

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 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.

The school provides education to pupils between the ages of seven and 19 years. A total of 14 pupils are currently staying in the residential provision. The residential provision operates from Monday to Thursday inclusive, during term time only.

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 February 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 22 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children thrive in the supportive environment. They benefit from individualised care and support; this helps them to develop and grow in self-confidence. Parents gave many examples of the difference that staying in residential has made to their children's lives. Comments include:

- 'Residential was an answer to our prayers. Staff know her [child] inside out and understand and support her additional needs. They have helped her to become more independent and she is showing increased confidence in this area. We have seen her mature and is starting to make decisions for herself.'
- '[Name of child] loves staying there. Staff know her really well and give her excellent levels of support. There are lots of opportunities, such as activities. It gives her freedom but with boundaries.'
- 'The care staff are amazing and how they support [Name of child] is amazing also. We've seen enormous improvements since she started going to residential. We've seen her grow in confidence and will now engage with people.'
- 'When my child leaves this setting they will do so with a stronger understanding of how to be independent.'

Children look forward to their stay in residential and enjoy spending time with their friends. Children take part in a wide range of activities and learn independence skills. This gives children the opportunity to have new experiences, learn new skills and increase their self-confidence.

Children's health needs are very well promoted. Staff have an exceptional understanding of children's specific health and emotional needs.

Staff are ambitious for children and support them to attend and do well in their education. There is effective liaison between the residential provision and teaching staff. This helps children to make excellent progress from their individual starting points.

Children who are new to the residential provision are welcomed with careful and considered planning. Equally, when children leave, staff promote positive endings.

Although dated, the environment is pleasant and homely. Communal areas are suitably furnished, and photographs of children and staff are displayed throughout. Bedrooms are used on a rota basis and are variable in personalisation.

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

Relationships between children and staff are extremely positive. Clear routines and boundaries help children to develop a sense of safety and trust. As a result, there have been no incidents of physical restraint, consequences, or missing-from-care episodes in residence.

Leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, have a clear understanding about safeguarding matters. Safeguarding concerns are effectively managed, with evidence of crucial information-sharing with external safeguarding agencies and professionals. Safeguarding training for staff is up to date and staff understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Bullying is not an issue of concern.

Risks are identified, understood and managed. Children are empowered to take age-appropriate risks as part of their development. For example, some children are learning to travel independently on public transport.

Staff understand the risks that the internet may pose for children. Responses to emerging concerns are robust, and information is shared verbally between staff to ensure that these risks are taken into consideration when providing care and support for individual children. A member of the residential staff has completed the CEOP Education Ambassador training and is using this training to help educate children about keeping safe online.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are effective. There have been no new staff in residential since the last inspection. The physical environment is safe and secure. Matters relating to safety and maintenance are promptly addressed by the maintenance team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care is leaving; however, succession plans are in place to ensure a smooth handover of his responsibilities. The leadership team has continued to ensure that the residential provision remains at the heart of what they do on behalf of children.

Partnership working is a great strength of the school. Feedback from parents was exceptionally positive about the care and support that their children receive during their stays. One parent said, 'The care that they give her [child] is always carefully considered with her best interests at heart.' Another commented, 'On the whole, they go above and beyond.'

There is a core group of staff who have worked together for some considerable time. Staff spoken to say that they are well supported by the leadership team and describe them as approachable. However, the plans to close the residential provision have caused uncertainty within the staff team.

Staff attend regular team meetings, supervisions and training opportunities. These support reflective practice and development. Staff are child centred and put the needs of the children first. One parent said, 'Cannot praise school or the staff highly enough. I don't worry about my son in the way I did previously. I know he is safe, looked after, everyone has his best interests at heart.' Another said, 'My son is given the support he requires from a group of staff that care.'

The school benefits from the scrutiny of the governing body. However, the residential provision does not benefit from regular visits from one of the governors.

There is an independent person who sits outside of the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance, who visits the residential provision. However, these visits do not take place at least monthly.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 2.2 The residential provision is a standing or regular item at the governing body meetings to ensure that children's experiences and the quality of provision are systematically kept under review. At least one governor should have responsibility for the oversight of residential provision, but responsibility for the quality of provision lies with the governing body as a whole. At least one governor should also be expected to visit the residential provision on a regular basis.
- 17.2 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children know who this person is, know how to contact them and feel comfortable talking to them. The person is easily accessible at all reasonable times, visits regularly (at least monthly), and knows the children. The person should have the necessary skills to interact and communicate effectively with the children and be able to recognise good/poor care and safeguarding concerns. Children who cannot communicate verbally are given the means to request individual support. Schools may need to make a range of arrangements for independent support, which might be provided by more than one person, to ensure that the needs of each child are met.

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 George Mills

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

Michelle Bacon, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

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