged seven to 18 years. It opened in May 1989 as a school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and has evolved to meet the needs of young people with learning difficulties associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Prior to starting at Rossendale School, pupils have a history of severe disruption to their education, caused primarily by poor attendance, challenging behaviour or extremely withdrawn and isolating behaviour.
- The school provides both day and residential provision for boys and girls from a variety of local authorities in the north west of England. Residential provision may be weekly or for shorter periods determined in discussion with the school.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school employs a speech and language therapist and an art therapist, and accesses a wide range of external agencies to meet the needs of the pupils.
- The school has predominantly more boys than girls. It currently has 57 pupils on roll including 7 girls.
- Approximately a fifth of the pupils are in the care of their local authorities.
- The school is situated in a rural environment and has a separate sixth form provision in a nearby town, close to the school's four residential provisions.
- The school accesses Myerscough College and local colleges as appropriate for sixth form students.
- The school is an active member of the National Association for Special Schools (NASS) and Engage.
- The school is an Investor in People and has the Sportsmark Award.

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

- Improve the rate of all pupils' academic progress by:
  - evaluating the impact of social and educational interventions on pupils' learning, to enable teachers to challenge all pupils and accelerate progress
  - ensuring that subject leaders develop links with other schools to discuss assessment procedures and share best practice to maximise pupils' achievement at Rossendale School.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The passion and commitment of senior leaders drive the school forward. These qualities are shared by the education, care and support staff who work as a collaborative staff team. As a result, the school has created a caring culture that has a strong academic focus and encourages pupils to thrive.
- Leaders are proactive, reflective and responsive to change and challenges. For example, two middle leaders have recently been given extra responsibility and have made many positive changes regarding the use of data, the promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, and supporting staff to improve the quality of teaching.
- The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. Supervision, appraisal and training ensure that the staff team have the skills and knowledge to meet the diverse needs of the residential pupils in their care.
- Policies and procedures are implemented effectively and monitored rigorously, to ensure the well-being of pupils in the school and the residential areas.
- The wide range of subjects offered within the curriculum is outstanding and allows a diversity of individualised programmes to meet the needs of pupils. For example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award is now on the timetable rather than as an extra-curricular activity. As a result, all pupils can access the award and enrich their social and life skills.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They visit mosques, churches and synagogues and develop mutual respect and tolerance towards others with different views, both in school and in the wider community. Mutual respect is modelled well by a highly professional staff.
- Staff work tirelessly to remove barriers to participation in activities offered to pupils after school. Consequently, activities are well attended and develop pupils' social skills and promote healthy lifestyles. For example, pupils use trampolines or go horse riding, to improve their core stability, are members of the local library, or join army cadets amongst other activities on offer to them.
- The school is rigorous in safeguarding pupils through its recruitment processes; its tenacious follow-up of any concerns it has surrounding a pupil; and its involvement with appropriate external agencies. The school uses the police, politicians and members of other public services to improve pupils' ability to keep themselves safe through raised awareness and their knowledge of e-safety.
- The deputy headteacher has delivered training on Autistic Spectrum Disorders to a local primary school, secondary school and college and these links offer further opportunities to share expertise and enhance the opportunities for staff and pupils at Rossendale School.
- Staff performance is monitored and a wide range of training ensures that staff are updated regularly. An experienced, highly committed and child-centred staff team creates a fully inclusive community where resident pupils feel safe and thrive. Two senior care staff have recently qualified at level 5, which reflects the high quality of training supported by the school.
