

The Robert Ogden School

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The Robert Ogden School is an independent school managed by the National Autistic Society (NAS). The school has capacity for 127 children and young people with special educational needs, who are between the ages of five and 19, and who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There are currently 96 children and young people on roll and 10 of these use the residential provision, which is split over two 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, six in the house and another four in the studios. Currently, five pupils board for four nights a week from Monday to Thursday and another five are flexible boarders.

The school uses the Structure, Positive approaches and expectations, Empathy, Low arousal, Links framework developed by the NAS to understand and support pupils with ASD. This framework also underpins the autism spectrum disorder-specific training that all staff receive. All pupils have an individual education, health and care plan.

The care of residential pupils is supported by the on-site Personal Support Team (PST), which provides specialist occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, psychology and behavioural support.

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly

improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 13 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Residential pupils receive a high quality of personalised care.
- Care plans and care practice are informed by professional input and based on best practice.
- Staff are knowledgeable about autism spectrum disorder and the complex needs of the pupils.
- The care of the pupils is flexible and responsive to their needs, progress and development.
- High standards of care are seamlessly integrated across the residential settings and the school.
- The pupils are kept safe and free from harm. They experience safety and security, and are relaxed, trusting the adults around them.
- Behavioural incidents are heavily scrutinised to ensure best practice and to keep the pupils safe.
- The pupils make sustained improvements in their social skills, independence and behaviour. This enhances their current and future lives.
- Leadership is excellent and focused on giving pupils the best support and maximising their potential.
- There is highly effective multi-agency work that promotes exceptional outcomes for the pupils.
- Parents and placing authorities highly rate how well the pupils are looked after.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Add a chronology of actions taken by the designated safeguarding leads to the 'cause for concern' safeguarding system. Ensure there is recorded evidence of the provider checking and challenging the actions taken. (NMS 11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The residential pupils' experiences at the school are excellent. The pupils make significant and sustained improvements in their development and progress. These pupils all have individual vulnerabilities and a range of complex needs. They thrive in a nurturing and safe environment. The high standards of care have a considerable impact on the quality of their lives.

Staff are well trained and supported by specialist input from the PST. Consequently, the staff respond well to the needs of the residential pupils. The high quality of care is a result of the comprehensive assessments of pupils and of the staff's understanding of autism spectrum disorder and the pupils' complex needs.

Care, education, behaviour support and communication plans are fully integrated across the school and the residential settings. These plans are developed collaboratively and are informed by evidence-based specialist input. The care of the pupils is underpinned by best practice in caring for people with autism spectrum disorder. Pupils clearly benefit from this. They are safe, secure, happy and trust the staff. They have a good sense of belonging within their residential settings.

Care records are organised and well maintained. They include detailed and complex information about the pupils' needs and care plans. This information has now been summarised since the last inspection to assist the busy staff in varying their responses to promote the pupils' diverse needs.

At an individual pupil level, the staff are successful in providing highly tailored care to meet the pupils' complex needs. Consequently, pupils are familiar with how their day is structured and are reassured by the predictable responses from staff. Staff use a variety of communication methods to help pupils understand their individual timetables. Pupils are well prepared for any planned changes. The staff are flexible and adaptable to making the necessary changes when a pupil is anxious about any change or transition.

The pupils are relaxed in their residential settings, and they enjoy their living environment and personalised bedrooms. They are fully included in decision-making and their requests receive a positive response, including the provision of a fresh coffee machine in one pupil's kitchenette and having a front door key. They all have an individualised complaints process based on their communication needs and are regularly consulted.

The settled living environment contributes to the pupils maintaining very good school attendance. There is excellent progress in the pupils' behaviour, social skills, communication and enjoyment of the local and wider community settings. They experience a broad range of opportunities and their achievements are a significant

enhancement of their lives.

The pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, including horse-riding, trampolining and trips out. They learn new life skills, benefit from employment and make huge strides in their independence at their own pace, based on their complex needs.

