

# Summarised inspection findings

Rossie Young People's Trust

23 May 2023

## Key contextual information

Rossie Young People's Trust is a multi-disciplinary charity offering care, education, health and psychological interventions to vulnerable and excluded young people aged 10 to 18. The current school roll is 15 young people in the secure education setting and 10 in the residential school. All young people who attend the school often have a range of complex additional support needs. Prior to their placement in Rossie, young people have had extended periods of absence from school, and most have not attained within minimum expected levels. On average each young person spends approximately four months at the school.

The headteacher resigned in November 2022 and there is a 25% vacancy rate amongst the teaching staff. At the time of the inspection, management responsibilities were shared amongst the wider senior leadership team of Rossie Young Person's Trust. The chief executive is acutely aware of the unique context of the school. She understands very well the need to recruit a headteacher with the necessary skills, experience, qualities and attributes to lead the school.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**weak**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- All staff establish positive caring relationships with young people across the school. Staff are aware of each young person's personality and background. However, staff's expectations of young people's attendance is not high enough. Young people's planned time in school is significantly lower than national expectations and planned learning is too narrow. As a result, young people's ability to learn and make progress in their learning is constrained. Overall, young people do not experience learning of a high enough quality.
- The key teacher time each morning is not sufficiently well planned to support progress in young people's learning. Teachers do not always arrive in class on time resulting in young people quickly becoming bored and disengaged from their learning. As a result young people's lessons do not motivate them or engage them in their learning sufficiently well. As planned, senior leaders need to continue to review the school day to ensure all young people receive their full entitlement to education. In doing so senior leaders should consider how to ensure staffing levels support young people to experience learning, which is motivational and engaging.
- Most young people attend Rossie for only a few months. During this time their future destination is balanced against achieving a breadth of learning. Therefore, the school focuses on the achievement of National Qualifications. While teachers planning makes reference to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes, planning for the Broad General Education (BGE) does not inform each young person's progress sufficiently well. This narrows their overall opportunity to experience a breadth of learning experiences, reducing their opportunities to develop their skills across a range of curriculum areas. As a result, young people in the BGE phase of learning are not receiving their entitlement to experience a BGE. Senior leaders need to

ensure all staff, including partners, work towards all young people experiencing all curriculum areas. Pathways need to link more explicitly to the experiences and outcomes and to National Benchmarks of CfE.

- The development of a common use of language supports young people to express their feelings more clearly. In addition, staff listen to and act upon young people's views when developing shared values for the school. Moving forward, staff should build on how young people are supported to express their opinions and contribute more to the life of the school.
- In a few lessons, staff use questioning and feedback well to enhance young people's learning. In a majority of classes, teachers check in with young people during learning to support them to engage with and understand their learning. This provides young people with oral feedback and an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. Teachers should build on this, ensuring questioning and feedback are used consistently well throughout the school. Teacher's explanations of what each young person is learning and why are not sufficiently clear. Teacher's explanations, questioning and feedback need to support young people better to understand what they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Young people are not able to describe consistently what they are learning or why they are learning it.
- In a few classes, young people have opportunities to express choice in their learning. Teachers should now utilise their knowledge of young people more effectively to increase opportunities for personalisation and choice. This includes adapting activities to support improvements in young people's engagement in their learning.
- Staff use outdoor spaces and community partners to increase young people's opportunities beyond the classroom. Teachers use the woodlands within the school campus to enrich young people's learning. Learning in the woodlands supports young people to apply their learning in real life contexts across a range of curricular areas. Teachers are developing their use of the school's campus to support outdoor learning further. Young people value these opportunities to improve their wellbeing and understanding of risk.
- In a few activities, digital technologies are used well to enhance young people's learning experiences. Teachers should now develop more consistent use of digital technologies to support young people's engagement in their learning. Digital technologies need to be used with greater focus on learning.
- Teachers use summative assessments too frequently to assess each young person's progress or to determine young people's skills and abilities. Teachers should extend the range of assessment approaches used. This will allow young people to demonstrate better their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts across the curriculum. Teachers should ensure that assessment is planned as part of learning and teaching. They should use resulting assessment evidence more effectively to plan work set at an appropriate level.
- Planning for the BGE and Senior phase does not sufficiently demonstrate that it builds upon prior learning in a progressive way. Teachers need to improve how they plan, track and monitor young people's learning to ensure all young people make appropriate progress through CfE levels. Teachers should take greater consideration of each young person's unique needs to improve approaches to individualised planning. This includes developing specific measurable outcomes or skills that each young person is developing to reduce any barriers to their learning. Teacher's knowledge of each young person does not inform individual target setting sufficiently well. Young people's individualised planning does not extend beyond attaining National Qualifications well enough.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- Based on young people's progress against National Qualifications, overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy in the BGE is satisfactory. Young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy is assessed largely through gaining National Qualifications. Evidence shows that young people attain a range of units ranging from National 2 to National 5. Young people in the BGE have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills before progressing on to the senior phase and working towards attaining National Qualifications.
- Overall, most young people communicate appropriately with known adults as their relationships develop. Most young people speak clearly and express their opinions and thoughts when talking to each other and staff. They contribute to important planning meetings, where they discuss their strengths and next steps. They listen to information shared by others and provide their thoughts when staff develop individual programmes. In learning environments, most young people can listen to introductions about their activities and respond with questions where they require further support or information. Young people would benefit from developing a broader range of language to express their ideas and opinions.
- Overall, a minority of young people are making appropriate progress with reading. Most young people need to develop their reading skills using texts appropriate to their ability. Most young people can read short texts to find information of interest to them. Almost all young people need to be supported better to develop their reading skills of comprehension and fluency.
- Overall, a minority of young people are making appropriate progress with writing. A majority of young people require support or encouragement to write independently. Staff need to have higher expectations for young people's writing. A majority of young people are developing their understanding of purpose and audience of a written text. Almost all young people need to be supported better to develop their vocabulary.
- Overall, a minority of young people are making appropriate progress with numeracy and mathematics. Young people are working predominantly towards National Qualification units at National 2 to National 5 in numeracy and mathematics. Almost all learning in numeracy and mathematics is based on textbooks or worksheets linked to qualifications. Young people are unable to apply their numeracy and mathematics skills progressively in real-life contexts well enough.
- Young people across all stages can perform a range of calculations linked to the National Qualification they are working towards. A few young people, working towards National 5 units, can perform calculations and use formulae such as Pythagoras Theorem or standard deviation. A few young people can calculate the area and perimeter of regular two-dimensional shapes. A few young people can collate data in a table. They can present this data in a range of ways

