

The Robert Ogden School

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

Inspection dates	12/12/2016 to 14/12/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	1
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- There is excellent leadership that delivers continuous improvement and provides an outstanding service.
- School leaders are rigorous in monitoring the quality of care and experiences of residential pupils and ensuring high standards.
- Staff are very motivated, well trained and they enjoy coming to work and providing the best care they can for residential pupils.
- Staff are thoroughly supported by school leaders.
- The residential and educational provision are seamlessly integrated. Residential pupils benefit from the significant contribution this makes to their academic, social and emotional development.
- The physical and emotional health and needs of residential pupils are extremely well supported. They thrive in a caring environment that is designed specifically to promote their autistic needs.
- Staff recognise the individual strengths and vulnerabilities of residential pupils. Diversity is respected and there is a lot of success in promoting residential pupils' potential.
- Parents are extremely happy about the residential experience and the impact it has on their children at school and at home.
- Strong safeguarding procedures ensure that residential pupils feel safe.

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?

- Complete the review of the framework for assessing pupil progress and consider more judgemental and evaluative statements about pupils' educational, social, and emotional progress.
- Incorporate the monitoring records of diet, fluid intake and sleep patterns more systematically into care reviews.
- Summarise feedback from parents, pupils and external professionals to give better consideration on whether to make any changes as a result.

Information about this inspection

The headteacher was given three hours' notice of the inspection. The inspector spoke to a range of residential pupils individually and spent time observing routines in the morning, at lunch, teatime and evening activities. This included observing the ways in which residential pupils and staff interact. The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy head, head of care and residential staff. Parents' views were collated from the Ofsted Parent View website and from the school's consultation processes. 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

Simon Morley

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

The Robert Ogden School is an independent school managed by the National Autistic Society (NAS). The school has capacity for 127 children with special educational needs between the ages of 5 and 19 with a diagnosis of autism. There are currently 95 children on roll and 14 of these use the residential provision, which is split over two separate sites, Thurnscoe House and Thurnscoe Studios. The house has a ground floor flat built on the side with separate access for one pupil.

In total 10 pupils can board on any one night, 6 in the house and another 4 in the studios. Currently, six pupils board for four nights a week Monday to Thursday and another eight are flexible boarders. The residential provision was last inspected in January 2016.

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 all staff receive.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

School leaders ensure residential pupils receive excellent care. Pupils experiences of the residential provision are very good and they make exceptional progress.

Staff have a very good understanding of the comprehensively assessed needs of residential pupils. Care strategies link closely with educational targets and are informed with specialist input and underpinned with an autism specific model of support. Care planning is well thought out and carefully considers the needs of individual pupils as well as promoting positive experiences of group living.

Residential pupils enjoy being at school and make significant personal, social and academic progress. New skills and abilities transfer to home life. One parent commented, 'Respite is having a massive positive influence on her, she was happy when she came home, went in the shower and took herself to bed. This morning she told me she wanted to start cleaning her teeth (like at school).' Another said, 'Had initial reservations about flexi-boarding but he has made considerable gains in behaviour, independence skills and relationships, he has never been separated from his mum before but is always ready to go and counts down the days.'

Residential pupils form strong, trusting relationships with staff and make friends with each other. This stability, safety and security empowers them to try new experiences, develop coping strategies and independent skills, and improve their social and communication skills. A social worker commented: 'He is healthy, enjoys school and has made notable improvements in social and educational development. He needs the specialist provision because of his high anxiety, complex needs and pathological demand avoidance.' A parent remarked, 'He gets a lot from Thurnscoe House, enjoys going out a lot, there is a real growth of verbal language, he is very happy, likes school, now eats with others. He is confident and more independent and sociable as opposed to being in his room.'

Staff ensure that residential pupils have individually adapted strategies to their care and education to boost their life chances and future outcomes. Leaders continually develop contacts with the local and wider community. This helps pupils benefit from work experience and to participate with community partners in a programme of pop-up shops. Residential pupils contribute recycled items and produce they have made and cooked in school. They help set up and run the shops and are eager to raise money for the school, which is re-invested in this project. Residential pupils also raise money for different charities through competitions, sponsored walks and enterprise initiatives.

