

Brompton Hall School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

Unique reference number	SC007923
Inspection date	28/03/2011
Inspector	Steve Pearson / Deborah White
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Brompton Hall School, High Street, Brompton-by-Sawdon, SCARBOROUGH, North Yorkshire, YO13 9DB
Telephone number	01723 859121
Email	headteacher@bromptonhall.n-yorks.sch.uk
Registered person	Mark Mihkelson
Head/ Principal	Mark Mihkelson
Nominated person	Andrew Terry
Date of last inspection	01/12/2009

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

This 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 children from the local authority and on occasions outside of the county. The age range of children at the school is between eight and 16 years. The school can provide overnight accommodation for up-to-42 children and can provide education for up-to-58 children during the day.

There are three boarding houses within the main building and these are age-specific. The youngest boarders live in a fourth and separate house within the grounds of the school. Boarding is only provided in term time and four nights a week, Monday to Thursday.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced, full inspection and so all the key national minimum standards (NMS) were assessed. The inspection also assessed whether the school had met the two recommendations made at the previous inspection on 1 December 2009.

At the time of the inspection, 38 children were boarding at the school. The inspectors spoke to children and staff about the care provided. The overall quality of care at the school is sound. There are 14 recommendations to address following this inspection.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure children's health is promoted. However medication policies and procedures are not fully robust and the staff have yet to benefit from training in the safe administration of medication.

There are also weaknesses in the safety of care. There is reduced accountability for the use of sanctions and children's direct views about the use of restraints are not being obtained. Recruitment procedures are also not sufficient to meet the national minimum standards.

The residential provision is excellent at contributing to children's education through the availability of computers, books, games and a very wide range of activities which several children described as 'awesome'. Strong procedures are in place to ensure the views of children are fully represented. They have a significant say in how the school is run.

The school premises are well-maintained and fit for purpose. However use of the closed circuit television system to monitor children during the night is not being publicised sufficiently. And its specific approval from parents or inclusion in placement plans is not yet established.

Organisational arrangements are relatively weak. The staff are not receiving structured supervision often enough. External monitoring is also poor because it is not happening often enough and it is not assessing important issues such as complaints and the use of sanctions and restraints.

Feedback from parents and children about the quality of the residential provision was predominantly positive. Although a significant proportion of older children say they do not enjoy boarding, they all say it is of good quality.

Improvements since the last inspection

The two recommendations from the previous inspection on 1 December 2009 relate to the policy and practice about medication and training for the staff team.

Since the previous inspection the school has introduced a procedure to advise on the safe handling of medication, but there are a number of shortfalls within the guidance. Consequently a recommendation made at the previous two inspections has been repeated.

The school has provided training to the staff about the recording of restraints. However, training has not been provided about race, culture and ethnicity or about safe handling of medication. Consequently a recommendation made at the previous inspection has been repeated.

The service has therefore not met the two recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are provided with healthy nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. There is a healthy eating policy in place and the school runs a cookery club to teach children basic culinary skills and how to live a healthy lifestyle. The educational curriculum includes lessons on food and nutrition and the children are currently clearing an area of the gardens to prepare a vegetable patch. Children are satisfied with the meals provided and feel they are involved in menu planning.

The main dining room is very pleasant and suitably furnished. Meals times are very well organised and social occasions. Children are respectful of each other when attending for meals and their table manners are exemplary.

The kitchen areas are clean and tidy and meals are presented in an appetising way.

The school has received a number of awards for catering and a five star award for healthy eating. Children have access to snacks and drinks and enjoy experiencing food from around the world by having themed cookery nights. Children's comments include 'The food is good here and we can say what we like' and 'We can cook if we want, and we can get drinks and later on sweets from the shop'.

Children's health needs are adequately met. Any health problems are discussed with parents before a child is accommodated and there is a section in the residential care plan format to record where a child needs additional healthcare support. Every child receives at least one annual medical review and most parents feel the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle.

There are systems in place to support children to access primary healthcare services, such as a General Practitioner, and staff know how to refer children to external healthcare agencies. All staff hold a current first aid certificate and there are first aid boxes located in each residential unit.

The systems in place to safely manage the handling, and administration, of medication do not fully safeguard children. The school has recently introduced a procedure to advise on the safe handling of medication, but there are a number of shortfalls within the guidance. For example, the school has not secured qualified medical advice in a written protocol for the administration of non-prescription medication. A recommendation to improve the safe handling of medication, which has been made at the previous two inspections, has therefore been repeated.

Other areas of concern about how medication is managed includes how medication is transported, received into the school and stored. Staff have not received any training in the safe handling of medication to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to safely administer medication to children. Consequently a recommendation made at the previous inspection has been repeated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Satisfactory arrangements are in place to promote children's privacy. They can make and receive telephone calls in private and they have lockable cupboards in which to store belongings securely.

Although most young people are not aware of the formal complaints system, they find that their concerns are dealt with effectively at an informal level. The school has received two formal complaints since the previous inspection.