including using bar graphs and pie charts. Young people should be supported to develop their skills in analysing data to make informed decisions.

- In June 2021, young people attained a total of 123 National Qualification units. In June 2022 this increased to 196. These qualifications have been gained by all young people, including those in the BGE. Young people's attainment is restricted by their inability to make progress across a broad general education from S1 to S3. This restriction contributes to a narrowing of young people's opportunities to attain across a wider range of curricular areas as they move through the senior phase. Most young people in the senior phase achieve National Qualification units in numeracy and mathematics ranging from National 2 to National 5. The school now needs to ensure that a wider range of opportunities for accreditation are available across a broader range of subjects, including literacy and English. This includes increasing the number of young people achieving national course units or awards in literacy and English.
- Outdoor learning in the school campus supports a minority of young people to develop their confidence in outdoor settings. Young people's access to outdoor learning is intrinsically linked to the length of their placement, assessments of their needs and assessment and management of any identified risks. Young people are learning to understand risks and how to enjoy learning in the natural environment. Their achievements outdoors are accredited. Staff should continue to develop outdoor learning to ensure all young people can develop their skills in outdoor settings.
- The school's wider achievement opportunities support young people to achieve in a range of activities such as trampolining, baking and dance. These opportunities support young people to develop their fitness, cooking and movement skills. Staff monitor young people's attendance at these activities. They should now extend tracking and monitoring to include the skills each young person is developing.
- Partners provide a range of opportunities for young people to develop their skills in a range of activities beyond the classroom, which contribute to improvements in their wellbeing. Such as volunteering with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Sticks and Stones volunteering. The school should continue to work with partners to ensure young people achieve in as wide a range of opportunities as possible.
- Rossie Young Person's Trust is an inclusive school community where diversity and difference are celebrated. The curriculum supports career planning sufficiently well for young people planning to move on from school. Staff work with partners, who support young people, depending on their length of placement, to experience learning in a local college and mainstream school.

### Key Messages:

- Young people experienced therapeutic and stable care and young people enjoyed warm, trusting and nurturing relationships with staff.
- Children and young people's physical and mental health was given priority.
- There was a strong and inspiring culture of leadership, which influenced staff at all levels.
- There was a passionate commitment to the reduction of restraint, however, the use of seclusion needed to be reviewed.

### About the inspection:

This was a shared inspection with Education Scotland. The Care inspectorate made an unannounced visit to the service on Saturday 21 January 2023 and then carried out a full inspection between Monday 23 January and Friday 27 January 2023. Education Scotland carried out an inspection of the onsite school between Monday 23 and Wednesday 25 January 2023.

The inspection was carried out by four inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we also spoke with young people using the service, staff and family members. We observed practice and daily life and reviewed documents.

Thirteen young people, 20 staff and two external professionals also returned questionnaires about their care and support prior to the inspection. They also returned questionnaires to Education Scotland. Views from these questionnaires were incorporated into the overall findings of the inspection.

### Inspection findings:

**We made an overall evaluation of good** for the key question 'How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?' as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. The strengths had a significant positive impact on young people's experiences and outcomes. We assessed the quality indicator 'Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life' as good, and the quality indicator 'Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights', as very good.

Young people were generally kept safe. Where young people didn't feel safe, staff recognised this and effectively responded to this through their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures and the young people they cared for. Good collaboration across key agencies ensured risk was minimised and young people remained at the centre of decisions.

