

Breckenbrough School Limited

Breckenbrough School Ltd, Sandhutton, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4EN

Inspection dates	19/03/2013 to 21/03/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is good. This is because residential pupils receive a consistently high standard of care which fully meets and often exceeds the national minimum standards. Areas for improvement raised at the last inspection have been positively addressed.
- Residential pupils enjoy their boarding experiences at Breckenbrough school. The 24-hour curriculum provides residential pupils with high levels of emotional and practical support during their stay. There is a child-focused approach to all aspects of the service. This ensures residential pupils receive a programme of care that is individually tailored to meet their specific and unique needs. This helps equip residential pupils with the skills and support they require to face up to, and overcome the challenges they may face in life. Consequently, the outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding as they make excellent educational, personal and social progress throughout their time at the school.
- The safety of residential pupils is good. Residential pupils confirm they feel safe and well cared for. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place and understood by staff. Good links with safeguarding professionals ensure the school responds appropriately to any issues of concern. The school has effective anti-bullying measures in place to ensure all incidents of intimidation or oppression are sensitively and quickly managed.
- Staff consistently promote positive behaviour. Challenging behaviour is calmly managed through good use of relationships and de-escalation skills. Staff are good at managing the complex group dynamics brought about by the diverse needs and different ages of the residential population. The pupils' positive behaviour and interaction with the inspector was a testimony to all their hard work.
- Residential pupils have access to, and participate in a wide range of enjoyable activities and play opportunities of their choice. Many of these experiences significantly enhance the opportunity for them to develop their own individual talents and skills as well as enhancing their social learning.

- The accommodation and facilities are to a good standard and provide a safe and suitable environment to meet the needs of residential pupils. Residential pupils say they are happy with the residential accommodation. They are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individual tastes and references.
- Some areas for improvement have been identified. These are in relation to improving the quality and consistency of restraint records and communication with parents.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The school received a morning's notice of the inspection. Meetings took place with key staff including the headteacher, acting head of care, residential care staff and the catering manager. Parents, the Local Authority Designated Officer and members of the residential team contributed to the inspection. All boarding accommodation was visited in the company of students who were also interviewed. Records and policy documents were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Paul Scott

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), a non-profit making charitable trust owns and manages Breckenbrough School. It is a residential special school for boys from nine years old up to 19 years old, who all have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of boys are diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, some have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and mild learning disabilities.

The school caters for up to 49 pupils, with provision for 37 boarders. The curriculum is based on the national curriculum, with a wide range of opportunities, including a strong focus on outdoor education and pursuits. Pupils can take up to 14 GCSEs and they are expected to progress well and achieve good grades.

Boarding accommodation is in the main school building, based on the two upper floors with a separate annex for upper sixth boarders. All pupils have their own bedrooms and share lounges and bathroom facilities. The school provides all meals from the central kitchen, though there is provision for semi-independent living in the sixth form. There are a range of facilities, including a motor-cross track and a fruit and vegetable garden. There is ample parking space for visitors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- improve the quality of restraint records, in particular ensure they consistently and routinely include details of the method of restraint used, the comments of pupils involved in the restraint and an evaluation of the effectiveness of restraints to identify any emerging trends and patterns.
- improve communication between keyworkers and parents, specifically ensure there is a minimum expectation as to what information should be shared and how frequently.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. The experience of boarding and the excellent quality of care makes an exceedingly positive impact on residential pupils. They are well supported to develop an understanding of their lives, achieve stability and plan positively for their future. Consequently, residential pupils are making excellent social, personal and academic progress.

Relationships between residential pupils and staff are a major strength. Strong, meaningful relationships are developed and individual differences are accepted and valued by all living and working in the school. Staff work hard to get to know residential pupils at the start of their placement. This raises staff awareness and develops strong and trusting relationships from the point of inception. Residential pupils are obviously at ease with staff and could be observed engaging in positive interactions and playful banter throughout the inspection. They show a strong sense of affiliation towards their residential environment and those who are able to rationalise their progress, attribute this to the support they receive from residential staff. For example, a number of residential pupils spoke about improved behaviour, better relationships with their family, and increased independence as a result of staff support.

The views of residential pupils are actively sought, valued and acted upon. Residential pupils are encouraged and empowered to put forward suggestions and make a positive contribution towards their school life. Staff are good at encouraging them to express their views and contribute to the running of the residential provision and the wider school as a whole. As a result, residential pupils show a great deal of investment in their school community and say they feel valued and respected as individuals.

Residential pupils are encouraged and involved in keeping themselves fit and healthy. They confirm that they are well cared for when they are injured or ill. Staff provide residential pupils with age appropriate guidance about the importance of eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. This means residential pupils develop an understanding of their own health needs. As a result, an increased number of residential pupils are choosing healthy food options and participating in regular physical activities. For example, trips to the swimming baths are extremely popular and a number of young people have joined the local rugby club.

Residential pupils have access to an extensive range of varied and meaningful opportunities and experiences beyond those available in school and the wider community. Staff are motivated and eager to seek out new experiences for residential pupils. For example, a small group of residential pupils went to the Paralympics, combining this with the opportunity with the experience of visiting the sites of London. Also, a number of year 10, year 11 and sixth form residential pupils were on the annual skiing trip during this inspection. These opportunities positively enhance personal growth and development.

