

Inspection of Rossendale School

Bamford Road, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 0RT

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 December 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Rossendale School arrive enthusiastic and prepared to learn. Staff greet them in a friendly way. They know pupils as individuals. Staff treat pupils with sensitivity and care. This is a compassionate place to learn. Staff understand pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Parents and carers value this.

Pupils are challenged to be their best. The school is ambitious for them. In many ways, the curriculum ensures that pupils fulfil these ambitions. Typically, pupils achieve well after a disruptive previous educational experience.

Pupils learn in classrooms which are calm and orderly. They learn how to behave well, supported by high-quality pastoral support which staff provide. From time to time, when pupils find it hard to control their behaviour, staff respond thoughtfully to help them to regulate their feelings. Overall, pupils show tolerance and respect for each other's needs and differences.

The school ensures that pupils learn beyond the academic curriculum. There is a vast range of experiences for them, which are intentionally planned. This prepares pupils very well for adulthood and life beyond the school. For example, pupils help in their local area as part of completing their Duke of Edinburgh Award, developing their life skills.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school. The school is resolute in providing pupils with every opportunity to succeed in life. Pupils benefit from an exceptional careers programme. Sixth-form students visit universities as part of their planning for potential next steps. Many pupils, including those students in the sixth-form, complete work experience in a variety of settings. There are many visits to support pupils' learning, such as Year 9 visiting caves as part of their geology topic. In the sixth form, students are taught how to budget effectively, travel independently and how to shop. Pupils are taught about different religions and festivals. Pupils learn to be empathetic to those less fortunate than themselves through charity events, which they organise.

The school has developed learning pathways to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The different pathways are equally broad and ambitious, including in the sixth form. Learning has been carefully sequenced within key stages to ensure that pupils encounter it in the correct order.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well in many areas. They demonstrate a secure understanding of their subjects. Teachers use strategies to help pupils learn in the most effective way. Typically, staff use the information effectively from the checks that they make on pupils' knowledge to ensure that pupils can build up a rich body of knowledge and that pupils' previous misunderstandings are rectified.

All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Any additional needs are identified well by the school. Targets from the pupils' EHC plans are woven into pupils' curriculum pathways effectively. In many ways, staff support pupils well through careful adaptations to help them access the curriculum.

The school ensures that it works with pupils to have a positive experience of reading. It uses high-quality texts to help promote a wide variety of literature. In many ways, the school is successful. Pupils engage well with different texts in lessons. They use the library in school as a calming environment to read. Where pupils find reading tricky still, the school has recently put provision in place to support these pupils. This helps these pupils improve their reading skills.

Typically, pupils attend well. The school works with parents to ensure that pupils come to school. From time to time, the school does not effectively analyse different pupils' attendance to identify any areas of concern. Therefore, its ability to take suitable action is not as effective as it could be. This is similar with behaviour. Although pupils behave well in school, the school does not use the information that it collects around any incidents effectively enough to target its response more precisely.

On the whole, parents are very positive about the school. They particularly appreciate the support that their children have received from the school to re-engage them in learning. The pastoral support which their children receive is valued. However, a small group of parents raised concerns around how well the school communicates with them. For example, this group feel that sometimes they do not have enough information about what their children are learning.

The proprietor knows the school well. It uses clear systems to do this. This helps it to challenge and support the school effectively. It rightly holds the school to account for the different aspects of its work. However, the systems that the school uses to keep a check on the different curriculum subjects are less well developed.

The proprietor ensures that the independent schools standards ('the standards') are consistently met. The proprietor ensures that key policies are in place and updated often. Thorough and regular checks help to keep the premises maintained to a very high standard. Regular checks on fire-fighting equipment, clearly signed evacuation routes and routine fire drills ensure that staff and pupils understand what to do in an emergency. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's systems for checking and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum lack rigour. As a result, it does not have a robust understanding of what works well and what needs to be improved. The school should ensure that it monitors carefully the effectiveness of the different subject curriculums, making amendments and refinements when required.
- At times, the school does not analyse in sufficient depth the information available about pupils' behaviour and attendance. This limits the effectiveness of its approach in this aspect of its work. The school should ensure that it analyses, evaluates and acts on its findings to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour further.
- Some parents do not feel that the school communicates as effectively as it could with them about their child's learning. This reduces these parents' ability to understand about their child's learning and how to support them. The school should ensure that it reviews how it communicates with parents to give them a greater understanding of the curriculum and their child's learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	119845
DfE registration number	888/6020
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10342008
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Service
Chair	Nancy O'Regan
Headteacher	George Mills
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,636 to £79,123
Telephone number	01706 822779
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/rossendale-school-ramsbottom
Email address	rossendale@aspriscs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 to 7 October 2021

Information about this school

- The school is a small independent special school situated over two sites. The main school address is Rossendale School, Bamford Road, Ramsbottom, Lancashire, BL0 0RT. Pupils in Year 8 to Year 11 attend this site. The school has a second site at Rossendale Campus, Crankshaw Street, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, BB4 7SH. Pupils in key stage 2, Year 7 and sixth-form students attend this site.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
- The school use four registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met members of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), science and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with a group of subject leaders to explore their curriculum documentation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of the school, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and honest culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority SEND team.
- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the standards and to provide other inspection evidence. These included: minutes from meetings between the headteacher, regional director and the proprietor;

information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance; and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

- As part of their checks on the school's compliance with the standards, inspectors made a tour of the school premises accompanied by the headteacher.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Cocker

Ofsted Inspector

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