- Annual reviews for parents and referring local authorities are extremely detailed and show the progress that pupils make and the individualised support provided by the school. Pupils receive independent careers advice and the success of their destinations is monitored by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - has weekly contact with the school to discuss reportable incidents and contact with outside agencies, contacts with local authorities, progress of pupils and any other business the school wishes to raise to ensure a tight focus on the welfare of pupils
  - makes regular monitoring visits to ensure that the school complies with independent residential school regulations
  - gathers evidence from visiting the site every month and keeps in touch with staff to ensure that personal contact is maintained and governance is approachable
  - has a team of people who support and challenge the school's evaluation of its impact on the educational outcomes for pupils
  - monitors the performance of the headteacher, and the deployment of staff and resources so that all pupils benefit and make progress
  - has every confidence in the senior leaders of the school to continue to move the school forward.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Although pupils join the school with complex and challenging behaviour, the school successfully re-engages them in learning by having high expectations, clear boundaries and a consistent approach. This was clearly evidenced during the inspection by the behaviour of the staff and pupils; records kept by the school confirm this judgement.
- Staff are highly skilled at defusing situations simply by a look or a comment and enabling pupils, both in the school and residential settings, to reconsider their behaviour and try a different way to manage a situation.
- The pupils who spoke to inspectors were positive about the difference attending Rossendale School was making to their progress and engagement with learning. They were positive about their futures and had high aspirations. No concerns were raised about pupils' behaviour by parents, staff or students during the inspection.
- Pupils are focused, engaged and ready to learn. Attitudes towards learning are positive and this is reflected in high attendance and pupils' comments during the inspection. One pupil said, 'I love coming to school – it's done so much for me.' Another pupil's attendance had increased from non-attendance at high school to nearly 90% since joining Rossendale. Overall attendance is very close to the national average for all mainstream secondary schools.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different forms of bullying. The bullying log and school records show that incidences are very few in number and are all resolved effectively, using the school's own resources or, where necessary, with support from outside agencies.
- The use of physical intervention is carefully monitored and evaluated. For example, one pupil has reduced the need for physical intervention, from 12 incidents in a year to none, as a result of learning to manage his own behaviour through self-control.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are able to take age-appropriate risks and feel safe in school. Staff and pupils get along well together and are supportive of each other. Staff and pupils know how to access help and support when it is needed.
- The school is very well aware of the vulnerability of the pupils and the risks they face. Targets give appropriate support to ensure that pupils learn how to manage those risks. For example, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' learning encourage pupils to keep themselves and others safe and to be aware of risks associated with sexual exploitation, breaking the law, radicalisation, and other negative or discriminatory behaviours.
- Pupils are actively involved in the community. For example, the school choir sang in different homes for senior citizens, including a complex dementia unit, which raised pupils' understanding of the needs and difficulties of the older generation. Pupils raise money for a local swimming group for disabled children, the local hospice and Sports Relief. They attended the Para-Olympics in Manchester and are actively involved with Community Action Nepal and World Vision.
- Although girls represent a small proportion of the school, they have their own girls' club as well as participating with boys in a range of activities. Therefore, they have opportunities to develop a range of skills and interests.
- The school's safeguarding procedures and working practices are robust and staff are well trained. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe in classrooms, workshops, outdoors, in the community, and in the residential areas.
- One parent wrote to inspectors: 'The best feeling in the world is being able to send your child to school knowing that they are happy and safe, and you know you don't have to worry about them while they are at school.'

