

The Robert Ogden School

10 Thurnscoe Hall Mews High Street, Thurnscoe, ROTHERHAM, South Yorkshire, S63 0ST

Inspection dates	11/01/2016 to 13/01/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Staff are motivated, committed and caring. They are supported effectively by dedicated managers who are aspirational and keen to provide all pupils with positive experiences and prepare them well for their future lives.
- Residential pupils enjoy being at school and make good progress personally, socially and academically. They thrive from the high quality care provided.
- Their lives are enhanced through the variety of activities and new life experiences they enjoy within the residences and in the wider community.
- Residential pupils benefit immensely from the partnership working between care, education and health professionals. All their needs are considered, regularly reviewed and holistically met.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust and keep residential pupils safe. They feel safe and have positive relationships with staff.
- The residential service is managed effectively. There are robust monitoring processes that demonstrate the positive impact living at school has for these pupils.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that monitoring reports undertaken by the independent visitor include how well recommendations made at the previous visit are implemented and what impact this has for residential pupils.

Information about this inspection

The head teacher was given three hours' notice of the inspection. The inspectors spoke to a range of residential pupils. Time was spent observing routines at breakfast, teatime and evening activities and how residential pupils and staff interact. Inspectors met with the principal, head of care and residential staff. Parents' views were collated from the Ofsted 'Parent View' website. Inspectors consulted with representatives from the local authority safeguarding team and a placing authority, examined a range of records, policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding and care of residential pupils.

Inspection team

Simon Morley	Lead social care inspector
Michele Hargan	Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Robert Ogden School is an independent school managed by the National Autistic Society (NAS). The school provides special education for up to 85 pupils between the ages of 5 and 19 with a diagnosis of autism. There are currently 81 children on roll, the majority of which are male. Of these, 10 pupils use the residential provision. Four of these board Monday to Friday and six board flexibly, staying one night a week. The residential provision was last inspected together with the education provision in February 2015.

There are two separate residences. A house for four pupils with a separate flat on the side, which is a short distance from the school. Studio accommodation is in the grounds of the school providing four studios and communal facilities for more able pupils.

The school uses the 'SPELL' framework developed by the NAS to understand and support pupils on the autistic spectrum. This framework also underpins the autism-specific training that staff receive.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Leaders and managers are keen to provide residential pupils with the very best care so that they all have positive experiences and make good progress.

The needs of individual residential pupils are understood very well and the care they receive is of high quality. There is a good level of thought and planning that considers individual need and the impact of group living. This is combined with a responsible and sensitive approach to keeping everyone safe. Care is underpinned by an autism specific framework developed by the provider.

As a result residential pupils enjoy staying at the school and make personal, social and academic progress. They make friends with their peers and form trusting relationships with staff. One stakeholder commented, 'At home he would not go out in the garden, here he not only goes out in the garden, he will go out with other young people and go to the shops and pay for items and undertake activities.'

Residential pupils significantly improve their life chances from developing their communication skills, coping strategies and independence. The individually adapted approaches to care and education helps prepare them for the future. Progress is monitored effectively with 'before and after' evaluations and care practice is tailored to individuals' needs and development. Staff know the difference they make and their focus is on the strong impact they have on the lives of pupils.

A baseline assessment of independence skills is undertaken that informs care strategies and is interwoven with education targets resulting in a whole school approach. This is effective for residential pupils increasing their attainment, developing life skills, communication and independence.

There is a good range of extra curriculum activities including shopping, youth clubs, trips to the cinema and Xscape, developing computer skills and learning to complete household chores. Residential pupils also take part in a community project with local charities making a range of items to sell. They enjoy celebrating seasonal events like Halloween, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Individual interests and clubs are supported, for example, going to a weekly local karaoke event at the Soul Lounge.

Staff are proactive in seeking residential pupils' views mainly on a one-to-one basis and where appropriate in groups. There is strong focus on promoting good communication, individual choices and giving all pupils a voice. For example, one pupil asked for and now has a keypad to his studio door instead of a normal lock and key. When pupils' requests are not appropriate, there is good sensitivity and patience in explaining the reasons to them.

The quality of care and support

Good

Residential pupils enjoy residing at school where they receive good quality care and their individual needs are understood. Staff from a range of disciplines: psychology, speech and language therapy, behaviour, care and education staff all work closely together promoting the holistic needs of pupils. When needed, care is also influenced by children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

There is good verbal communication between staff. Information about changes to care needs are shared with all staff. This applies to individual support plans, behaviour management plans and communication profiles. Overall, this results in residential pupils receiving support based on expert knowledge and from people who know them well. One stakeholder commented, 'Evidence based outcomes are the best I have ever seen.'

