

# Mossbrook Primary School

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

**Inspection dates** 08/12/2015 to 10/12/2015

**The overall experiences and progress of children and young people** Good

The quality of care and support Good

How well children and young people are protected Requires improvement

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers Good

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- Children really enjoy their time here. They have opportunity to participate in activities they may not be able to elsewhere.
- Staff have an in-depth knowledge of each individual's needs. They have good if not outstanding relationships with children.
- Specific targets, which are devised in partnership with teachers, parents and the speech and language therapist, ensure that children make progress in all areas of their development.
- Children's wishes and feelings are sought no matter what their level of communication ability. Differentiated communication systems allow all children to communicate at their own level.
- The consistent and caring staff team are well supported by dedicated managers who ensure high aspirations for all children are upheld.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

12.3 Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidents of challenging behaviour. This is in specific relation to all staff including night staff being trained in line with the school behaviour management policy.

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

- ensure risk assessments detail in full the action to be taken to reduce or eliminate the risk identified. Ensure children who need behaviour support plans have them in place.
- continue to improve and maintain the environment
- incidents of physical intervention are recorded clearly and in detail. They need to show the period of time restraint was used, who was involved in the restraint and consider reflection of staff and children opinions after the event.
- ensure all staff including night staff receive the same training experiences especially in relation to safeguarding and children's specific needs such as autism.

## Information about this inspection

The head teacher was given two hours notice of the inspection. The inspector spoke to all the residential staff members and the senior residential care officer alone. The inspector observed children's interactions with staff and daily routines. No individual consultation was appropriate in this setting due to complex communication needs. Time was spent during the evening observing and having tea with children. Part of the morning routine was also observed. Some time was limited as the inspector respected children's needs when they became distressed. The inspector met with the head teacher, senior residential care officer, chair of governors, a governor, speech and language therapist and all residential staff. Parent views were collated from the Ofsted parent view website and from direct contact during inspection. Staff surveys were also focused on during the inspection. The inspector consulted with two representatives from the local authority safeguarding team and examined a range of policies and records in relation to the safeguarding and care of residential pupils.

## Inspection team

Jamie Richardson

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Mossbrook is a maintained residential special school for up to 81 boys and girls aged 4-11 years. 10 pupils choose to stay one or two nights a week at the residential accommodation, between Tuesday and Thursday. The residential provision is linked to the main school premises, and usually around three 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 October 2014.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

As a result of attending this service children make good progress in all areas of their development. Staff ensure young people's voice is heard no matter what their level of communication. A range of individualised communication aids are put consistently in to practice. Consequently some children are making choices for the first time.

Specific targets which are consistent between home and education ensure that children achieve socially and academically. The skills they learn are preparing them well for later life. For example, individuals have progressed with eating skills and independence. One parent commented 'He is now toilet training, they have really taken this on board.' This seamless planning ensures that even the smallest steps of progress are acknowledged, celebrated and then built on further.

The consistent and dedicated staff team offer a very nurturing and caring environment for young people. This helps positive relationships to develop between staff and children. As a result children really enjoy spending the night at this home. One parent commented 'they are marvellous with him. He loves going, he takes his suitcase, when it's not even his night.'

The head teacher and senior residential care officer are fully aware of the strengths and weakness of this setting. They are dedicated to providing individualised care which gives children the structure and consistency they need. They strive to make the best of the resources they have and acknowledge areas where they could develop. For example in terms of the environment they understand the challenges of the building and make the best of its design. They are aware of the extended time scales for areas of repair. To maintain a good standard these need to be attended to on an ongoing basis, such as damaged ceiling tiles and decor. Their analysis and understanding of the provision shows the need to possibly reshape the service that is being provided due to the recent decline in referrals.

The safety of children is given priority in this setting. High staff ratios ensure that they are well supervised at all times. This allows children to undertake activities and new experiences they may not manage anywhere else. Staffs high expectations of children ensures their behaviour is positively managed and challenging behaviour is not a regular occurrence. On the rare occasions physical intervention is required, areas of recording are not robust. The night staff are not appropriately trained in the schools behaviour management techniques. This has led to, on one occasion staff having to physically intervene without the training. After this incident the risk assessment was not updated to reflect the change in behaviour and strategies used to manage them. Consequently there is on occasion a lack of analysis of behaviour management.

### The quality of care and support

Good

Staff demonstrate very good knowledge of children's individual and complex needs. Their genuine warmth and care promotes close appropriate bonds with children this helps them understand the intricacy of individual needs, communication and behaviours. Staff have a wealth of experience and in some cases work across school as well as in the residential provision. This offers children the predictable world they strive for.

Diversity and identity is celebrated. Staff ensure young peoples favoured possessions and

pictures are placed in their room for their stay. This promotes a homely and personal feel, which helps children to settle. Staff are responsive to individual beliefs and faiths. They work in partnership with parents to ensure any beliefs are followed. For example they help some children to pray at particular times of day. Staff regularly consult with parents obtaining their wishes about their children's care and the service offered. Consequently parents feel included in their children's care and feel their views are respected in the running of the service. One parent commented 'The staff are lovely they always have time for me. They always want parental input on how things could be better. They listened to my comment on the parental sheet I filled in. I asked and they listened. I can't fault them.'

