

Brompton Hall School

Inspection report for residential special school

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| Inspector | Monica Hargreaves / Helen Walker |
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| Address | Brompton Hall School High Street Brompton-by-Sawdon SCARBOROUGH North Yorkshire YO13 9DB |
| Telephone number | 01723 859121 |
| Email | |
| Registered person | Mark Mihkelson |
| Head of care | Mark Mihkelson |
| Head / Principal | |
| Date of last inspection | 17 July 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

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| 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

Brompton Hall School is a residential special school for boys who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, which are recognised in their statements of special educational need. The school offers day, extended day and weekly boarding places to boys from the local authority and on occasions outside of the county. Boys start at the school between the ages of eight and 14 years.

There are three boarding houses within the main building which are age arranged. The younger boarders live in a separate house within the grounds of the school. All of the houses provide domestic style accommodation.

At the time of this inspection, 37 pupils were boarding.

Summary

This announced annual inspection was arranged to consider how the school is caring for pupils who board and the progress that has been made towards meeting recommendations from the last inspection. To achieve this, all the key standards and some additional standards, were considered. All six outcome areas were assessed.

The school provides a good standard of care and is outstanding in many areas. Pupils enjoy the experience of boarding and feel they are safe and well cared for. They have excellent relationships with staff. The structure of the school helps pupils to learn to manage their behaviour which in turn helps them to improve their outcomes in education. Pupils themselves have a good understanding of this. Leadership in the school is strong and there are sound systems in place to ensure that pupils are cared for safely. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to the medication procedures and one aspect of recording in staff recruitment files.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations that were made at the last inspection, in respect of the complaints procedure, safeguarding issues and records, have all been addressed. Complaints are properly dealt with. The procedure is clear and is followed in practice. Young people comment that they feel confident about raising issues with staff. The safeguarding procedure is robust and there is clear evidence that this is followed, so that pupils are protected from abuse. Information that is held about pupils is detailed and as required by the standards, as is the information that is kept on staff working at the school. Records are all monitored at the required intervals, to ensure that the welfare of pupils is properly monitored.

The school has also ensured that the role of senior staff is clear. Team leaders have detailed job descriptions and understand their duties and responsibilities. This is also clear to care staff. Rotas show who is in charge of units at particular times.

A recommendation made about the medication procedures has not yet been fully addressed and this is carried forward.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are sound systems in place to ensure that pupils health needs are well met. Young people comment that they are given good information about how to stay healthy, including the importance of exercise and issues of substance misuse. They also say that they are well looked after if they are ill. Individual care plans contain clear information about their health needs and staff have good links with health professionals which means that boys receive the individual support they need. Pupils are provided with a range of activities which encourage them to take physical exercise, which in turn promotes their good health.

The school has gained the 'Healthy Schools' award and staff have a good understanding of the importance of promoting healthy eating. Pupils are provided with nutritious food and are given a choice at each meal. They comment that staff encourage them to make healthy choices and also to learn how to prepare food. Staff are sensitive to cultural issues and encourage pupils to learn about food from other cultures and communities, preparing meals to celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year.

All staff are trained in first aid, so that pupils are properly cared for in a medical emergency. There are clear medication procedures and all medicines are stored safely in locked cabinets, to protect young people. Medication is administered as prescribed, but the current practice does not require two staff to sign for controlled medication, as advised by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. In addition, some records are not clear in relation to disposal of medication, which weakens the safeguards that are in place to protect young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Pupils are cared for safely when they board at the school. For example, there are sound systems to ensure that boys are protected from abuse and from bullying and that their privacy is properly respected. There is also a clear protocol which staff follow if a young person absconds from school, which helps to protect them.

Safeguarding matters are properly managed: training in safeguarding is regularly updated, staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and there is a clear procedure for responding to concerns, which staff follow. The Head of Care has developed good relationships with external agencies which also helps to protect boys at the school. Pupils report low levels of bullying and understand that it is not tolerated in the school. The bullying council provides boys with a good mechanism, which they trust, for reporting their concerns. Pupils feel that staff deal with issues promptly, effectively and fairly. Privacy and confidentiality are properly respected. The boarding accommodation provides pupils with an appropriate level of privacy, particularly with regard to the sleeping and bathing arrangements, whilst allowing staff to monitor the safety of all the pupils. Staff have a good understanding of issues of privacy and confidentiality and ensure that information about pupils is stored securely.

Pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff, which encourages openness. They feel able to take complaints to staff and have confidence that these are dealt with properly. Records show

that parents, carers and other people outside the school, also feel able to approach the school about issues of concern and that these are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Boys are supported to develop behaviour that is socially acceptable, which in turn helps them to achieve in education. They are encouraged to learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to understand the rights and responsibilities of all individuals in the school. There is a highly effective system of rewards and incentives, which the pupils understand very well and are enthusiastic about. Care and teaching staff work well together to develop a consistent approach to the pupils throughout the school. Achievements are celebrated by the whole school at weekly assemblies.