The school provides the staff with regular training in child protection and they clearly understand how to respond to any allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse. The school has designated two senior members of staff for child protection and they pass on any concerns to the relevant people outside of the school.

Young people and staff said that there is very little bullying. For example, several young people said 'we all get on well and there really isn't any bullying'. Effective arrangements are in place such as good levels of supervision by staff and a bullying committee composed of children and staff who consider any serious incidents.

Since the previous inspection, there have been three occasions when the school has asked the police to attend due to serious incidents. However, the school did not inform Ofsted about these occasions. This meant the regulator was unable to be assured about the frequency or detail of significant incidents.

Children occasionally go missing from the school but this is usually only for a short time. The school respond appropriately on such occasions and they always search for the children immediately and contact the parents and the police.

The staff encourage positive behaviour by using a clear and well-established rewards programme. Children respond well to the scheme. Occasionally the staff issue sanctions to the children if their behaviour has been unacceptable. Although each sanction is recorded in each child's file, there is no central record of sanctions detailing the information recommended by the national minimum standards. This makes overall accountability and monitoring of the use of sanctions more difficult.

The staff also have to restrain children sometimes. This is only done for valid reasons such as disruptive behaviour in the classroom, being a danger to themselves or others or causing serious damage to property. However the recording of such occasions is not robust. For example, jargon is used to record how a restraint was conducted but there is no supplementary explanation about what such terminology means. This means it is difficult for external people to evaluate how a restraint was actually carried out. Additionally, children are rarely being offered the opportunity to have their views recorded about the use of restraints or to be able to sign the records afterwards. Again, this weakens the accountability for the use of such measures.

The premises are maintained in a safe condition. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, boilers, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. There are regular fire drills and children receive written guidance about the fire alarm procedure in their pupil handbook. However, written risk assessments of the hazards that may affect each child are not recorded in their case file. Without such an assessment for each child, there is not sufficient assurance that the risks to their welfare have been considered and evaluated.

The school does not have a high turnover of staff. However the recruitment checks in place are not fully robust. There is not always a written explanation for gaps in employment histories of staff who are employed at the school. And the school does not always verify the reason why people seeking employment may have left all previous jobs which involved working with children or vulnerable adults. The school records all visits to the school and they check the identity of those visitors who they do not recognise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is very good communication between the residential and school staff to provide consistent care for children. Regular placement reviews take place and children are encouraged to contribute to their meetings to give them a voice in how they are looked after. Daily meetings provide for staff to carry on with the school's incentive schemes for children so that good behaviour in school is recognised and rewarded.

Children have access to a range of out of school educational opportunities, such as after-school clubs and educational activities. Children are encouraged to learn through play, and achieve by taking part in planned fund raising events. The school has introduced a life skills programme for all children so that they can learn skills which will be useful when they are older and living independently.

The school has very low numbers of pupils who are not in education, employment or training and all children have plans in place for when they leave school. Work experience and college courses have led to full-time employment for many children for example, 50% in one year. Children can now achieve over 20 qualifications from the school in addition to vocational college courses in local colleges of further education.

Children have access to an excellent range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Individual hobbies are encouraged, and supported, and group activities teach children about team work and how to be considerate of others.

Staff actively involve all children in the resident social group. Relationships, between children and staff are positive and based on mutual respect. All activities are very well organised and children are encouraged to choose how they spend their leisure time. Physical activities play a big part in the school's activity programme to keep children fit and healthy.

Activities are arranged both in the school environment and in the community to promote children's inclusion. There are regular holidays arranged to introduce children to different cultures and to give them opportunities to experience different lifestyles. For example, children can spend time on holiday in Spain and learn a different language or spend time working and living on a river barge to broaden their life experiences.

There are lots of pictures and photographs displayed throughout the school of where children have participated in activities. Children are proud of their achievements and enjoy showing visitors what they have achieved, especially in big fund raising events.

Children are very positive about the provision of activities and see this as one of the best things about staying at the school. Activities are described by children as being

'awesome; 'the best thing about school' and 'brilliant'.

Children feel they are treated as individuals and can make choices. Each child has a key worker and regular, recorded, key worker sessions take place. There is good information displayed about how to access an advocate and posters displayed to advise how to contact external agencies, such as helplines and an advocacy service.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel they are consulted and there is regular, recorded, contact with parents and significant others. Parents feel their child can contact them easily. Each residential unit has a child representative who contributes at the school council to share issues raised by all children during each term. Residential staff contribute to each child's placement review and children have access to their residential reports to give them the opportunity to comment about the care they receive. Regular house meetings provide a forum for children to talk about how their school day has been. Each child has a key worker and specific key worker sessions are arranged every half term to enable each child to discuss issues and comment on their residential care plans.

Each child has a basic residential care plan that outlines their needs. Staff know the content of each care plan and are knowledgeable about each child's history. There is some information not included in the plans to fully protect children's rights, for example, there is no recorded information about how children's liberty may be restricted.

Staff are very good at helping children to develop appropriate social skills. Throughout this inspection the children were courteous, polite and very well behaved. Children are taught how to be tolerant of each other and this is positively reflected in each unit's group dynamics.

