

Ramsden Hall School

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

Inspection dates	13/01/2015 to 14/01/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
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

- Residential pupils benefit considerably from their boarding experience. They make progress in managing their behaviour, developing friendships, accessing a wide range of leisure opportunities and developing independence skills.
- Residential pupils enjoy boarding and hold the staff in very high regard. They feel that staff care for them, are always available and that they help them to become more self-managing.
- Parents say they have 100 per cent trust in staff to keep their children safe. Residential pupils say that bullying is not tolerated, staff manage incidents well and promptly. Staff understand safeguarding procedures and report concerns in line with local policies. There are shortfalls in processes relating to pre-employment checks and recording and agreements for non-staff living on site. The school took action to address this during the inspection.
- Residential pupils enjoy equality of access to a range of services, including mental health and therapy services. They experience activities they would be unable to participate in other than at school.
- There are a high number of shortfalls resulting in breaches of the national minimum standards. These relate mainly to monitoring, documentary evidence, the physical environment and some policies that require updating. However, the shortfalls have not compromised pupil safety and do not outweigh the highly positive and effective care they receive.

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 welfare only inspection of all boarding houses across both school sites was conducted following a notice period of three hours. The inspectors met with pupils, key residential and school staff and senior managers, spoke to parents and observed practice within the residential provision. Information gathered from Parent View, Ofsted point in time surveys and scrutiny of records and documents informed the inspection process and judgements.

Inspection team

Louisa Bayley	Lead social care inspector
Gwen Buckley	Social care inspector
Kristen Judd	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Ramsden Hall School is a maintained residential special school for 128 male pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. The school is situated on the outskirts of Billericay and Colchester with residential accommodation on both sites. 42 pupils reside at the school for between one and four nights a week. The school caters for pupils with a 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?

- Update the school website to reflect current policies and include the safeguarding policy.
- Develop the fire risk assessments to reflect contingencies in the event a pupil refuses to evacuate during a drill or an emergency.
- Ensure that senior residential staff have the time they need to adequately monitor, review and evaluate the residential provision against the national minimum standards.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Suitable accommodation is provided for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of children's main meals. This may be situated in the main school provided it is adjacent to or reasonably accessible from the residential accommodation. (NMS 8.2)
 - The school has, and implements, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines and dealing with medical emergencies. (NMS 3.6)
 - 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)
 - There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. The school's governing body or proprietor has a system to monitor care and welfare provision in the school. (NMS 13.1)
 - Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 14.1)
 - For all persons over 16 (not on roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as children but are not employed by the school, there is a criminal records check completed at the standard level. (NMS 14.2)
 - There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with children, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with children. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or

convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)

- The school's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the school is located. Where children placed out of authority go missing, the Head of Care follows the local RMFHC protocol and complies with and makes staff aware of any other processes required by the placing authority. (NMS 15.7)
- All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these Standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment. (NMS 19.2)
- All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance. (NMS 19.6)
- 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)
- Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the Headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. (NMS 20.3)
- 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)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

The outcomes for residential pupils are good.

Parents say their children make good progress as a direct result of their experience at the school. One parent said: 'The boarding is brilliant; my boy has come off of his medication. He has learned how to behave, he has taken responsibility for his behaviour and he has learned to walk away from conflict. He has made a lot of friends.' Another parent said: 'Since he has been at the school he has excelled, I am really impressed. He has done well in curriculum subjects. His behaviour has really improved. He has made friends; sometimes they come to our house to visit him. He does a lot of activities.'

Residential pupils develop their social interactions, learn to turn take and show empathy for others. They have made friends where previously they struggled. A parent said that their child has made a good school friend who visits him in his family home, progress she never thought she would see. There are very warm, nurturing and caring relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils state how much they like the staff and hold them in high regard.

Residential pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem as a result of their boarding experience. They engage with mental health services, become more extroverted, develop independence skills and parents say these are transferred into the family home.

Residential pupils improve their behaviour over time. Physical restraints reduce, aggressive and violent outbursts reduce and pupils take responsibility for their behaviour. They understand their individual targets and they enjoy working towards rewards. They fully understand the reward system and respond well to this. Parents say that there is a noticeable improvement in behaviour because of the boarding experience.

Pupils enjoy the residential experience. They say it is 'awesome' and they did not realise how much they would enjoy it. They participate in a wide range of activities and social opportunities. These include horse riding, trampolining, cinema, going out for meals, physical and sports activities.

Residential pupils give their views through regular key work sessions, residential pupil council and they say they feel able to express their views with staff at any time. They comment on their preferences for medication administration and they contribute to their reviews and reflect on their own progress. They feel fully involved in their care.

Residential pupils benefit from good health resources including a mental health worker and play therapist. Mental health referrals are made and there is positive engagement and outcomes as a result. Pupils become able to take responsibility for managing their health, for example, diabetes, and their weight.

Residential pupils learn to take on household tasks such as bed making, making drinks and snacks, ensuring their laundry is taken to the laundry room. This helps them when they are at home and enables them to contribute to family life.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The quality of the residential provision is adequate.

Residential pupils say they really enjoy boarding. They told inspectors that the only thing that

would make it better is 'if residence were larger, so more children could enjoy it.' Pupils speak very highly of the residential staff and develop strong attachments with them. The staff provide a high level of nurture, ensuring that all residential pupils feel well cared for.

There are sound arrangements for transition into residence and monitoring of progress. The residential and academic staff communicate well and this supports consistency between residence and school. Staff are sensitive to individual needs and ensure that induction to residence and review of progress is robust, promoting individual's happiness, engagement and development.