Staff work hard to promote healthy lifestyles and improvements in the monitoring of diet and sleep are having a positive impact on pupils. As well as specialist on-site support, pupils access additional health services. Concerns about individual health needs are followed up thoroughly and staff are persistent in getting the best outcomes for the pupils. The emotional well-being of pupils is given a high priority. This is central to the ethos of the setting and contributes to how well pupils feel safe and secure, resulting in sustained improvements in their lives.

There is detailed communication with parents and social workers through emails, telephone calls and link books that go home with pupils. Consequently, parents and social workers are well informed about the pupils' experiences and progress. Those spoken to during the inspection are positive about the school and its proactive nature in the way that pupils are looked after. This was supported by consultation that the school undertakes with parents and stakeholders.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

There is creative and extensive care planning and risk management that is highly effective in keeping pupils safe. The professional guidance from the PST is a considerable influence on risk management, including behaviour support and transition planning, such as the creation of social stories to assist communication with pupils and alterations to the sensory environment to reduce pupils' stress and anxiety.

The school has a highly organised and thorough approach to e-safety. This includes individual risk assessments and safety plans for pupils assessed as being at risk. Pupils are included in developing and implementing their safety plans, which gives them ownership and helps to educate them. Staff responsible for information technology are resourceful and knowledgeable in this area and are accomplished at keeping pupils safe. There is comprehensive support for pupils and their parents about e-safety and a willingness to try different approaches. For example, the setting hosted a 'bring your own device to school' day.

Pupils do not go missing and are generally free from the risks of exploitation, alcohol and substance use. Their behaviour is excellent, and the number of incidents is low in frequency. There is support from staff qualified in behavioural management training as well as other members of the PST team. Combined with the regular scrutiny of incidents for trends and patterns, this leads to pupils having imaginative and comprehensive support plans. For example, the use of a sensory diet and personal motivators to promote pupils' relaxation, reduces their stress and improves

their social engagement.

The staff have received more training about the exploitation of children and improved their level of comprehension and knowledge in such safeguarding matters. The revised system for reflective supervision purposefully checks staff understanding and if needed leaders provide additional guidance to individual staff.

The system for managing safeguarding concerns has improved since the last inspection. This allows for better management oversight and challenge from the provider with regard to the decisions made by the school's designated safeguarding leaders. Written evidence of such scrutiny is not as good, and it is difficult to track actions taken by the safeguarding leads, as records do not include a chronology of how the leaders have responded. At the time of the inspection this did not have an impact on how well the pupils were safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership and management are excellent, which ensures that pupils receive high levels of support. Longstanding, experienced and accomplished leadership promotes high expectations for what all the pupils can achieve, regardless of their individual backgrounds and needs. The dedicated and proactive management of the residential provision ensures that pupils thrive and enjoy positive and fulfilling experiences.

There is a successful mix of staff nurturing the pupils and promoting their self-discipline and their independence that delivers results. These results include pupils benefiting from paid employment, increased school attendance and enjoying new social experiences.

Leaders ensure that academic, personal, social and emotional development are all monitored and assessed. There is targeted additional support for pupils over and above what would normally be expected. This empowers pupils to achieve and make excellent progress. For example, staff took the time to make a series of home visits to develop relationships, which successfully helped a pupil with his transition into the residential provision.

Proactive leadership ensures that the education and care provisions and the PST work together as a confident and cohesive team. This seamless integration across the school provides pupils with the best all-round support.

Governance arrangements are thorough, comprehensive and have improved since the last inspection. Managers and the provider understand the school's strengths and weaknesses through a rigorous approach to self-assessment. There is a high degree of scrutiny of behavioural incidents, pupils' support and safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding systems have been improved since the last inspection and there are plans to set up a local governing body to further improve the quality of oversight.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC473713

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Type of school: residential special school

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Inspectors

Simon Morley, social care inspector (lead)

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