

Mossbrook Primary School

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

Inspection dates

16/11/2016 to 18/11/2016

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

Good

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Children's life experiences broaden through the activities they take part in.
- Children's social skills improve and they start to make friends for the first time.
- Children's self-care and personal independence continues to develop.
- The stable and consistent staff team provides children with excellent structure and routine.
- Children's behaviour improves and their risks reduce.
- Internal safeguarding procedures are good.
- Staff feel well supported by the senior childcare officer and the head teacher.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- 19.4 The learning and development programme is evaluated for the effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary.
- 20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:
 - checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children;
 - evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
 - 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).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support a low-arousal and autism-friendly environment. Consider removing all staff notices and correspondence that do not need to be displayed in communal areas for children and young people.
- Continue to maintain and upgrade the building.
- Document staff supervision, in particular capturing reflection and analysis of staff performance and children's care.

Information about this inspection

The head teacher was given two hours' notice of the inspection. The inspector observed residential children and staff interaction. The inspector spent time observing activities and joined children for tea. The inspector met with the head teacher, senior childcare officer, residential staff, school manager, maintenance team, independent visitor and a parent. The inspector also spoke on the telephone to the chair of the governors, lead safeguarding governor, and a parent. Parents' views were collated from the Ofsted 'Parent View' website, and no parental survey forms were returned directly to the school. The inspector consulted with a representative from the local authority safeguarding team and examined a range of records, policies and procedures 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 86 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 years. Two pupils choose to stay one night a week at the residential accommodation, on a Thursday night. The residential provision is linked to the main school premises. 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 December 2015.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children and young people enjoy their overnight stays. They thrive from the routine that this residential provision offers. The predictable response from staff and consistency of their care lessens their anxiety and helps them to enjoy new experiences.

Children enjoy excellent relationships with staff. Staff know children very well and understand how they feel. This helps staff to respond quickly to their complex needs, and staff successfully tailor their responses accordingly.

Children make good progress at school. Regular communication between the residential provision and the school staff ensures that any issues are quickly identified and children receive high quality support in both settings.

Internal monitoring of safeguarding practice is effective. The head teacher and senior team leader are quick to involve the relevant professionals to make sure that children are safeguarded. External monitoring of safeguarding practice has this term failed to be effective. This has not had any impact on children due to good internal monitoring systems.

Boarding is well organised and children benefit from a consistent staff team that knows them well. As a result, they make progress with their independence and with their social skills. All staff now receive relevant training and a previous national minimum standard shortfall is met. However, the impact of this training is not currently evaluated and potentially hinders senior managers in identifying future training goals.

Children enjoy their time at this school. Parents are extremely happy with their care and progress. One parent commented: 'It's absolutely great. Since he has been there it's helped his sleep patterns and he loves going.'

All standards and recommendations set at the last inspection have been met. Shortfalls identified at this visit particularly relate to leadership and management. This does not directly affect the experience and safety of children.

The quality of care and support

Good

Children make good progress in all areas of their development. The consistent approach between school and the residential provision helps to reinforce children's skills and enables them to transfer skills between settings. Some children have been able to take this a step further and use their skills at home. One parent commented: 'He has learned how to bath and shower himself. He can now do this at home.'

Staff have specialist training around children's specific health needs. Consequently, they are quick to respond to emergencies and are confident to administer rescue medication. Staff work closely with medical professionals and mental health services. This ensures that children receive a comprehensive approach to their complex care needs.

The physical environment continues to present challenges. It requires an upgrade and repair in places. The management team strives to keep on top of this and the school is awaiting a new

heating system. The staff make the best of the environment. They work hard to make sure that children have personalised rooms and homely furnishings. Children benefit from a wide range of on-site facilities, such as a sensory room, ball pool and flood-lit playground with climbing area. As a result, children appreciate the outside facilities day and night. They enjoy the physical exercise and benefit from a space which promotes time alone and with others.

Children benefit from an excellent range of communication aids and visual cues. This enables children to communicate, whatever their level of ability. Staff information displayed alongside children's visual aids detracts from the key information children need. This leaves some walls looking cluttered and does not support the autism-friendly environment that staff are trying to achieve.

Children enjoy a range of activities, such as trips to local shops and parks. They start to further develop their life experiences, and their social skills continue to improve. Some children start to make friends for the first time. This builds their confidence and self-esteem.

Individualised care plans centre around children's very specific needs. Consequently, care is focused and children make progress from their individual starting points. Some individuals can now go to bed independently, and others are working on developing their self-care skills. This helps improve their independence now and prepares them well for later life.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Children benefit from a staff team that knows them very well. Staff are able to identify each child's vulnerabilities and plan activities accordingly, ensuring that they consider all possible risks. Staff identify the early signs of an individual's distress and quickly redirect any challenging behaviour. There has been no use of physical intervention since last the inspection. Through this consistent and positive approach, children's behaviour improves and their risks reduce.

Safeguarding practice is monitored through weekly and monthly meetings involving safeguarding representatives from across the whole school. This well-organised approach promotes effective communication, and any risks are quickly identified. As a result, swift action is taken to protect. The head teacher ensures that all relevant professionals are notified to make sure that children receive the support that they need.

The management team recognises that thorough monitoring of the physical environment is particularly important, as the building continues to present maintenance challenges. Daily checks of the physical structure take place. Through these observations, maintenance staff identify any health and safety issues promptly and monitor the building as a whole. Regular checks of the fire equipment and fire procedures prepare staff and children well for a safe evacuation in the event of a fire. Individual evacuation plans ensure that all children, regardless of their very complex needs, are prepared for any emergencies.

Staff regularly access a range of courses, which provide them with the knowledge to safeguard children. Staff have additional knowledge of potential wider risks, such as child sexual exploitation.

Robust recruitment procedures ensure that only adults assessed as safe look after children.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

Several shortfalls identified at this inspection link to the senior management oversight of the setting. This does not affect the good standard of direct care that children receive.

The senior leaders of this school fully understand their strengths and areas for development. They are limited in their future planning because a recent drop in referrals from the local authority has affected the numbers of children that they accommodate overnight.

Staff all feel well supported by the senior management team. One member of staff commented: 'We are very well supported; we can go to the senior childcare officer any time'. Staff receive regular supervision. The dates of these meetings are recorded but the content of the supervision is not. This hinders the management team's ability to monitor and analyse staff performance.

The school governors and the independent visitor's oversight of the service and children's needs is generally good. However, during their most recent visit, they failed to monitor the safeguarding and experience of children who stay over in this residential provision. The management team did not identify this omission. Weak external monitoring has the potential to impact on the safety and welfare of these very vulnerable children.

All staff receive a wide range of training, which meets children's needs. The same standard of training is delivered to both the school staff and residential staff. This improves the calibre of staff members caring for children across all areas of the school. The impact and effectiveness of the training programme is not routinely assessed by the head teacher. Without this evaluation, it risks the effectiveness of ongoing staff development and overall service improvement.

The head teacher and his senior team have an excellent relationship with parents. They share their knowledge and expertise with families to help children at home. The management team maintains strong links with professionals such as consultants, specialist nurses, and speech and language therapists. This ensures that children receive the very specialist care that they need.

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 exceed the standard of good and result 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	School URN 107182
Social care unique reference number	SC003048
DfE registration number	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.

Type of school	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	86
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	4 to 11
Headteacher	Dean Linkhorn
Date of previous boarding inspection	08/12/2015
Telephone number	0114 237 2768
Email address	enquiries@mossbrook.sheffield.sch.uk

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