

The Robert Ogden School

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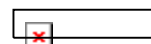
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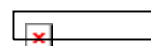
Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

School details

Introduction and summary

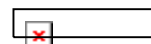


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



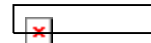
The Robert Ogden School is an independent special school and is part of the educational provision made by The National Autistic Society (NAS). It caters for pupils who are on the autistic spectrum, including many who have additional special educational needs. The school moved from the original premises to the present site, which was formerly a comprehensive secondary school, in September 1999. There are 125 pupils on roll, aged between 8 and 19, twelve of whom are girls. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and are placed by 25 different local education authorities (LEAs) or jointly with the respective social services departments, mainly from surrounding authorities in the northern part of England.

In addition to the day school, residential services are provided on three other sites. Eight pupils reside at Storm House for 50 weeks each year and 23 pupils reside at either Benson House or Hoylands House from Monday to Friday during term time. The residential provision was inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in September 2004.

The attainment levels of the pupils fall mainly within the range of severe learning difficulties and many pupils and students present complex and challenging behaviours. The school aims to teach the National Curriculum at an appropriate level to the needs of the pupils, whilst developing effective communication skills and increasing the pupils' levels of independence and self-confidence.

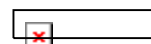
Parents and pupils indicated their satisfaction and support for the school and for the significant improvement which is made by the pupils through attendance at the school. Parents are very pleased with the provision made by the school.

Summary of main findings



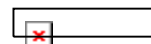
The Robert Ogden School is a very good school with a significant number of strengths. Within an environment where pupils feel safe, there is an ethos in which the progress and achievement of the pupils is purposefully promoted and celebrated. This is made possible by very good teaching and support for personal development, very good accommodation and generally good resources which are used effectively to support teaching and learning. The school is very well led and managed by the Principal, who is supported by a strong and effective senior management team. The curriculum is firmly based on the National Curriculum. It is taught in a manner which effectively meets the particular needs and levels of attainment of the pupils. It offers opportunities for externally accredited qualifications for older pupils. The provision for post-16 pupils prepares them for adult life and for further training and possible future employment. The very good quality of residential provision and care enhances the provision for those pupils who are boarders.

What the school does well



- It provides a very positive environment in which the pupils can learn well and develop socially;
- the quality of teaching and support is very good and enables pupils to make good progress;
- it provides a high quality, well-planned curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant to the identified needs of its pupils;
- it provides very effectively for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils and staff;
- it consistently and effectively manages instances of challenging behaviour so that these do not disrupt teaching and learning;
- there are effective arrangements for the induction and ongoing professional development of all staff;
- the Principal and other senior staff provide clear and very effective leadership and management of the school;
- the good quality premises and accommodation are used effectively to promote the pupils' learning and personal development; and
- it makes high quality provision of residential care for those pupils who are boarders.

Next steps

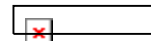


Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

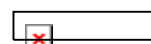
- to review and develop the aspects of the curriculum which afford a choice of activities at the end of the day, to ensure that these have a clear educational purpose;
- to fully implement the system for assessing and recording the pupils' learning and progress;
- the NAS to complete the planned programme of refurbishment to maintain and further improve the high quality of the premises and accommodation; and
- to further develop the facilities and resources for the post-16 provision in order to

provide wider opportunities and expectations for these students.

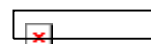
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The Robert Ogden School provides a curriculum for all pupils which is broad, balanced and relevant to the identified needs of its pupils. The quality of curriculum thinking and planning in the school is a clear strength of the institution. The curriculum includes appropriate access to the National Curriculum programmes of study at the relevant key stages. These are adapted accordingly in ways which are appropriate to pupils' individual levels of attainment. The school's curriculum is subject to continuous review and modification. Appropriate structures are in place to ensure that this process is effective in providing equal opportunities and access to entitlements. The curriculum reflects the needs of pupils with autism, taking account of their specific impairments in the areas of language and communication, social awareness and behaviour and flexibility of thought.

A strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of key skills and these are taught through a cross-curricular approach. The key skills are highly relevant to the development of knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects. These include communication, personal, social and health education, information and communication technology, problem solving and numeracy.

The organisational structure to pupil groupings is designed to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their learning needs, either long term or within immediate contingencies, are fully met subject to circumstantial constraints. For example, at Key Stages 3 and 4, a number of pupils demonstrate contextual learning needs which benefit from an organisation which allows them to continue to have access to the curriculum, but which also protects the entitlements of other pupils at the school. In order to meet these pupils' needs, the school has established at Key Stages 3 and 4 an 'Inclusion Resource'. The aim of this imaginative provision is to allow each pupil a personalised 'inclusion' timetable which enables them to negotiate their access to learning groups, or particular teachers with whom they feel comfortable. This approach allows pupils within mainstream learning environments to enjoy the benefits of personalised learning opportunities.

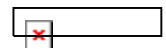
At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils receive specialist teaching in science, French, religious education (RE), physical education, design and technology, music, art, history and geography. Older pupils within this department also have access to award scheme development and accreditation network (ASDAN) Transition Challenge, Bronze Award and AQA Unit Award Entry. Foundation level general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) is taught in English and mathematics for pupils with appropriate levels of attainment.

Many pupils derive enormous benefit from transferring to the post-16 unit at the school when they finish Key Stage 4. The curriculum of the unit facilitates an extension of the development of a wide range of basic skills together with a focus on learning which fosters personal and social adult independence and also offers a modest range of vocational opportunities. This curriculum is

externally accredited and successful and supportive links have been established with local colleges. Work-experience placements are also part of the routine opportunities offered by the department. While this provision is a strength of the school, it does not always provide vocational training functions which challenge students or advance their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra curricular opportunities which offer in part an extension of personal interests and skills, and also time for learning in a more relaxed social setting. Towards the end of each school day, school age pupils have a choice of a range of 'club' activities. While these provide pupils with a range of enjoyable tasks towards the end of the school day, there is not always the evidence that this time is used as purposely as it might be in relation to a planned extension of the curriculum with learning objectives focused on extending pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This aspect of the curriculum needs review and development.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and combine this effectively with very good knowledge of the particular needs of pupils on the autistic spectrum and of the most appropriate teaching methods to use. Teachers are responsible for the coordination of individual subjects within and between each department. This works well to provide continuity and progression in pupils' learning and support to other teachers. Effective use is made of specialist subject teaching in the secondary and post-16 departments.

Lessons are consistently planned very well, with clear learning objectives. The planning is very effectively enhanced by the specialist assessments and programmes devised by the educational psychologist and speech and language therapists. The work and tasks set are matched appropriately to the individual needs and abilities of the pupils in the groups and to the individual targets which are set for each pupil. Very effective teamwork by teachers and their assistants enables the pupils to learn and make good progress.

The system of tutor groups for the initial and final lessons on most days works well. It produces a calm atmosphere for teaching and learning to take place from the start of the day and helps pupils to make the transition to subsequent lessons and activities. It also provides a calm and secure end to the day prior to pupils travelling home or to the residential facilities.

Lessons generally begin calmly and the pupils settle to work quickly. They are used to the classroom routines, know what is expected of them and respond well to these expectations. The very few instances where pupils do not settle quickly or become distracted during the lesson are managed calmly and effectively by teachers and their assistants.

The consistent use of symbols supports communication between adults and pupils and effectively enables all pupils to participate in the lessons. It also helps the pupils to develop their independence. This is further supported by regular opportunities for the pupils to make and express their preference between two or more possible choices.

Teaching and learning are supported by the very good quality accommodation, including that for specialist subjects. The use of individual work areas in some rooms helps the pupils to concentrate and not become distracted. In other teaching areas there is sufficient space for the pupils to work, with support from a teacher or teaching assistant, without being distracted by other pupils or adults.

