

# Breckenborough School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Marcia Mackey / David Martin
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28 February 2007

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Breckenbrough is a Residential Special School for boys aged nine to 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and are subject to a statement of special educational needs. Pupils are generally of above average intellectual potential but have difficulty in achieving this in a mainstream school setting. The school is situated in a rural location near Thirsk, North Yorkshire. Residential accommodation is located on the two upper floors of the main school building and all boys have their own room with shared bathroom facilities. The school is owned and managed by the Quaker Society of Friends and is a non-profitable charitable trust.

### **Summary**

This was an announced inspection which involved an assessment of the school's performance in all outcome areas. The visit included a review of recommendations made at the previous inspection regarding the need to reintroduce the school council and the need for placing officers to receive information about the complaints procedure. Breckenbrough School provides a safe and supportive environment in which pupils feel respected and listened to. Pupils benefit from very good relationships with staff and they make sound progress in both their social and educational development.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The school council has been reintroduced and pupils are now able to contribute their views about the school and any changes they would like to make. This has made them feel that the school listens to them and that their views are taken seriously. The school has ensured that placing officers receive a copy of the complaints procedure. This means that they know how to complain to the school if they are dissatisfied with the care given to pupils. The school has made improvements to pupils' accommodation, including the replacement of bedroom windows. Bedrooms are now warmer and safer for boarders.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Pupils' health needs are met well and they are actively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The school provides healthy meals. Menus are based upon pupil's preferences and this ensures that they eat well while they are at school. Pupils with special dietary requirements have their needs met but staff do not have a sufficiently good understanding of dietary disorders and their effects. Pupils understand the importance of regular exercise and they are encouraged and enabled to take part in activities which facilitate this. All children are registered with a GP, ophthalmologist and dentist and this ensures that their health needs are well met while they are at school. They attend appointments and are able to access specialist support if they need it. However, written health information is diffuse and there are no individual health plans in place to help staff ensure that they are all giving consistent care. Staff are trained in the storage and administration of medications and in the provision of first aid. This ensures that pupils are cared for safely in the event of illness or injury. Children and young people said, 'they look after you if you're ill or homesick' and 'you can go to bed if you're ill and they come and check you'.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The service protects pupils from harm and actively encourages them to make safe decisions for themselves. There is an effective policy in place for responding to child protection concerns which works well in practice. Parents, carers and professionals are positive about the school's approach to safeguarding issues and pupils feel safe in school. The school has done some very good work in providing external training about relationships between pupils within same-sex boarding. This means that staff respond openly and constructively to pupil's concerns regarding their sexuality. All staff are provided with child protection training. However, ancillary staff have not had an update in safeguarding procedures for some time and are not aware of current best practice. All staff are subject to panel interview and to checks by the Criminal Records Bureau prior to appointment. This helps to ensure that pupils are being cared for by appropriate adults. However, some staff files do not contain all the required documentation necessary to demonstrate safe recruitment practice. Pupils report low levels of bullying at the school. They are protected by the school's response to bullying incidents which are addressed and resolved quickly. Staff are highly effective in conflict management and are well trained in the use of de-escalation and diffusion techniques. Staff use a wide range of positive strategies to address negative behaviour, and physical management is used as a last resort. However, the recording of behaviour management incidents is inconsistent with the school's own policy and the National Minimum Standards. There is a strong expectation of progress in pupils' behaviour which they are keen to achieve. They confirm that the staff's approach and the calm atmosphere at the school helps them to improve their relationships with other people. Children and young people said, 'there is bullying every now and then but it's mostly verbal', 'the staff are awesome and everyone just seems to work well together to resolve issues' and 'no one holds grudges and it all seems to work out. There are more rewards for good behaviour than punishments for bad'.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Pupils are able to take part in enjoyable and rewarding activities and they receive a good level of individual support. Boarding makes a valuable contribution to pupils' education. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of activities at the school and they appreciate the efforts made by staff to provide these. Extra curricular activities include sports such as football and cricket as well as creative pursuits such as art and music. This ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to develop their interests and talents. Pupils receive good individual support based upon their assessed needs. They can approach any member of staff for guidance and feel that their needs are understood and appropriately responded to. Pupils can contact the independent listener if they wish to speak to someone outside the school. Breckenbrough pupils commonly have high academic potential which they have been unable to achieve within mainstream educational settings. They achieve good standards in their education while at the school, and appreciate the opportunities given to them. Their educational attainment is valued by staff who praise and reward their achievements. Pupils feel a strong sense of identification with the school and many maintain contact after they leave via the 'After Care' team. Pupils feel positive about the continuity and support this offers them. Pupils said, 'it's all positive motivation' and 'this place has changed my life. I would never have done anything without them'.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Pupils are able to make a positive contribution to the school and to decisions affecting their future. The school undertakes a thorough assessment of pupils' needs prior to their admission and this information is recorded in care planning documents. Consequently, staff understand what is required of them and pupils receive support which is tailored to their needs. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. The atmosphere at the school is good humoured and relaxed. Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to pupils' personal and academic success and this encourages pupils to progress. There is a strong expectation that pupils will contribute to decisions affecting them while at the school. All boarding policy and practice is underpinned by an assumption of their right to do so. Pupils can contribute their views by either formal or informal means. A member of each boarding year group is represented on the school council along with day-pupil representatives. The school makes changes to practice based upon this feedback. Pupils are also able to speak directly to the headmaster and to the head of care, and their comments are listened to and taken seriously. Pupils said, 'you can ask for things to be looked at and changed, for example food, we asked for more variety in the main courses and desserts and we got them' and 'we get to have a say in the kinds of privileges and I think they are really fair'.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Pupils receive good preparation for independence and they appreciate the opportunities given to them by the school. Pupils like their bedrooms and are able to personalise them with posters and pictures from home. They are also able to bring in electrical items, such as television and game-stations, and this makes them feel more at home. The school undertakes regular site surveys of the school and has replaced bedroom windows since the previous inspection. This has made the bedrooms warmer and has also improved safety for boarders. Pupils have all the pre requisites they need in terms of clothing and personal care, and they are given regular pocket money to spend as they wish. Pupils are helped to prepare for independence and are able to learn to cook and shop for themselves. They learn about personal responsibility and the need to forge and maintain positive relationships, and this supplements the more practical aspects of independence preparation. Pupils said, 'they help to get you ready for leaving school'.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Pupils and staff benefit from the stability offered by an efficiently run school. The Statement of Purpose clearly describes what pupils and carers can expect while at the school. Additional child-friendly documentation is provided in order to describe day to day routines and house rules. This is important for many of the pupils at Breckenbrough, who rely on consistent routines and clear boundaries. Staff are provided with a variety of opportunities for training and professional development and this ensures that pupils receive a consistent quality of care. Staff are able to access regular supervision and they use these opportunities to improve their care of pupils. All staff demonstrate a very good awareness of pupils' needs. They are provided with the necessary policies and procedures to assist them in providing high quality, individualised care. Monthly monitoring reports are provided by a member of the governing body. These reports are an important resource for quality assurance processes and are regarded as central to the development of boarding provision. Pupils benefit from the consistent improvements made in response to quality review processes.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that each child has a clear written health plan (NMS 14.6)
- ensure that medical advice is sought for those children who have an eating disorder (NMS 15.6)
- ensure that there is ongoing safeguarding training for all staff (NMS 5.8)
- ensure that records of physical management include all required information (NMS 10.14)
- ensure that all recruitment information is maintained in writing (NMS 27.2)

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for residential special school

#### Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

**Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

**Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)



- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

**Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

**Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

**Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**