The school has extended the range of qualifications residential pupils can and do achieve. It is notable and a credit to the integrated residential provision that the group of residential pupils all make better educational, social and emotional progress compared to the day pupils. Staff at all levels fully understand the difference they make and the very strong impact they have on the lives of pupils.

The quality of individual support for residential pupils is excellent. Staff embody a strong ethos and culture in which all pupils are treated with respect and dignity and are provided with care that meets their diverse needs. The sensitive, nurturing environment and acceptance of all pupils regardless of their level of need makes them feel welcome and generates a deep sense of belonging and security. This is clearly seen in the way residential pupils become more confident, improve their self-esteem and develop a strong sense of identity. A parent commented, 'Staff know him well and care for him, they have specific autism expertise and training so that he feels comfortable and confident.'

Most residential pupils start as day pupils and the move into the residential provision is seamless. The quality of support, planning and links between school and care allows children and young people to settle in quickly. One social worker commented, 'The transition was very good, settled straight in, the head of care worked closely with the school and parents. It is a really integrated service.'

The carefully, structured way that residential pupils develop their independence, helps them make sense of the world around them. Staff are skilled in minimising the potential for confusion and anxiety that new experiences and change may cause children and young people with autism. The successes are significant and residential pupils become more resilient, adaptable and learn to make more choices. For example being able to sustain working in a busy shopping environment and overcoming the fear of the dark and go out after sunset. One parent commented: 'He gets a lot of benefit from school and Thurnscoe House, he enjoys going out a lot, he is well supported and we have seen great progress over the years. He has very complex difficulties yet he is very happy and responds well to the people who support him, which is very positive.'

The quality of the residential accommodation is very good. Thurnscoe House is purpose built and both this property and Thurnscoe Studios are designed to support residential pupils with a range of abilities. One young person who finds it difficult to tolerate others has his own flat and more able pupils in the Studios participate in housekeeping tasks such as cooking and cleaning. The Studios provide en-suite accommodation and options to have a kitchenette and separate lounge area. Pupils living here have their own front door keys to promote their independence. A parent commented, 'There is a very homely environment and they are allowed to be kids as well as have tasks to complete, it is very well structured.'

Care planning and reviews of residential pupils needs are comprehensively thorough with input from a range of specialists. When additional support is not available on-site then the head of care commissions it externally. For example the local authority sensory impairment team helped review the risk assessment, living arrangements and support for a pupil with a detached retina so he could maximise the benefit that the residential experience provides him with.

Residential pupils enjoy an excellent range of social and leisure activities that promote their participation in the local and wider community. These include swimming, baking, recycling, shopping, karaoke nights and participation in local youth clubs such as the Soul Lounge and Cool Club. Their engagement in new experiences, work experience and

social activities develops their skills and talents enormously.

Staff frequently consult pupils about their care. There is a strong focus on promoting good communication and giving all pupils a voice. Staff are adept at using different strategies such as signs, symbols and talking mats. An example of creative planning involves the use of simple story books to help a pupil recognise and describe feelings.

Although parents retain responsibility for healthcare, the staff support them and ensure that the physical health of residential pupils is promoted. There is regular monitoring of diet, fluid intake and sleep patterns, any issues are taken up with relevant health services. Residential pupils have choice about their diets and are encouraged to eat healthy meals. Robust medication systems ensure that pupils receive the medication they need at the right times and staff are proactive in ensuring there are regular medication reviews. Good partnership working helps parents try different support at home. One commented, 'Staff have offered support and strategies to use at home, such as trialling ear defenders.'

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Residential pupils say that they feel happy and safe. They are free from bullying and tell the staff what they like and dislike. Staff act on their views and are sensitive to their individual needs and personalities so that care plans and daily routines make group living a positive and successful experience. Pupils that are more able are sympathetic towards others and contribute to making a friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

The manager ensures there are robust assessments of the complex vulnerabilities of residential pupils and that staff understand these. There is a strong focus on promoting the emotional wellbeing of residential pupils, supported by the expertise of different professional specialists within the school. For example, understanding about sensory impairment needs, such as auditory sensitivity, to promote an understanding of life from a young person's perspective and to reduce levels of self-harming.

