

# Rossendale School

Moor Side Farm, Bamford Road, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 0RT

## Inspection dates

27/02/2017–01/03/2017

### 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

Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- Pupils benefit from a committed, dedicated and child-centred staff team that strives to prioritise their needs.
- Pupils enjoy their experiences in the residential service. They have great fun, increase their confidence and make very good progress.
- Staff have excellent relationships with pupils. They are creative and inspire pupils to work together. These approaches encourage positive pupil relationships.
- Education opportunities for pupils are extensive. They benefit from a wide range of options in and outside of the school. The in-school therapists work closely with care staff. They assess the needs and the impacts of pupil's emotional, social and psychological well-being.
- The school and residential provision are organised and managed exceptionally well. Effective safeguarding of pupils is central to all decisions made.
- The residency arrangements provide pupils with a comfortable and homely experience. The houses are well equipped and personalised to make sure that pupils can enjoy their stay in a warm, nurturing and relaxed environment.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmed about the education and care provided to their children. They have complete trust in the teaching and residential staff. They frequently comment that their own and their family's stress levels have significantly reduced in the knowledge that their child is happy and 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?**

There were no areas identified on this inspection.

## Information about this inspection

Notice of the inspection was by telephone call to the school initially at 9.00am on the first day of the inspection. Details of the inspection were confirmed with the head of care and then followed up by email, which also contained a letter of confirmation, an indicative timetable, a letter to parents (Parent View) and a copy of Annex A.

During the inspection, the following activities were undertaken: each of the residential homes were visited, informal discussions with pupils took place when the inspector visited the residency provision after school and in the early evenings, observing routines, interaction between residential staff and pupils and sharing various meals with pupils.

In addition to this, meetings and discussion took place with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of care, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, the school's administrator, senior residential and residential staff, therapy team members, chef and person in charge of maintenance. The case tracking of three selected pupils took place. Discussions took place with a leader of faith, the parents, carers and family members of pupils as they visited the school. The inspector also attended a staff handover meeting. Information was taken from the most recent surveys of pupils, parents and carers undertaken by the school themselves. Contact with the local authority designated officer was made prior to the inspection commencing.

## Inspection team

Mark Kersh

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Rosendale School is an independent residential special school, providing education for pupils who display behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils are subject to a statement of need under the 1996 Education Act (since superseded by the 2002 Education Act and the 2006 Education and Inspections Act) and the 2014 Children and Families Act.

The school provides education to pupils of mixed gender, between the ages of seven and 18. There are currently 72 pupils on roll. A total of 23 pupils currently experience residential provision from one to four evenings per week. The residential provision operates Monday to Thursday inclusive, term-time only.

The residential provision is spread between two sites approximately four miles away from the school. The accommodation consists of single bedrooms and each house offers communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. The residential provision was last inspected on 7 March 2016.

## Inspection Judgements

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

### Outstanding

The school and residential provision have a very good track record. Outstanding outcomes for pupils have consistently been achieved over a considerable number of years. There is very strong evidence to show that pupils have progressed from their starting points at the school, and this often exceeds their own, parents' or carers' expectations. Young people demonstrate confidence and are excited to describe their progress and how this has been achieved. Pupils spoken with felt that this exceptional progress made was due to the school and residential environment being highly supportive, extremely nurturing and fun. Pupils were eager to be part of this inspection process and provided very positive individual and group feedback. Such comments from pupils include:

- 'I am doing really well, I have more friends and I love coming here.'
- 'What has helped me is the staff, they listen and help me and tell me I am good. I am very happy and learning lots of new things.'
- 'I have to get on with it, much worse people than me out there and I don't know how I would manage without the support from my staff.'
- 'We are all safe and have someone we can talk to. Staff have shown us how to manage our own behaviour and we do not have any complaints about our care.'

Pupils are optimistic about their future life chances. The result of the school's highly nurturing and inclusive approach is that pupils move on from their starting points and make significant progress during their time here, emotionally, socially and academically. This is clearly demonstrated by their improved self-esteem and confidence as they continue to be supported and take on new situations and challenges.

Pupils increasingly benefit from access to extensive resources in the school and in the residential provision. This means that they can access technology to help assist them in their research into projects for their school and recreational work. Pupils use and enjoy many sports and leisure facilities to have fun and exercise. They have access to a range of sensory equipment that can help to provide stimulation or a calm space to relax and enjoy. There is plenty of provision, including surrounding countryside for a range of needs and this means that all pupils have access to many varied activities and the support that they need to enjoy their stay.

