

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 may have 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 between the ages of seven and 18 years old. There are currently 92 pupils on roll. A total of 22 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.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 March 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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: 6 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy the residential experience and make exceptional progress in learning social and independence skills. Residential pupils recognise the progress they have made and were keen to talk to the inspectors about this. One pupil talked about their first skiing trip abroad and being away from home for the first time. They said, 'It was brilliant.'

Pupils build trusting relationships with residential staff, who are highly committed to providing pupils with the best opportunities for growth and enjoyment. One residential pupil said, 'If I was not at this school I'd still be in my bedroom at home.' Another pupil commented on their improved self-confidence and independence skills. All residential pupils acknowledged the value of residency in helping them to develop and maintain important friendships, gain important life skills and have the opportunity for leisure activities.

Specialist help is available according to the needs of individual pupils. The in-house clinical team is benefiting a number of residential pupils. Teaching and residential staff have developed and strengthened relationships with key professionals, which ensures that pupils receive high-quality care and support. One professional said, 'Staff are just lovely, I really feel they have all worked together to support [Name]. I wish there were more provisions like this as it would change children's lives.'

The residency houses support the cultural needs of pupils and their families. Since the last inspection, a separate kosher kitchen has been set up in one of the residency houses. This means that individual pupils can continue to practise their religious beliefs when they are away from home.

Residential staff ensure that pupils have a positive introduction to their residential stays. A Year 13 pupil has helped to develop a presentation where he talks about the positive experience of residency and the opportunities that it provides. Comments from the pupil include: 'It's very relaxed, chilled out, just like home. If you're not sure, just give it a go.' This is instilling confidence in others to take up the opportunity of trying residency.

Pupils are able to contribute to activities and have a say in how their residential experience is planned and carried out. Those pupils who previously experienced social isolation are now thriving and building emotional resilience with the support from nurturing staff. Parents report that their children have made exceptional progress in developing confidence and their independence skills.

Residential staff work holistically with the pupils and their families. For example, staff have been working with parents on a shared plan for their child's independence training. One parent said, 'It's been amazing; [Name]'s life skills have really come on.

It has been really good for him. I think it is a really wonderful facility.' Another reported, 'This is an excellent school which takes into account the whole child, providing them with skills and education they need to progress in life. We could not be happier to have our child at this school. Thank you to the amazing staff.'

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

Residential staff and managers receive regular and comprehensive safeguarding training. Systems are in place, which staff understand and use, to identify when early intervention may be appropriate. Highly effective systems are also in place to report any welfare concerns. Appropriate referrals have been made to social care and to the designated safeguarding team. Robust recruitment processes protect pupils.

Residential pupils' welfare and safety are promoted and protected to an excellent standard. A carefully worked-through approach, which is not risk-averse, ensures that pupils are able to expand their life experiences and skills. Consequently, they develop a sense of safety and responsibility, much to their own and their parents' delight. For example, pupils on the transport programme spoke of their increased confidence in catching a bus alone. One pupil said, 'I would never catch the bus previously, but now I go and have a mooch around the town and then catch the bus up to school.'

Comprehensive risk assessments form part of the pupils' care plan. If a pupil's needs change, new information becomes available or new behaviours emerge, the risk assessments are updated. High-quality monitoring and supervision of pupils contribute to the fact that they do not leave the site without permission. Physical intervention has also not been required. The behaviour support policy focuses on the reinforcement of positive behaviours. Pupils who have previously been isolated participate in group activities and develop much better social skills.

A strong embedded tolerance of each other's behaviours and idiosyncrasies helps pupils to support each other and to recognise when their peers are struggling. This mutual acknowledgment of each other's feelings helps to encourage an atmosphere of strong community support and care. This improves the pupils' emotional well-being.

There is a robust e-safety policy. Managers and staff are aware of research highlighting the vulnerabilities of pupils who have additional needs when using digital technology. Pupils' use of digital technology is carefully monitored to enhance the safety and welfare of the pupils.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious and have high expectations about what all pupils can achieve. They continuously seek to refine and improve the service that they offer, which means that the residential provision continues to build on its strengths. A professional commented, 'The headteacher and

head of care work so well together. The head of care is passionate and enthusiastic and has a very hands-on approach.'

The residential team can demonstrate the positive difference that it is making to the lives of pupils and can clearly evidence change and improvement in the pupils' lives. The members of the management team put the pupils first. For example, they recently offered temporary boarding for one pupil. This provided them with stability and essential support during a difficult time in their life.

The performance of residential staff is routinely supported through appraisals, regular supervision and training. Staff are suitably experienced and qualified to deliver high-quality care to pupils. Two staff are currently undertaking the level 5 diploma and another is doing some training in mindfulness. Every Friday, staff receive training that covers a range of topics, including Adverse Childhood Experiences, looking after children's mental health online and supporting pupils with autism. Practice is informed by research and continues to develop from a strong and confident base.

An independent person regularly visits the residential provision. The independent person meets with head of care, staff and pupils. She reports on the quality of care and safeguarding arrangements to ensure that the high standards of care practice are maintained.

A key strength of the school is the high level of consultation with pupils and their parents. This ensures that residency continues to provide the very best experience for the pupils. One parent's feedback includes, 'Confidence and self-worth have improved, social skills improved dramatically and family relationships have enhanced.'

No recommendations or points for improvement were made at the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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/teacher in charge: Mr David Duncan

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Michelle Bacon: Social care inspector

Elaine Clare: Social care inspector

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