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The school's judgement of the quality of teaching as good was confirmed through observations of lessons and scrutiny of the school's evidence about teaching and achievement.
- The majority of teachers have high expectations; plan and deliver lessons that extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding; and adapt their teaching and assessment methods to enable all pupils to learn effectively.
- Teachers regularly mark books and give oral feedback. For example, in the junior department, pupils were encouraged to correct their own work by being reminded about their targets while they worked. They responded positively to this approach. However, there is less evidence elsewhere of pupils consistently acting on the advice given and deepening their understanding.

- All subject teachers promote literacy in their lessons. There is a clear emphasis on using subject-specific vocabulary, developing speaking and listening skills and encouraging pupils to read a variety of texts.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively. The Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) session that occurs across the school every week has raised the status of reading for pleasure and pupils eagerly volunteered to read aloud during the inspection.
- Classrooms are welcoming, safe, equipped and resourced well, and are supportive environments for learning. Practical skills are promoted well; for example, the school's Master Chef Competition was a highlight of the year. The video created by the pupils shows the engagement and fun the pupils had taking part.
- Most teachers make good use of other adults in the classrooms to support the learning of pupils. However, not all teachers use this support to help record the gains in individual pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as well as their behaviour and attitudes.
- The school records pupils' skills, knowledge, application of learning, and the impact of interventions alongside their improved attitudes. However, this information is not used consistently to challenge pupils and accelerate their progress.
- Baseline assessments in English and mathematics are robust. Teachers track pupils' progress towards their targets, and discuss and moderate standards within the school. However, there is insufficient contact with other schools to help improve the rigour and consistency of standards across all subjects.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of the complex needs of pupils in their care and make good use of pupils' individual education plans. The outstanding relationship between pupils and staff creates trust, allowing pupils to develop greater self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Residential staff support pupils during the school day and enhance their learning experiences during the evening by ensuring that homework is completed and pupils' interests are further developed. For example, a young pupil struggling with numeracy uses a cash register and helps with shopping to improve his skills in this area.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points when they join the school. The school uses robust English and mathematics baseline assessment, alongside prior attainment at Key Stage 2, to set challenging targets.
- Pupils enter the school with varied prior experience, complex needs and anxieties, poor school attendance and a wide range of academic ability. The school is adept at re-engaging pupils in a positive learning environment. However, some pupils' rates of progress are not meeting the high expectations set by the school.
- The school's tracking data and evidence from work in books show pupils make good progress over time. The majority of pupils make good gains in their literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' reading levels have increased since joining Rossendale School, as evidenced when listening to pupils read and the support all staff offer pupils to improve their literacy skills.
- Pupils make gains in their behaviour, confidence and self-esteem and this is also tracked by the school. This was demonstrated by pupils' responsiveness and willingness to share their progress and ambitions. For example, one pupil shared his desire to get a university education and another spoke about her newfound confidence to tackle aspects of learning and life skills she found challenging.
- Residential pupils are keen to point out that they have chosen to attend residence and enjoy being there. They also recognise the progress they make. For example, one pupil spoke in depth about the improved relationships enjoyed at home as a result of his improved ability to manage his own behaviour and understand its impact on others. Another spoke about how pupils develop increased skills for independent living through being able to do their own washing and cooking.
- The most-able pupils are encouraged and challenged to take external examinations when they are ready to achieve a good grade, and then to extend and deepen their learning. For example, in mathematics some pupils who have already attained, prior to Year 11, a B or A grade at GCSE are now following further mathematics and statistics courses.
- Pupils who struggle with literacy or numeracy have had their timetables adjusted to include regular intervention and clear targets are set across all subjects to improve their skills.
- Comments from parents, pupils and staff, received during the inspection, are positive about the progress being made and the support offered by the school. Positive comments from parents reflect the added value regarding improved behaviour, confidence, communication skills, as well as subject specific skill development. One parent wrote: 'Our son is looking forward to a bright future and is planning transition to college and then to university. This is down to all the hard work and support that Rossendale School

have invested in my son.’

**The sixth form provision is good**

- The sixth form curriculum ensures that students are able to develop core skills further and provides courses, such as media studies and horticulture, to prepare students for college or employment. The sixth form provision is highly effective at meeting the needs and interests of students.
- The sound studio, music suite and horticulture area are also being used by Year 10 and Year 11 pupils so that they get used to a more adult college approach and environment. ‘Zombie contamination’, created by the GCSE film studies group, is extremely entertaining and professionally produced by the students. Another music demo-track produced by a student was used to support his admission onto a music course at college.
- Individualised programmes of study meet the needs of students including academic, social and emotional development. In addition to external qualifications, students are taught to develop independence, social and life skills so that they are able to make a successful transition to mainstream colleges or the workplace.
- The quality of teaching is good, owing to the excellent subject knowledge and practical skills that enable staff and students to work side-by-side on real projects that engage students and extend their learning. For example, a music video of the whole school working together has been designed, created and edited and is used regularly by the school to reflect the improved skills of students and their enjoyment of learning. Sixth form students ran the Macmillan Coffee morning and developed their organisational and financial skills as they took total responsibility for running the event.
- Students discuss world, national and local issues regularly, to raise awareness of how to manage risk and develop respect and tolerance towards other people. They are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles, and are aware of the importance of balanced diets and regular exercise and act on this knowledge.
- Attendance is high as students want to take part in what is on offer.
- The sixth form is led and managed effectively. Staff are responsive to the needs of the students and enable them to approach and contribute to life in modern Britain positively.

**Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding**

**Quality of residential provision and care is outstanding**

**Residential pupils’ safety is outstanding**

**Leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding**

## What inspection judgements mean

### School and residential provision

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053).

Grade characteristics for the judgements made on the school's residential provision can be viewed in the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools* which is also available on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096).



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119845
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC009656
<b>Inspection number</b>	446386
<b>DfE registration number</b>	888/6020

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of residential provision 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>	Special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties including pupils with learning difficulties associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	5
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	13
<b>Proprietor</b>	Priory New Education Services Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Trevor Wilson-Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Duncan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£32,127–£93,750
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£56,877–£130,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 822779
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