Some areas of the house require minor repair. This is acknowledged by the head teacher. The repairs are undertaken in line with the regulations for the building, unfortunately this adds some delay to completing minor jobs. Staff make the best of the environment providing homely furnishings in age appropriate colours and patterns. The house is well resourced with toys and games. Children enjoy a space where they relax and choose to socialise or play alone. The outside of the property is specifically designed for young people's needs. As a result they can explore a safe environment. This gives them independence and freedom to play in large areas, including a sensory garden and bike track.

Children are supported to broaden their social skills and life experiences. They are able to partake in activities they may not get the chance to do elsewhere. They benefit from a range of activities in the community; such as shopping, walks in parks, and trips to see the Christmas lights. One social worker commented, 'They can take him out there. He does not get that chance anywhere else.' Another young person used a symbol to show he enjoyed going to the park.

Meal times offer opportunity for interaction and development of socially appropriate behaviour. Staff sensitively manage children's challenges. At meal times, some individuals eating habits have significantly improved. Some young people are enjoying a more varied diet for the first time. Meals provided are all home cooked and are well planned to meet individual's needs. The healthy and varied menu promotes healthy choices such as fresh salad and fruit. These are available at every meal. This is teaching good eating habits which will benefit children now and in the future.

### **How well children and young people are protected**

Requires Improvement

Staff have an in-depth understanding of children, their effective communication strategies have resulted in, incidents of challenging behaviour reducing. Staff are quick to try different methods of managing behaviour rather than resorting to restraint, such as the use of weight blankets. There has been only eleven incidents in total this year of challenging behaviour. On occasion there has been shortfalls in the quality of physical intervention recording. This potentially hinders management oversight. Physical intervention has only been used as a last resort on two occasions this academic year. The amount of time individuals have been physically held for is not clear. Not all members of staff are qualified to use physical intervention. On one occasion staff have used restraint without having training. Potentially a child could be injured because holds may not be correct, as staff are not provided with the understanding they need to make the child safe.

For one individual a behaviour support plan has not been constructed, despite a recent increase in challenging behaviour. Staff have undertaken actions that are not documented in plans or risk assessments. This potentially leaves a lack of oversight and clarity of how best to deal with challenging behaviours. On occasion multi-agency input into managing behaviours and what is

safe for some individuals is not present. For those who have behaviour support plans they are sufficiently detailed and regularly reviewed. As a result the frequency of incidents decreases as residential pupils learn different coping strategies, improve their behaviour, social skills and communication.

No matter what children's level of communication ability this provision strives to ensure that individual's voices are heard. Literature in relation to children saying how they feel and staying safe is presented in a variety of ways. Pictures and symbols are used to give children the best possible chance of understanding how to keep safe. Warm and trusting relationships between staff and children enables staff to gain an in-depth understanding of their feelings. Consequently staff pick up on the smallest of cues to identify how children feel. This is particularly important in this setting given children have complex and limited communication.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding procedures. Easy to follow flow charts in relation to the schools safeguarding procedures and safeguarding representatives are clear around the building. Consequently this ensures that staff know the right people to contact to make sure protective steps are taken. All staff say that 'yes' they feel children are safe in this home and they would be confident to report any issues to senior management. One parent commented, 'I know that he is safe there and happy, he just loves it.'

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

Good

The senior residential officer is qualified and has significant experience to undertake her role. She works in partnership with the head teacher. As a result the residential provision and the school work flawlessly together. Given the complexity of young people's needs the consistency this approach provides is vital. Consequently children make good progress in all areas of their development. Staff all report they feel confident in their managers and one staff commented 'Support is really good. On a professional level I get a lot of support from my line manager and the head teacher, they are both approachable.'

The dedicated head teacher ensures all staff have high expectations and aspirations for residential pupils. The senior care officer strives for improvement. Visits to other providers and meetings involving other local services enables her to keep up to date with practice. She maintains strong relationships with others services.

The staff team is consistent and well established. All staff are qualified to the recommended level 3 to work with children, some have related qualifications beyond this. There is a good range of training offered to staff. This varies on occasion between what is offered to day staff and night. Night staff are offered more online courses and have not yet been trained in the schools chosen behaviour management technique. This does not fit in with the holistic approach the school have chosen. Whilst staff are equipped with the skills to meet the very complex needs of children, potentially the inconsistency on occasion in training between day and night staff may lead to differing quality of care or understanding.

The provision provides a clear purpose and specific objectives, which they are meeting. Through very differentiated plans and communication systems children are developing good communication strategies, social and life skills. They are at every level given the opportunity to make choices. This is promoting autonomy and developing children's personality.

Oversight from governors is very good. They are confident the head teacher understands the strengths and challenges of the setting. It gives them assurance in the abilities of the head teacher and senior care officer to lead the service into a new direction, following a recent drop in

referral numbers. The head teacher's reflective and regular reports to governors allow them to have up-to-date knowledge of practice and the head teacher's accountability of progress and development.

All of the recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. Training has improved. As a result of this inspection the head teacher now acknowledges the need to keep the standard consistent across day and nights staff in all areas, particularly in relation to behaviour management and autism specific training. Communication training has been significantly developed. Strong links with the speech and language therapist has seen a range of individual communication systems come into play. This includes, sign, symbols, pictures and objects of reference. The second recommendation has been implemented through the effective use of specific targets for children. This is demonstrating progress and development in all areas. Health plans now enable staff to have good understanding of processes to follow for emergency care. The final recommendation in relation to the fire system has now been completed manually, the service awaits certificates from the Local authority.



## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	School URN 107182
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC003048
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	84
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	4 to 11
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dean Linkhorn
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	07/10/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 237 2768
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@mossbrook.sheffield.sch.uk

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