Pupils say they enjoy a good range of activities. They like the staff participation in games such as hide and seek; they eagerly recounted past activities. Pupils have a good level of choice, enjoy physical exercise and benefit from activities that encourage positive social interaction and turn taking. They say they are able to enjoy activities they would not get the chance to do at home.

Parents are highly praising of the care provided for their children in residence. Telephone discussion with parents and feedback from Parent View, online survey, demonstrates that parents are very happy with the level of care provided.

There are comprehensive plans in place for pupils, gathered from pre admission information and on-going review. Parents are fully consulted and involved in planning and pupils understand the targets they are working on and their areas for development.

There are sound procedures in place to effectively record, store and administer medication. Pupil's health needs are clearly documented and regularly reviewed. Staff discuss health needs and preferences with pupils, promoting their individual rights and wishes. Where pupils have particular health needs, such as diabetes, these are comprehensively recorded. There is good oversight of the administration of medication. Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for managing their condition. Health plans are clear and there is good communication between the school, health professionals and parents. The medication policy requires updating and staff on one of the residential sites do not consistently follow the policy in respect of staff training.

Pupils say they like the food and they can have a say in the menu choices. The catering manager caters for preferences and allergies or health needs. There is an award for good manners and the winner each week is able to pick their favourite meal for one night the following week. The food served to pupils is based on individual likes, preferences and dietary needs. The catering staff are committed to ensuring that pupils enjoy a balanced and healthy diet and that they are well nourished. There are plentiful options and the catering staff ensure that all pupils eat well, offering alternatives if they do not like the options available. All pupils, whether day or boarding, enjoy equality of access to good quality food throughout the school week.

There is disparity in the quality of the physical environment, maintenance and décor across the residential houses. On one site, the heating is inadequate in the dining room. There is a lack of equity in the quality of furnishings between residential houses. In some areas, paint is peeling from the walls, the bathrooms are bare and unwelcoming and there are panels in doors that have been boarded over. This looks unsightly and does not encourage pupils to take pride in their environment. This shortfall was identified at the previous inspection. Some progress has been made, with redecoration of some residential houses. However, this remains as a breach of the national minimum standards.

Residential pupils' safety

Adequate

The safety of residential pupils is adequate.

Parents have complete faith in residential staff to keep their children safe. They say that restraint

is only used when absolutely necessary and staff provide clear and effective boundaries for behaviour.

Staff complete clear records of restraint and use recognised techniques. Pupils say staff only use restraint when behaviour is unsafe. This makes them feel safe; they say they develop the ability to walk away from situations rather than escalate them.

Residential pupils say they do not experience bullying as an issue within their residential units. When incidents do occur, they say staff manage them well. Pupils say that staff support them to successfully rebuild relationships with their peers. There are examples of proactive and creative work around bullying, including the use of bullying ambassadors in the school.

Residential pupils respond well to behaviour management incentives and rewards. They understand their individual targets and how they need to behave to achieve points, which they can turn into rewards. Pupils say that sanctions are fair and that staff know how to manage behaviour well.

Allegations and safeguarding issues are promptly referred in line with local and organisational procedures. There are designated safeguarding officers identified within the school who manage concerns effectively. There are detailed records in place reflecting that prompt action is taken and subsequent outcomes.

There are shortfalls in the record keeping and procedures relating to recruitment and adults living on the school site. This includes agreements and checks for adults living on site who do not work in the school and documentary evidence of confirmation of identity. The inspection highlighted a lack of knowledge of safe recruitment guidance and actions. The school took action to address some of these issues during the inspection. Pupils' safety has not been compromised; however, failure to follow safe recruitment procedures has the potential to put pupils at risk.

Staff understand how to manage incidents should a pupil go missing. This has not been an issue within residential time. However, the policy in place is not in line with local protocols and procedures.

All relevant health and safety checks are in place. Fire drills and fire equipment servicing is in place and monitored. This provides pupils with a safe physical environment.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Adequate

The leadership and management of the residential provision are adequate.

The statement of boarding principles is clear and translated well into daily practice. Consequently, parents and pupils understand the provision and have realistic expectations upon admission.

The residential provision is effectively managed in respect of daily practice and the care and support of the residential pupils. Pupils benefit from clear routines and boundaries and well established staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. This supports pupils to develop a sense of security.

The ratio of staff to pupils is sufficient. However, due to senior staff covering shifts, they have been limited in ensuring managerial oversight in respect of monitoring, reviewing policies and ensuring that the provision meets the national minimum standards.

Staff feel well supported by managers, they receive regular supervision and good levels of training. However, some staff do not receive annual appraisal and some do not have the

minimum level of qualification required by the national minimum standards.

The school does not have systems in place to monitor the quality of the residential provision, internally or externally. Lack of objective oversight means that opportunities to identify shortfalls and areas for improvement are missed. The shortfalls identified during the inspection demonstrate the importance of regular monitoring.

Policies are in place but a number require review, as they are outdated. The school website gives access to policies that are out of date and does not give access to the safeguarding policy. This does not provide parents with current and relevant information.

Complaints are rare, with only one since the last inspection. There is a clear protocol in place to respond to any complaints, ensuring that complainants feel listened to and acknowledged.

The school promotes equality of opportunity as a core value. Many pupils have suffered from lack of access to services in the past. The staff advocate on behalf of pupils to ensure they are able to exercise their rights and benefit from education, health and social opportunities.

Parents are very positive about the quality of communication with the school. The staff are proactive in passing on information, they have regular telephone contact and staff make home visits where parents cannot get in to the school. This supports an inclusive approach to promoting pupil welfare.

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	Maintained residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	42
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Emma Paramor
Date of previous boarding inspection	26/06/2013
Telephone number	01277 624580 school mob 07710 372150
Email address	admin@ramsdenhall.essex.sch.uk

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