The pupil council is very productive. Pupils with varied and complex difficulties play an equal part in sharing views and concerns. Pupils take responsibility and propose actions from the council meetings. These are considered by the management team, reported back to council and agreed with pupils.

Residential pupils are developing meaningful friendships, for example, by inviting each other to their respective houses for Tuesday and Thursday club. Young people value opportunities to mix socially with their peers.

Parents and carers consistently report that their children look forward to their stays in residence and that they settle quickly. Some pupils, who may previously have had difficulties with engagement in education and social interaction, settle quickly into the structured routine of the school, enhancing their attendance and learning opportunities. They learn to live harmoniously, make friends and share accommodation. Parents attribute this to the warm and supportive relationships that their children are able to develop with the staff. Their feedback is really positive and includes:

- 'Since he [son] came here it has been absolutely fantastic, so much so, he really wants to stay in residency, that's how much he likes it here. The progress has been remarkable, his behaviour has improved and he is now at home with us, but he still enjoys the activities provided in residency.'
- 'This school has changed his life, he is now a happy boy and comes home and talks about everything he has done in school, and on school trips, he comes home happy. This has taken a strain off all the family, it is great.'
- 'We believe her needs are consistently met, much better than the previous two schools.'
- 'Rossendale is the full package. I also fully believe and have faith that the culture and structure, along with very experienced, caring and understanding staff, allows pupils to feel happy and secure. This has a very positive impact, enabling them to work to the best of their ability and achieve good results.'

The school and residential provision are exceptionally well led. Effective management in school and of the residential provision is crucial to its success. Improvement work is constant and supported by motivated, qualified staff who strive to maintain high standards of care and support. The pupils' views, staff, therapists and the local authority contribute to pupils' education health and care plans. Regular audits by the management team and the independent person enable analysis of all the services provided and any shortfalls are tackled swiftly to provide pupils with high levels of education and care.

### **The quality of care and support**

### **Outstanding**

The school's admission, induction and transition processes are extremely effective. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of care scrutinise referrals very closely and challenge every detail. Home visits by managers are carried out to assess the needs of the child and their family. Parents and carers receive a handbook that contains very informative information about the services provided and a copy of the latest Ofsted inspection report. Introductory meetings in school are carried out, followed by an initial planning meeting within 12 weeks of a pupil being admitted into school or residency. This assesses their adaptability and their interaction with staff and other pupils. These rigorous processes ensure that when pupils join the school there is a minimal impact in residency or with other pupils in school.

Pupils above school age are able to transition smoothly from the school to the sixth form. The sixth form is situated away from the school. This provides students with an

opportunity into higher education as well as enhancing their practical independence skills within the community.

The residential provision is set up to accept full-time pupils or provide respite arrangements to families. These arrangements provide a valuable service and enable pupils to access a well-structured education programme, support families and prevent breakdowns. There is a considerable commitment to provide care around the child and family approach. Professional assessments from in-school therapists and contact with previous educational placements ensure a full and thorough assessment prior to and from the commencement of a school placement.

The school and residency houses support the cultural needs of pupils and their families as well as encouraging British values. A faith leader supports pupils in school and a parent has provided practical suggestions and advice. Pupils and staff attended a Bar Mitzvah celebration weekend away from the school. In addition, a parent provided support to a designated area of a cookery classroom, where traditional cultural food can be prepared and cooked by pupils. Staff are fully trained to meet the specific difficulties and needs of pupils and are sensitive and responsive to pupils' sexual orientation.

Pupils' mental health, speech and language and emotional well-being are prioritised. Staff are proactive in ensuring that young people can access specialist support services to meet their needs. A new initiative by the in-school therapy team has been implemented, benefiting pupils. Care staff or teaching staff now complete a referral form requesting a specialist service from the therapy team. Referrals are scrutinised by the whole therapy team during weekly meetings, ensuring that pupils in need are prioritised for intervention. These arrangements also allow the therapy team to provide support strategies to staff when intervention by the therapy team is not considered necessary.

The support that pupils receive from a clinical psychologist, speech and language therapist, mental health worker, two art psychotherapists and the neurodevelopmental support worker is invaluable in school. These arrangements ensure that pupils are always seen by a therapist who they know and mean that pupils do not have to travel long distances to professional services outside of the school. Pupils' physical health is assessed and monitored by a local authority nurse and any medical interventions or treatments are carried out within local health centres.