Generally the resources available support the teaching and learning successfully. They are appropriate to the needs and levels of attainment of the pupils. Resources in the post-16 department are insufficiently developed to provide students with a realistic experience of equipment available in most offices and manufacturing workplaces. The completion of the installation of the

pottery kiln in the art room would enhance the opportunities for work in clay and in three dimensional work.

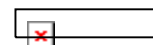
The assessment of pupils' learning and progress is undertaken and recorded very systematically, so that there is clear evidence of this over time, both in their work and in their behaviour. This is currently being further developed. The new system, when fully implemented, will enhance the quality of the assessment and recording further. The opportunities for older pupils to gain externally accredited qualifications recognise their progress and achievement.

Overall, the combination of a well planned and appropriate curriculum, designed to meet the particular needs and levels of attainment of the pupils, together with very good quality teaching and support provided by very effective teamwork by teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals, results in very good quality provision and good learning and progress by the pupils.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The work of the school provides a number of high quality planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. The shared experience of morning assemblies makes a valuable contribution with the carefully planned recognition of the unity of community and of the emotional and moving impact of collective song and music in worship. It also provides pupils with an awareness of the potential for communication with a divine being who can be thanked and petitioned for the blessings of life now and in the future. Religious and spiritual themes are effectively extended and explored within the good lessons in the RE programme. Spiritual awareness is also enhanced by the quality of aesthetic display within the school and the beautiful and tranquil gardens that have been created within discrete areas of the school grounds.

A strong moral code pervades the whole school with routines of interpersonal behaviour and high expectations in the context of all human interaction. The parameters of what is acceptable and unacceptable, right and wrong, are humanely exercised at every appropriate opportunity. This sensitive and uniform culture provides pupils with a safe and predictable environment in which they flourish and in which they are freed to experience happy and successful learning. Opportunities are routinely taken to encourage pupils to exercise choice and to be aware of their actions and their impact of others around them. For example, during a drama performance, pupils were helped to appreciate the distressing impact of bullying and the skills needed to make good trusting friendships. Pupils are also encouraged to feel a concern for those less fortunate than themselves. Many pupils were successfully involved in collecting money for the Tsunami Appeal and Comic Relief.

Social development is a further strength of the school. A significant and justified emphasis is placed on this aspect of pupils' learning. Positive social interaction is encouraged at all times and the composition and functioning of social groups is carefully considered by all staff. The school thus provides a rich and rewarding social experience for pupils of all ages. Its policies and practice in relation to issues such as bullying are very effective. The impressive level of adult supervision ensures that inappropriate behaviour is avoided. The school has created a happy and relaxed social atmosphere. A further commendable aspect of social development is the planned programme of pupils taking responsibility for the social wellbeing of others and the group. Most pupils are able and willing to perform tasks for the social good and two pupils contribute much to the work of the School Council by their wise and authoritative representation. In the post-16 department, the 'Storm in the Coffee Cup Café' gives pupils formal opportunities and training in the development of social skills.

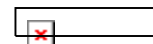
Visits to places outside the school also play a significant part in the development of social skills, knowledge and understanding.

Cultural development is enhanced by a good variety of planned activities. Pupils have regular opportunities to experience music and dance in a range of appropriate settings. The school's RE programme gives pupils a good knowledge and understanding of other world faiths. This was seen in one lesson where pupils became very excited when allowed to inspect and handle religious artefacts associated with Sikhism. Art activities enable pupils to explore the works of great artists. However, there are currently insufficient opportunities to explore aspects of cultural diversity.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school places a very high priority on the welfare, health and safety of its pupils and staff. Procedures and safety routines are firmly established and regularly reviewed. The school has a very sophisticated model of 'incident monitoring' which is used to record, track and analyse individual pupil behaviour. This is used effectively to inform teaching and support staff about pupils' predictable needs and their associated programmes of learning. In this process it is used to improve behaviour through close monitoring. The school's policy on child protection is fully compliant with the regulations and represents a model of good practice.