Young people experienced therapeutic and stable care and young people enjoyed warm, trusting and nurturing relationships with staff. The relationships we observed were based on compassion and respect. An understanding of the impact of trauma also enabled the young people to recover, relax and have fun with the adults who cared for them. Comments from young people included: 'I like it here - they are caring and understanding and take time to speak' and 'I Don't want to be here but whilst here its ok. Staff are fantastic'.

There was a passionate and effective commitment to the reduction of restraint across the whole of the staff group with a culture of least restrictive practices and de-escalation strategies. Young people therefore experienced less of the most restrictive practices to keep them safe. For some young people the use of seclusion needed to be reviewed to ensure they were not isolated from their peers for too long or too frequently (see area for improvement 1). Comments from young people included: 'They leave us in our room for ages'.

Young people told us they had trusting relationships that gave them confidence to express their views. They had highly positive relationships that were warm, respectful and fun. Hugs and physical comfort were naturally offered, informed by the team's capacity to be mindful of each individual's past experiences. There was a positive culture of telling the young people how much they were cared for. There were good examples of the young people being involved in structured evening activities which made their day more fulfilling and helped them develop new skills and interests.

From the point of admission young people were fully engaged in their own care and support. They were effectively supported to represent their views formally and informally and independent advocacy was available and accessible. We saw good examples where young people had been involved in developing and reviewing their support plans and had contributed to what would work for them, and what they needed from the people around them. Their views (gathered in a range of ways) were therefore central to planning and meeting their needs in ways that they had described to be helpful to them. Young people could also positively and creatively influence and effect decision-making in relation to the wider service and their response to 'The Promise'. Children and young people's physical and mental health was given priority. We observed specialist intervention staff working passionately alongside care staff to understand young people's experiences and help them recover. A young person said 'It helps me when people speak to me and help me release all my anger. They know how to help me'. Initial healthcare and risk assessments were completed quickly to ensure young people received the best possible support. There were good examples of young people's health improving as a result of the onsite dental and optician services, liaison with community services and immunisation programmes. Relationships and protocols developed with the NHS will improve the experience of young people who need medical care and advice.

Connections to family, brothers and sisters and friends were nurtured. Young people had regular visits, telephone calls and online time with family and friends. We were pleased to hear about plans to develop family work.

Young people benefitted from an interest and support for their individual ambitions and interests. An increased emphasis on young people's success after secure care was promoted by the throughcare team who had already supported some young people to develop a range of life skills which would be beneficial to them.

Not all young people were fully engaged in their education, spending significant periods of time in their houses. Structured alternatives to education provision within the houses needed to be improved. The ongoing recruitment of education staff should increase opportunities for young people to be supported in school during the school day and provide better structure. Young people enjoyed varied, healthy food that took account of their individual preferences. Outwith mealtimes young people told us about events where food was used to celebrate, have fun, build relationships and develop new skills.

There was a strong and inspiring culture of leadership, which influenced staff at all levels. Managers were highly visible, approachable and had good oversight of the day to day functioning of all of the houses. This gave staff and young people a confidence that managers understood the current needs of the young people and were responsive to these. They role model the values of



the organisation and inspire staff to do so. The ethos of care very firmly had young people at the forefront of all discussion and decisions.

Senior managers had aspirational and forward thinking views and were involved with various National initiatives influencing the future of secure care. They worked collaboratively with a range of external organisations to champion the needs and rights of young people.

There were very good opportunities for staff to access a wide range of training that was informed by the needs of young people. Learning and development opportunities were available for staff at various levels, encouraging professional development and staff retention. The welcome introduction of the senior practitioner post provided additional support and mentoring for the staff team. Staffing levels were good across the service with consideration of consistency for young people. Staff recruitment was in line with safer recruitment guidance.

Trauma informed practice was evident within all the houses and staff could confidently describe the overarching principles to this. As would be expected, there were different depths of understanding within the whole staff group but the rolling programme of training that is regularly evaluated ensures there is a solid foundation of knowledge that is well embedded throughout all training opportunities.

Staff stated they were very well supported through immediate debrief and open discussion with peers and senior staff. They were encouraged to reflect on incidents at a later debrief which focussed on what strategies were helpful (or otherwise) to the support of individual young people. There were clear mechanisms of support for staff, with access to regular supervision.

Young people benefitted from comprehensive plans and assessments which guided practice and analysis. Service development plans identified the intention to review the range of plans to ensure they were fully accessible to young people and incorporate their views.

There was continuous robust evaluation of young people's outcomes and comprehensive development plans detailing how the service would meet the expectations of 'The Promise' and the 'secure care pathways standards'. This ensured young people were at the forefront of service development.

**Area for improvement:**

The service should review the use of the seclusion of young people in line with their commitment toward the reduction of restrictive practices.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'If my independence, control and choice are restricted, this complies with the relevant legislation and any restrictions are justified, kept to a minimum and carried out sensitively' (HSCS 1.3).

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.