Pupils benefit from a balanced, varied diet with a range of choices. The chef is responsive to their dietary and cultural needs. Residential pupils know the chef well and were observed giving him very positive feedback and compliments on the food served. A consistent five star rating has been achieved from the Food Standards Agency. All meals are made from fresh produce and are never reheated or kept. Chef reported that he has more than sufficient budget to order and purchase the produce needed. Pupils enjoy the social side of mealtimes. Secondary pupils are very positive role models for the primary pupils and the sittings are well organised, have table helpers and pupils adhere to acceptable table manners.

The two residency houses are separate from the school and located approximately four miles away. They are not distinguishable from other houses in the local village. Each house is comfortable, warm and decorated and furnished to a high standard. Pupils'

bedrooms who are in full-time residency are personalised to their own tastes. For those pupils using residency as respite, their bedrooms are personalised with home comforts prior to arriving for their stay. Careful consideration is given to matching pupils, in areas such as age, so that they can experience play and activities appropriate to their age and understanding. Pupils, whether primary or secondary, enjoy age-appropriate toys and games, they are kept occupied, have lots of fun and television or gaming consoles are rarely used. Parents, carers and pupils can contact each other anytime by telephone, should they wish to do so.

There are no more than 12 pupils in residency at any given time. Currently, 23 pupils are using the residency service from one to four nights each week. As in school, the education health and care plans for residency pupils are detailed and kept securely in each of the houses. Equally, medication is stored securely with regular and robust audits ensuring that all medication is accountable.

Meals provided in residency are nutritious and pupils plan, prepare and cook for the Tuesday and Thursday club and staff. Pupils in residency are regularly joined by pupils from school at these clubs. It is evident through observation how much friendships between pupils are encouraged and enjoyed. Pupils were seen to express themselves and were being encouraged and supported by their staff to show the best of their abilities and knowledge. Each term, pupils and staff are set a task to consider something that means a lot to them. The inspector observed the conclusion of this task in a 'show and tell' presentation given by pupils and staff at the Tuesday night club.

The 'show and tell' presentation is inspirational and significantly contributes in building pupils confidence, self-esteem and social interactions. Pupils are proud to talk to the group about their planning and presented interesting facts about the topics that mean so much to them. Equally, staff presented to the pupils interesting and educational facts about their own lives and hobbies, all of which generated many questions and interesting conversations. Pupils who previously experienced social isolation, feeling disconnected and alone, are now flourishing with the support and encouragement provided to them by staff.

These innovative, inspiring and practical arrangements provide pupils with excellent outcomes and their families with exceptional support.

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

#### **Outstanding**

Safeguarding is at the centre of practice in this school and within the residency houses. All staff understand their individual responsibility to safeguard each pupil. Concerns are reported without delay to the designated safeguarding team. Detailed chronologies are recorded and kept of any issues that staff, pupils, parents or carers raise.

Procedures for identifying the risks associated with each pupil are thorough. Staff demonstrated at the inspection considerable knowledge of pupils' risks and the strategies outlined in their risk assessments to protect them. These strategies are implemented in practice, so that the potential for pupils to self-harm, hurt each other or place themselves at risk when out in the community, is reduced. Risk assessments take into account pupils' background information and are discussed as part of the staff's daily



handover. This ensures that staff have any updated information on pupils when they return to school from home.

Pupils benefit from a strong, visible, proactive and professional team. The team is made up of five therapists, 18 teaching staff, 20 special support assistants and 10 care staff. Their photographs are displayed in school and throughout the residential houses. They are all accessible to pupils and are fully trained in safeguarding procedures, including around child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, internet safety and bullying.

Staff clearly understand the individual vulnerabilities of each pupil and their role in keeping them safe. Staff understand the process for notifying incidents if they have any concerns or if disclosures are made. There is excellent liaison between the school and the 18 local authorities using the school. This ensures that any concerns are thoroughly considered and investigated rigorously.

The designated safeguarding team consists of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the head of care and they all demonstrate a clear understanding and insight in relation to potential risk. Research from public enquiries, attending key national conferences on safeguarding and delivering outcomes to staff ensures a robust and consistent approach is taken to protect pupils. There are innovative practices undertaken with pupils to help them understand the potential dangers and keep themselves safe. Pupils are involved in role play, drama created scenarios and contribute in publications about safety in school and residency. While much of this is fun, it is also educating pupils with strong messages on their own vulnerability and safety.

Staff understand the safeguarding policy and report any concerns accordingly. The safety of pupils is consistently evaluated. Safeguarding practice is inventive and proactive. There is a professional working partnership with the designated safeguarding officer in the local authority. He confirmed prior to the inspection that he has no concerns about the school or the pupils.

