

# Rossendale School

Moor Side Farm, Bamford Road, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 0RT  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Rossendale School is an independent residential special school, providing education for pupils who display behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, including autism spectrum disorder. Pupils are subject to an Education Health and Care Plan under the 2014 Children and Families Act.

The school provides education to pupils of mixed gender, between the ages of seven to 18 years old. There are currently 73 pupils on roll. A total of 24 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 10 October 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 8 November 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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:** 10 October 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Pupils flourish and make excellent progress because of this school and residential provision.
- The residential experience is highly valued by pupils. This helps to support their increased academic attainment, attendance and improved behaviours.
- The pupils make excellent social, emotional and educational progress because of the support and opportunities that they receive.
- The pupils engage in therapy sessions that encourage social, psychological and emotional well-being.
- Pupils thrive, learning and living in a culture where success is highly supported and celebrated. Staff work closely to ensure that each individual pupil not only achieves, but in many cases exceeds, their potential.
- Pupils' voices are threaded through all aspects of the school and residential provision. They are influential in all aspects of decision making and on-site developments. This is exemplified by the inclusion of the pupils in the making of a short film about the services available.
- The staff support the pupils to be respectful and understand diversity. The pupils use these skills to help others in the community.
- Leaders and managers, and all the staff, share a commitment to support the residential pupils to fulfil their potential and become active, independent young people.
- Highly trained and vigilant staff keep pupils safe and help them to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The leadership of the residential provision is exceptional. The leadership team remains enthused and committed to improving the pupils' experiences.
- The head of care has a continuous drive for improvement. He has an accurate evaluation of the strengths of the service and future areas of development.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Pupils thrive and enjoy the opportunities and experiences available to them through being residential pupils. No matter what their needs or abilities, they are nurtured to reach their full potential. Pupils collectively talk positively and fondly of the staff and teachers who care for them and teach them.

The pupils enjoy their time in the school and the residential provision. They have exceptional relationships with the staff and with each other. Pupils' self-esteem significantly improves because the staff treat each young person with value and respect. The staff demonstrate great empathy and understand each of the pupil's complex needs.

Pupils' enjoyment and sense of belonging is reflected in the requests they make to increase their time in the residential provision. There is considered planning, ensuring that the pupils are matched. This planning strengthens the relationships pupils enjoy with each other.

The residential houses and the services provided are extremely valued by pupils, parents and carers. Despite significant challenges, the pupils make excellent progress in education compared to their previous education experiences.

The help and support given to pupils ensures that they are very well prepared for independence and the workplace, and to study at university. Pupils can now access a new sixth form building that is situated away from the school site. This building is fully equipped and provides the pupils with excellent space and facilities. These facilities include sensory equipment, catering facilities, media suite, music room and information technology.

Pupils learn to transfer their educational and social skills into the local community, and their behaviour is improved when at home. As a result, the pupils start to broaden their views of themselves and about the wider world. The pupils are proud of the community and charity work that they undertake, which includes helping elderly people in a local care home.

Pupils told the inspectors that they feel listened to. They participate in the school pupils' meetings and they design informative magazines for the school and local businesses. A short inspirational film is shown at the annual awards evening. Pupils are very much involved in this film-making process and their parents and carers look forward to watching the film.

The pupils' emotional well-being improves significantly because of the positive approach that staff use. The school's psychologist, therapists and mental health workers provide bespoke support to the pupils to help them deal with their anxieties.

These on-site professionals assist the pupils to develop coping strategies. Specialist help is available to the pupils as soon as it is needed, at the intensity required and for as long as it is required. Nutritious meals are provided to the pupils. The chef has been recognised nationally for his achievements, and he knows which pupils require special dietary and cultural requirements.

Staff safely administer medication to the pupils. The approach to managing medication that is brought into the school and residency and later taken home with the pupils is fully understood by staff.

Learning from research is used to benefit the approach the staff take with the pupils. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the head of care cascade this information to the staff and teachers. Leaders and managers publicise their practice, and they present at seminars and conferences. They have a professional interest in autism spectrum disorder, social communication difficulties, sensory awareness and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The school and residential provision are very inclusive environments that encourage tolerance and diversity. Well planned and shared activities are enjoyed by the school pupils and residential pupils. The welfare of the pupils is at the heart of the work that the teachers and staff provide to the pupils. The staff are approachable, they act with integrity and there is always someone who pupils, parents and carers can turn to for support. Pupils, parents and carers know that they matter. One family described the school as 'fantastic'. Compliments from other parents and carers about the school and residential provision include:

- 'It has changed our son's life, and ours as a family. Our son has made incredible progress since joining the school.'
- 'He has been at the school for almost five years now and is happy here. He loves staying over and is really benefiting from the independence skills he is learning.'
- 'After failed placements in mainstream school, all staff support him to flourish and focus on him trying to achieve, and they celebrate what he can do. The support is outstanding with ongoing contact that is superb.'
- 'The school is quiet and calm. My children are well looked after by staff who are not only qualified and experienced but who genuinely care about my children's welfare. The staff ensure that my children truly exceed their academic potential.'
- 'She trusts the staff who tailor activities to meet her changing needs. Communication is excellent, as is liaison with the main school.'