Health and safety matters are managed very effectively to ensure that pupils are cared for safely. For example, detailed risk assessments are developed for individual pupils, where specific concerns are identified, as well as on the environment and on any activities that the pupils may be involved in. The buildings and grounds are well maintained and equipment and installations are regularly checked and serviced. Pupils are involved in regular fire drills so that they have a good understanding of what to do in an emergency.

All staff and governors who are recruited to the school are thoroughly vetted. Records overall demonstrate the thoroughness of the procedures. However, any unexplained gap in the employment history of a prospective employee compromises the welfare of pupils.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the pupils' individual personal and educational needs and there are highly effective systems in place to make sure that these are met by the school. For example, the incentive scheme works across education and care, to encourage young people to manage their behaviour during the whole day, in and out of the class room setting. Each pupil has agreed personal and educational goals to which they are working. These are properly recorded and regularly reviewed with pupils themselves during key work sessions. Information about pupils is routinely exchanged in verbal and written handovers between care and education staff so that there is a consistency of approach to individual pupils. Records of achievement demonstrate very positive outcomes for pupils. Young people themselves are very positive about the incentive scheme and about the support they receive from all the staff. They believe that the school has helped them to settle, so that they can continue their education and be able to make plans for their future in work and training.

Pupils benefit greatly from taking part in a wide range of activities after the school day, for example, football, swimming, model making, music, computers and film club. These activities help to raise their self esteem and to learn to structure leisure time, as well as promoting physical exercise. Boys are enthusiastic about the activities that are available to them.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the individual needs of the pupils in their care and provide support and advice as necessary. Regular meetings between individual pupils and their key workers, enable boys to talk about their experience at school and to identify targets they can work towards achieving. Staff maintain good links with a range of agencies outside the school, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to make sure that pupils receive the additional help they need. Young people say that they feel confident about discussing issues with staff and believe they are listened to.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The process of consulting with pupils about their individual care in boarding and about how the school is run, is fully integrated into the life of the school. Individual key work sessions, unit forums and school council meetings enable pupils to raise issues in a number of ways. Pupils comment that they can always talk to staff and feel fully involved in decisions that are made about their care. They also comment that they believe their views make a difference and can identify things that have changed in the school through consultation in the school council.

All admissions to the school are properly planned. Pupils and parents or carers are fully involved in the process so that boys are helped to settle into boarding.

Young people's individual needs are clearly identified, in plans that are regularly monitored. Care staff provide information for reviews and attend meetings. The individual key working system is very effective and enables the care of pupils in boarding to be monitored closely. Pupils appreciate the support they receive at school and understand that the structure of the education and boarding at school has helped them to settle and to learn, making such comments as 'its helped me to do things differently' and 'its changed my life'.

Pupils are weekly boarders and return home to their parents or carers every week end. However, they are also supported to keep in touch with people who are important to them during the school week. There is a telephone which they are able to use in private and boys say that their parents are able to ring them 'whenever they want'. Staff have an excellent understanding of the contact arrangements for each pupil and work closely with carers and local authorities to ensure that relationships are maintained.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The boarding accommodation provided for pupils meets their needs well. There are four boarding houses which provide pupils with an appropriate amount of individual and communal space. Each pupil has a private bed space, which they are encouraged to personalise. Younger pupils in one house share bedrooms. There are sufficient bathroom and shower facilities, which pupils say allow them privacy. All boarding houses are warm, well maintained, brightly decorated and create a homely, domestic environment. Pupils comment that they really like their rooms and they demonstrate a sense of loyalty and belonging to their individual houses.

The school itself is appropriately located, in a village a few miles from a large coastal town. There are good transport links to nearby leisure and other facilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective systems ensure that boarding is well managed, that pupils are cared for safely and that they receive the individual support they need to meet their personal and educational needs.

The school prospectus gives parents, social workers and pupils themselves, good information about the school, so that they understand the ethos of the school and how pupils are cared for in boarding.

There is a strong line-management structure and excellent leadership from the governing body, the Head teacher and the senior management team. Levels of staffing are good, which ensures that pupils are properly cared for and able to take part in a good range of activities beyond the school day. Staff receive supervision at regular intervals and have good training opportunities to help them to develop skills and knowledge they require to understand and to meet the needs of the boys who board. They can access help and guidance on an informal basis and comment that they work well together as a team, which helps them to feel supported and ensures consistency in care for pupils. Records that are kept are detailed and are checked regularly. Independent visitors to the school ensure that the care of pupils is monitored and that governors receive regular reports on the provision. Members of the governing body are very involved in the school and so are able to monitor the welfare of the boys.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the school is good. Staff have a good awareness of issues of diversity and inclusion and work hard to help pupils value their own and each other's culture and identity. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of different countries and communities and are involved in activities in the local community, for example raising money for local charities and helping in community projects, which support this.

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):

- review the policy and practice in relation to the administration, storage and disposal of prescribed medication in particular in relation to controlled drugs (NMS 14.17)
- ensure that a satisfactory explanation is sought for any gaps in employment history and that a record of this is retained (NMS 27.2).