Proactive care practice is based on highly individualised risk assessments and behaviour support plans, which are regularly reviewed. The high quality of planning minimises risks inside and outside of school, while still promoting inclusion, participation in the wide community, new experiences and development.

Residential pupils do not go missing, they are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and are free from the risks of alcohol and substance misuse. Staff encourage residential pupils to learn about the risks from using the internet and e-safety practice is robust. Support about e-safety is extended to parents to help protect pupils when they are at home.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and reviewed so they are up-to-date with changes in statutory guidance and best practice. Staff are clear about their safeguarding roles and responsibilities and know what action to take should a pupil be missing from school. Senior leaders' respond effectively to any concerns or allegations, and they have good links with the local authority safeguarding team to help keep pupils safe and promote timely outcomes.

The recruitment process for new staff is generally very thorough to ensure that only suitable adults are appointed. Practice is usually above and beyond what is expected in obtaining and verifying multiple reference checks. There was one exception to the rule, which was an unexplained short gap in employment history that was rectified during the inspection.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

All staff, from care staff to senior leaders are highly motivated and ambitious in making a positive difference to the lives of residential pupils. Leaders translate their high aspirations through robust staff management systems and carefully thought out, bespoke packages of care. This ensures that residential pupils receive an excellent quality of care that helps them overcome the challenges in their lives resulting from autism, sensory loss, emotional, behavioural and communication difficulties.

Impressive leadership ensures the school excels in meeting its aims and objectives. These include: residential pupils receiving the support, education and training they need; being able to live with dignity and as independently as possible; and feel part of their community and wider society.

Exceptional practice is well founded in a strong evidence base approach for supporting children and young people with autism. All staff undertake a comprehensive induction and training programme, which gives them the skills and knowledge to support residential pupils with complex needs. There is extremely low staff turnover and all staff feel valued. Teamwork is very effective and everyone's thoughts and ideas are listened to with a strong commitment to working together. The new reflective practice approach to supervision is more targeted on children and young people's needs and contributes to the high quality of care. A placing authority commented, 'All the staff are committed to providing high standards of care and work. We are very satisfied that our children are progressing well and everyone is working hard to maintain standards.'

Residential care is underpinned with specialist on-site input from professionals, experienced in educational psychology, speech and language therapy and pathological demand avoidance. Residential pupils benefit from the thoroughly integrated and collaborative approach between these specialisms, teaching and care staff. Care and education plans, risk assessments, communication and sensory profiles are all joined-up, giving residential pupils a very holistic package of support that is centred on their individual diverse needs with notable consistency. One social worker commented, 'They know how to meet his needs and use visual timetables. There is a lot of input from the educational psychologist and speech and language therapist.'

The head of care manages the residential provision exceptionally well and is always trying to improve the experiences of children and young people. She ensures there are comprehensive levels of monitoring that include daily and weekly feedback from residential pupils as well as termly and annual progress reviews. These monitoring arrangements maintain a very strong focus on residential pupils, so they are always at the heart of the service.

Management oversight is supplemented from regular, external reviews, which have improved in quality since the last inspection. The head of care networks with other outstanding residential schools to support the drive for continuous improvement. Creative and forward thinking leadership is central to the improvements made since the last inspection. This includes, reflective staff supervision, better arrangements for pupils to integrate in the community, reviewing the system for assessing pupil progress and more opportunities for pupils to obtain accredited qualifications.

Relationships with parents and placing authorities are very good. There is numerous positive feedback about the school and care in the school's compliments book, from contributions at formal review meetings and survey responses. One parent said: 'It is fantastic, he is severely autistic and aggressive, he cooks, learns other life skills and I couldn't wish for a better place. Staff are helping us at home with his self-care, I feel listened to and there is good communication.' Another commented: 'She was so excited about her dance exam, her dance classes are brilliant, just like all the staff at school. I am surprised she got to sleep at all last night as she was on such a high, the staff at the Studios must have done a brilliant job with her.' Others remarked: 'Staff expertise significantly contributes to her well-being and development we don't feel we can leave her with anyone else;' and 'I think he likes it more than home.'

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	370 6004

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	14
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to 19
Headteacher	Lorraine Dormand
Date of previous boarding inspection	05/02/2015
Telephone number	01709874443
Email address	robert.ogden@nas.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/ofsted." If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

if you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.co.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016