The pupils clearly enjoy their time spent in residency. As a result, the number of negative incidents is extremely low. There are no safeguarding concerns, the last physical intervention took place in 2013 and pupils have never been missing or absent from a residency house. Records show physical intervention significantly decreasing in school. This is because the management team analyses and produces data to recognise trends, patterns and triggers of pupils' behaviour. There are weekly drop in sessions for staff in relation to managing pupils' behaviour, and the culture in school and residency is embedded around praise, respect and positive relationships.

The staff are constantly assessing and measuring the pupils' behaviour throughout the school day. They listen to pupils, parents and carers and if needed will identify when a residency placement may be beneficial to a pupil, their parent or carer. This added support can play a vital role in supporting pupils and provides much needed respite for their parents or carers.

The recruitment, selection and vetting of staff are effective and evidenced in the school central record. The school administrator confirmed that existing staff are re-vetted in line with the prescribed timescales. A new staff member confirmed the rigorous process that

he went through as part of his recruitment. New staff members undertake two days of assessment, including a written exercise, presentation and interview. The management team is totally engaged during this process, ensuring that they get the right candidate for the job. All visitors to the school are required to produce their identity, sign in and wear the school's identity badge. Each visitor is given a quick guide leaflet describing the safeguarding procedures at the school. Entry into the school is only accessed by an electronic fob and provides high security.

There is an excellent approach to health and safety matters, which is underpinned by comprehensive health and safety policies. The physical environment is safe, secure and helps to protect pupils. Any matters relating to safety and maintenance are quickly addressed by the in-school maintenance team. The maintenance person confirmed that all repairs in school or residency are acted on immediately and funding for new materials, equipment and furnishings is not an issue. This results in the school, residency houses and grounds being safely maintained and managed. Pupils know how to evacuate the school and residency houses in case of emergencies or fire. Detailed records show regular tests and evacuations above the required level.

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

#### **Outstanding**

The management team in school and residency never stands still. It strives for continued improvement. Effective partnership working and challenges ensure that pupils receive the services that they are entitled to from local authorities as agreed in their education health and care plans. Consultation with Ofsted ensures that the school is up to date with current legislation. Providing case studies to the Department for Education demonstrates that the school is interested in shaping future guidance, in relation to physical intervention and safeguarding in schools. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of care are passionate about the school and are extremely interested and have a clear vision for the residential provision.

They have attended and presented at conferences, covering topics such as pupils who display behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder and adolescent brain development. Such a proactive stance enables the school to be kept up to date of key local and national themes, which informs policies, procedures and practice. This is cascaded down to staff and training assessment tools are used, enabling leaders to measure and evaluate the staff members' learning, understanding and competencies. This contributes to staff induction, refresher training and places the welfare of pupils at the heart of school and residency practices.

The management team, teachers and staff are fully supported by a professional and experienced team of administrators. They are skilled at pulling information together, arranging meetings and providing facilities for visiting parents, carers or professionals.

Staff morale is very high and turnover is minimal. There are sufficient staff in school and residency. All staff are experienced and qualified to level 3, or higher, including degree level. A new staff member says, 'I feel privileged to work here, it is really good to see the progress the pupils have made.' Staff feel supported through regular supervision and appraisal from the management team. Evidence is clear and these practices are regularly followed. This enables staff to be confident, reflect on their performance and identify

future training opportunities.

Regular reports following visits by the independent visitor provide challenge and insight into practice. There are rigorous monitoring tools in place to analyse trends and patterns in order to sustain the high levels of care provided to pupils. The management team has a clear oversight of the school and residency provision. Development plans are detailed and include future benefits for pupils. In particular, the new build is due to open on 20 March 2017. This provides extra classroom space, therapy rooms and facilities and will strengthen the opportunities of the pupils and staff.

The residential provision is an integral part of the school and supports pupils extremely well. This joined-up approach provides pupils with endless opportunities and new experiences. For example, pupils have for the third year running been involved in the planning, filming, acting and making of a DVD. This is inspirational considering pupils' previous backgrounds and enables them to flourish. The DVD is presented to parents and carers at the end of year awards. This enables the pupils to develop a wealth of new skills and increases their confidence. Together with all of the very useful information provided to parents or carers, this gives them a visual glimpse of what a pupil's life is like at school or in residency.

No recommendations are made at the inspection.

## 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>	119845
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC009656
<b>DfE registration number</b>	888/6020

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>	23
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	7 to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Duncan
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	07/03/2016
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 822779
<b>Email address</b>	rossendale@priorygroup.com

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