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

## **outstanding**

The pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe. Safeguarding procedures are effective. The school's designated safeguarding leads all work closely with the staff, who are committed to ensuring that the pupils in their care are kept safe. The staff, regardless of their individual roles, undertake safeguarding training to enable them to identify and report concerns. This training is informed by research and specifically relates to the pupils' complex needs.

When safeguarding concerns are raised, quick action is taken to protect the pupils. Concerns are shared immediately with other agencies, when appropriate.

Risk assessments that are clear and well written help staff to anticipate when pupils are likely to struggle emotionally and behaviourally. Practical strategies known by the staff help the pupils to learn about the importance of listening and, in turn, how to take responsibility for their behaviour. Age-appropriate risks are managed well, with some of the sixth form students going out for their lunch in the local town.

Pupils learn how to behave appropriately and how to manage their own emotions. They are encouraged to keep calm rather than becoming aggressive. Pupils are also encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. There is an effective behaviour watch programme in place. This programme contributes to the pupils' behaviour support plans. All staff demonstrate an excellent awareness of each pupil's plan, and they are consistent in their approach. Each plan includes the pupil's own views about how best to help them if they are displaying challenging behaviours.

The inclusion of pupil's own views in their plans helps to inform de-escalation practice. Physical intervention of children has not been necessary in the residential houses, with annual data also showing a decrease in physical intervention being used in school. There is a clear correlation between pupils who have stayed in residence overnight and their improved behaviour in school the following day.

Staff know the procedures to follow should a pupil go missing. The rural location of the school and the close staff supervision of the pupils in residency and sixth form ensures that the pupils do not go missing.

Health and safety is managed very well in the school, residential houses and sixth form. The pupils take part in fire evacuation drills so that they know what action to take if a fire occurs. Recruitment procedures are thorough and meet the required standard in the checks undertaken.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The leaders and managers are exceptionally aspirational for every pupil to achieve. The leadership team is devoted to providing pupil-centred care, and this gives the pupils the skills to achieve their maximum potential. The care staff and teaching team follow their leaders' aspiration and enthusiasm consistently.

The residential staff are suitably qualified and experienced. All the staff share a common aim of providing an excellent residential experience and education for the pupils, to enhance their life skills, experiences and learning. The residential staff and teachers are professional and are committed to providing excellent levels of support, assistance and guidance so that the pupils can succeed.

The leadership team is not complacent and strives for continued improvement. Staff report total satisfaction regarding the support they receive, with a focus on their emotional resilience and well-being. The staff supervision and appraisal process includes reflection on practice.

The sharing of information between leaders and managers, teachers and residential staff is exemplary. This includes daily handover meetings and team meetings and ensures thorough communication with all staff who support the pupils.

The staff are proactive in seeking out information to support their understanding of the diverse needs of the pupils, their parents and carers. For example, staff have researched information in respect of different faiths and religious beliefs, and they have attended training in relation to gender, sexuality, domestic abuse and self-harm.

Leaders ensure that there are accurate and extensive data analysis systems to oversee pupils' progress and welfare. This information is used proactively across the residential houses, school and sixth form by staff, teachers and managers. Consequently, the journeys of each pupil, even pupils who have very complex needs, succeed well.

The head of care's accurate self-evaluation clearly demonstrates a continuous drive for improvement. He understands the areas of strength and future areas that he would like to develop. The independent visitor provides a thorough oversight and quality reports, which enable the leaders and managers to monitor progress and to continue to make developments in practice.

Leaders and managers lead by example, using creative ideas and research to help them to provide pupils with bespoke care. They have high expectations for both pupils and staff and are open to new ideas and innovation. The pupils' academic and social improvement is evidenced well, and this has been sustained over time.

The residential houses provide the pupils with a homely environment. The pupils' bedrooms are personalised with items brought from home. Communal areas are reflective of the pupils' enjoyment through the display of photographs and arts and crafts they have made.

## **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:** SC009656

**Headteacher:** Mr D Duncan

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Mark Kersh: social care inspector (lead)

Michelle Bacon: social care inspector (shadow)



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