There is a strong emphasis on promoting communication, social skills and preparation for the next stage in life when pupils leave school. A variety of communication strategies are used including signs, symbols, social stories and picture exchange. Residential pupils benefit from the school's own speech and language therapists to develop their communication.

The head of care and staff design individual care plans to help residential pupils cope with the challenges of community living. This helps them become more resilient and develop their social and independence skills.

Residential pupils' emotional well-being is a priority. The nurturing care, consistency and boundaries provide a secure base helping residential pupils feel comfortable, reduce their anxiety and build relationships with adults that care for them. This improves mental health, reduces self-harm and supports residential pupils to try new experiences. Parental feedback is very positive about the care, 100% who responded, strongly agreed their children were happy and well looked after, they would all recommend this school to another parent.

Meals provided to residential pupils offer choice and promote healthy eating. Staff listen to feedback and residential pupils strongly influence the menus. A creative approach has been used to make healthier choices and reduce sugar intake. Medication systems are safe and robust, promoting pupils physical health.

The residential accommodation is of a high standard, clean, tidy and well maintained. Both settings provide residential pupils with a homely and welcoming place to stay.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Residential pupils are safe and feel safe. Their safety is given a high priority by all staff. A notable strength is how staff use the care framework effectively so that residential pupils feel emotionally safe.

Particular attention is given to ensuring group living is successful. Admissions are well planned, matching is of good quality and flexible use is made of the varied accommodation. This ensures that residential pupils live in a calm, low arousal

environment or can have their own separate accommodation that caters to their individual autistic needs.

Residential pupils are free from bullying and staff are good at managing any challenging behaviour. Practice is sensitive and consistent, giving residential pupils caring and predictable responses. This is in line with individual behaviour plans, communication strategies and risk assessments.

Such plans have multi-agency input from the school's educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and behaviour support specialists. This results in a thorough approach and the frequency of incidents decreases. High quality support avoids confrontation and helps residential pupils develop their social skills, communication and coping strategies.

Monitoring by senior managers is robust, accountable and upholds safe practice. Staff have a good understanding of the individual vulnerabilities of autism and associated pathological demand avoidance. They take appropriate action to keep residential pupils safe in their day-to-day lives at school. Staff know their triggers, are aware if they are distressed and communicate well to help them manage their anxiety.

Senior staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding have well developed links with the local authority safeguarding team. Any concerns about staff practice are managed in a comprehensive and robust way to keep residential pupils safe. There have been no incidents of missing from school. Policies and procedures in this respect are in line with local and statutory guidance.

The recruitment process for new staff is robust and ensures that only people who are suitable to work with vulnerable children are appointed.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

Senior managers are qualified, experienced and work closely together ensuring the residential provision is a fully integrated part of the school. The head of care ensures there is regular monitoring and review of practice that focusses on the experiences and progress of residential pupils. She maintains a good oversight of the residential provision and is very effective in making a positive difference in the lives of residential pupils.

The head of care networks with other special schools and is pivotal in developing and maintaining good standards of practice. This is supported by external scrutiny and systems of accountability within the organisation. Regular reports completed by an independent visitor focus on the wellbeing of residential pupils and challenge how the service can improve. It would be more beneficial if these reports tracked the implementation of recommendations and identified the impact.

The three recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. The quality of residential pupils' health plans has increased; policies are more individualised to the setting; and there are new individual risk assessments for missing from school that have been shared with the local police.

There has been a significant amount of staff turnover but this has been managed well to

minimise any disruption to residential pupils. Teaching staff work regularly in the two residences, which adds to the integration between care and education. There are different teams of staff that work either the morning or evening shift. This promotes routine, consistency and minimises change which can be anxiety provoking for residential pupils.

Staff undergo an induction and a wide range of training. The majority also have the recommended level 3 qualification. They are equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge. One stakeholder commented, 'I have been very pleased with the placement and provision provided. The staff seem very dedicated and have a very good understanding of the young people who stay there.'

There is regular supervision and annual appraisal of staff performance. There are good levels of staff support and any concerns are swiftly addressed. Management systems ensure residential pupils continue to benefit from high standards of care.

All staff have high expectations and aspirations for residential pupils which is driven by the head of care and underpinned by the care framework. The ethos of the school for pupils is to: 'live with dignity and independently as possible; feel part of their community and wider society; and be understood by all professionals who support them,' lives out in practice.

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

Unique reference number	106965
Social care unique reference number	SC473713
DfE registration number	

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	75
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to19
Headteacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	05/02/2015
Telephone number	01709874443
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