Children are encouraged to have fun but never at the expense of their peer's needs or capabilities. Humour is appropriately encouraged to tackle difficult situations, and children are continually praised to promote their feelings of esteem and self worth.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Effective precautions, acceptable to children and staff, are taken to ensure the security of the school from access by unauthorised persons.

The school maintains appropriate links with the local community. For example, children said 'we have helped to raise money for two charities and we did a sponsored bike ride to Edinburgh. We also make things for older people in the church hall'.

Closed circuit television cameras are used in the residential units to deter children from behaving inappropriately during the night. The systems do not invade into each child's bed space and staff said the system is effective. However, the use of the system is not described in the school's Statement of Purpose and it is not described in children's placement plans or specifically approved by each child's parent. There is therefore insufficient accountability for the use of this monitoring system.

Young people can make telephone calls from their mobile telephone or from the telephone in each residential unit. There is also a payphone in the school and information is displayed nearby describing how to contact helplines or an advocacy service. However the payphone is not in working order and will only permit emergency calls. Children said 'the payphone often doesn't work'.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school has a written Statement of Purpose which describes the function of the school and how it operates. Children also receive written information about the school in a pupil handbook. This has useful information about daily routines, what to do about any bullying, how to make a complaint and the behaviour points system.

The level of staffing is good. For example, there are usually three member of staff on duty on each residential unit. Several children and staff said that the staffing levels are appropriate to meet children's needs. However, there is no overall recorded staffing policy detailing important information about minimal staffing levels, arrangements for managing the staff by day and night and arrangements for calling senior staff support if necessary.

The school provides training for staff on regular days throughout the year. However, the staff have not received training in race, ethnicity or culture, or in the safe administration of medication. Consequently a recommendation made at the previous inspection has been repeated. Most of the residential care staff are qualified to level three in the National Vocational Qualification in care. The head of care is very experienced and also is qualified to level four in care management.

The support arrangements for staff are not fully robust because they are not provided with formal supervision by their line manager at the recommended frequency. However annual appraisals are taking place and each member of staff has a personal development plan. Teams of staff also meet regularly to discuss issues and plans for the future.

The headteacher and senior staff monitor and sign relevant records every half term or term to identify patterns or issues requiring attention. The head completes a report every term about the operation of the school and these are submitted to the governing body. However the head does not currently complete an overall annual assessment report for the governing body covering the issues described in the national minimum standard. This means self assessment is not fully robust because a coordinated evaluation of important information is not being undertaken to improve the quality of care.

External monitoring is weak. An external person does not visit the school every half term to assess and report on the quality of care. Additionally, when such visits do take place, the visitor does not assess important issues such as school attendance, complaints, sanctions and restraints.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark for ensuring equal opportunities for all children, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background. The school has introduced activities such as themed meals and displays that explore equality and diversity. The school strives to continually review their non gender specific role modelling and to increase pupil experience with regard to other cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Children have numerous and varied opportunities to contribute their opinions about how the school should be run and to have a say in the content of their own care plans. The key worker system and a high level of consistency of staffing in each residential unit helps to ensure the individual needs of children are met.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure there is a robust policy and written guidance, implemented in practice, for administering and storing medication (NMS 14.17)
- secure and follow qualified medical, pharmaceutical or nursing advice in a written protocol on the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines to children (NMS 14.18)
- notify Ofsted of any serious incident within the school which has necessitated the police being called to the school, whether or not injury has been caused to a child (NMS 7.6)
- ensure a record of all sanctions applied is kept in a bound and numbered book which contains a list of permitted sanctions and includes all the recommended information (NMS 10.9).
- ensure that where physical interventions are used children are encouraged to write or otherwise have their views recorded and sign their names against them, if possible, in the records kept by the school (NMS 10.14)

-
- ensure risk assessments are carried out with regard to children's known and likely activities (both permitted and illicit) (NMS 26.3)
 - ensure that the system for recruiting staff who will work with children in the school includes all of the relevant checks, in particular a written explanation for any gaps in employment history and contact with each previous employer involving work with children or vulnerable adults (NMS 27.2)
 - ensure that auditory, electronic or visual monitoring systems are not used inside the school unless the relevant conditions apply and its use is recorded in the Statement of Purpose (NMS 23.7)
 - ensure the young people's payphone is maintained in working order (NMS 24.9)
 - ensure that the school's staffing policy states the necessary information (NMS 28.2)
 - ensure that subject to the needs of individual staff, there are programmes of training available in relation to race, ethnicity and culture, and safe handling of medication (NMS 29.4)
 - ensure all staff and others working in the school (including the teachers, care staff, temporary staff and ancillary staff) receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term (NMS 30.2)
 - ensure that the headteacher conducts an annual review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, covering the issues recommended by the national minimum standard (NMS 32.4)
 - ensure that someone who does not work at, or directly manage, the school visits there once every half term and completes a written report on the conduct of the school. The visitor should also evaluate those issues recommended in the standard. (NMS 33)