Close and purposeful links have been forged with the Sheffield local education authority in connection with health and safety when the pupils are on educational visits. In consequence, extensive relevant training has been provided for staff. First Aid policy and provision is very good. In addition to the qualified First Aiders in each department, many staff have undergone elementary training. Policies cover the safe handling of medication and the management of epilepsy and asthma. Effective links have been established with the Barnsley Health Authority.

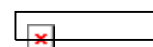
The school works very hard to facilitate and promote good behaviour. This is supported by a comprehensive anti-bullying policy and high levels of staffing which allow very effective supervision of pupils at all times.

The school has a responsible and constructive plan which fully meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The National Autistic Society is the proprietor of the school and provides good support to the Principal and staff. All teachers, teaching assistants, residential care staff and other staff in contact with the pupils have been subject to clearance at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records

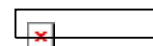
previous experience, references and medical history of staff appointed.

The Principal is newly appointed to the post, but has been at the school for a considerable time in other posts, knows the staff and pupils well and provides very effective leadership of the school. She is strongly supported by the Deputy Principal and by other members of the senior management team. Together they lead and manage the school very well. The school is very well organised. There are very good administrative arrangements to ensure the smooth running of the school. There are clear plans for the ongoing development and further improvement of the premises and the quality of provision. There is very good staff morale, which contributes to the effective teamwork which supports the pupils and promotes their learning and development of independence.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school moved into the present premises, which had previously housed a secondary comprehensive school, in September 1999. An extensive programme of refurbishment has ensured that the accommodation is of high quality and suited to the particular needs of the pupils. The school is very clean and well maintained, and a refurbishment programme for the interior and exterior of the premises is ongoing.

The entrance to the school premises and the very good arrangements to organise and supervise the arrival and departure of the pupils in the many vehicles required, ensures the safe arrival and departure of pupils in a calm, safe and secure manner.

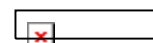
The premises provide very suitable accommodation and facilities, including specialist teaching areas and rooms for sensory development. It is effectively organised into separate departments for primary, secondary and post-16 pupils as appropriate to their increasing maturity.

Effective use is made of the outside facilities for both teaching and cross curricular clubs which form part of the programme. The residential accommodation is of very good quality. There are suitable arrangements for pupils who are ill, both here and in the school. The very good links between residential care staff and the school extend and consolidate the pupils' work in school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school complies fully with all the regulations governing the provision of information. Informative, comprehensive and thorough documentation is an exceptionally strong aspect of the school's administration.

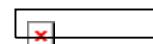
In addition to an excellent school brochure, parents receive regular newsletters and an end-of-year report on their child's progress in all curriculum areas.

The school maintains an electronic admissions register and class attendance registers are dutifully kept for each class group which comply with the regulations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

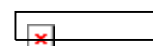


The school's complaints procedures fully comply with the regulations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	The Robert Ogden School		
DfES ref number:	372/6002		
Type of school:	Special		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	8 - 19 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 113,	Girls 12,	Total 125
Number of boarders:	Boys 29,	Girls 2,	Total 31
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 113,	Girls 12,	Total 125
Annual fees (day pupils):	£30,932 - £59,138		
Annual fees (boarders):	£55,644 - £79,149 (38 week residential)		
	£104,585 - £162,565 (50 week residential)		
Address of school:	Clayton Lane Thurnscoe Rotherham S63 0BG		
E-mail address:	robert.ogden@nas.org.uk		
Telephone number:	01709 874443		
Fax number:	01709 870701		
Headteacher:	Mrs Gillian Roberts		
Proprietor:	National Autistic Society		
Lead Inspector:	Mr David Gardiner HMI		
Dates of inspection:	9 - 12 May 2005		

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