Preparing residential pupils for independence and adult life is a major strength of the school. Residential pupils independent living skills are comprehensively assessed. Well thought out independence and life-skills activities and programmes, that take into consideration age, ability and understanding are delivered. For example, younger residential pupils are taught basic skills such as how to plan and cook basic meals, do their own washing and travel safely between school and home. These skills are frequently assessed and developed ensuring a natural progression towards independence is promoted throughout the time residential pupils spend at the school. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the high levels of responsibility and independence some residential pupils are showing. For example, one residential pupil spoke proudly about his budgeting skills and how he had bought steak that he was cooking for his tea.

The school has an independence unit that is used to enhance learning and development in preparation for the time residential pupils leave.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is good. The 24-hour curriculum provides strong links between academic and residential staff. Staff from the residential provision provide additional behavioural support for pupils throughout the school day, strengthening links further. This provides residential pupils with continuity of care, stability, support and varied learning opportunities which take account of their personal needs and interests.

The admission and induction of residential pupils is extremely well planned. Pupils and their parents have the opportunity to visit the school to view the residential facility, meet with staff and other residential pupils. This enables them to make an informed decision about their child using the residential facilities.

Residential pupils are cared for by staff who give their individual needs the highest priority. Care plans are detailed and clearly focused on individual needs. Care planning and staff's day-to-day practice recognises residential pupils as individuals. Keyworkers take primary responsibility for ensuring residential plans are consistently put into practice and effectively monitored. Regular keyworking sessions focus on progress, constantly reinforcing positive actions and celebrating achievement, no matter how minor it may be. This encourages residential pupils to enthusiastically work towards their individual goals and targets.

Care staff promote residential pupils good health and support them to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff work in partnership with parents who retain primary responsibility for their child's health. This ensures continuity of care because staff are fully aware of residential pupils health needs including dietary requirements, illnesses and medication. While at the school residential pupils are supported to access routine and specialist healthcare services. This is further enhanced by the role of the school's psychologist who plays a key part in promoting the psychological and emotional health of residential pupils. Extremely robust procedures for the management and administration of medication are in place. Staff are trained to safely administer medication and deal with accidents that require first aid treatment. This ensures residential pupils welfare and safety are protected at all times.

Meals provided by the school are nutritious and of good quality with plenty of choice. Choice is actively promoted and specific diets catered for. This ensures the range of food caters to residential pupils individual needs and preferences, some of which stem from their Asperger's condition or allergies. Mealtimes are social occasions where residential pupils are encouraged to sit together and chat with staff and peers. This results in a pleasant, purposeful and relaxed atmosphere that further promotes a culture of respect and tolerance.

Residential pupils are actively involved in a wide range of enjoyable, stimulating and creative activities designed to build self-esteem, enhance independence and promote social inclusion. Staff make good use of the resources available within the school and the wider community. Residential pupils said 'there are lots of things to do if you want to do them.' For example, several residential pupils spoke enthusiastically about going swimming and riding the schools motorcycles on the motocross track. These opportunities contribute to helping residential pupils develop their social skills and improve their confidence and self-esteem.

The residential accommodation is spacious, clean and pleasantly decorated. Residential pupils are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with pictures, posters and other items brought from home if they wish. Sixth formers have their own kitchen in which they regularly prepare their own meals. Younger residential pupils can use a different kitchen to practice and develop their cooking

skills.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. The school's child protection policy is consistent with the local safeguarding policy and informs staff how to respond, should they have concerns about the welfare of residential pupils. The school has established positive links with the Local Authority Designated Officer who confirms the school consistently reports and effectively manages safeguarding issues and concerns. This means the right action is taken to protect and promote residential pupils welfare.

The recruitment of residential staff is robust. Staff are subject to appropriate vetting and checks prior to working with residential pupils in the school. The head of care is fully involved in the recruitment process to make sure staff have the right competencies and skills to meet the needs of residential pupils. There are safe arrangements in place to ensure visitors to the school are suitably checked and supervised. This means residential pupils are protected from contact with adults who may pose a risk to them.

Residential pupils benefit from being cared for by staff who are aware of child protection and familiar with the schools safeguarding procedures. This is because staff receive relevant child protection training that is refreshed annually. The school has become increasingly proactive and is seeking to improve staff knowledge in relation to child protection. For instance, two senior residential staff were attending the local education authority designated person for child protection training during this inspection. This further enhances the skills of the residential team in protecting residential pupils welfare and effectively managing allegations and suspicion of abuse.

Residential pupils say they feel safe. The school maintains good anti-bullying practices and staff are vigilant to any signs of this. Staff are aware of residential pupils' vulnerabilities and work hard to encourage them to share their feelings and discuss any concerns they may have. Residential pupils confirm this and say they are confident that if they are worried or concerned they could tell staff who would do their best to sort things out.

Being missing from the residential provision is not an issue for residential pupils. The school has good procedures for monitoring residential pupils and ensures their whereabouts are known at all times. Detailed systems are in place should a residential pupil go missing. All staff are familiar with the procedure and action they need to take to try to locate residential pupils if they go missing.

There is a calm, effective and gentle approach to behaviour management. This is because staff have developed a good understanding of the circumstances and factors that contribute to residential pupils becoming frustrated and anxious. Staff are well trained in behaviour management. They use well planned and effective individualised behaviour management strategies to manage residential pupils often complex and challenging behaviour. Staff use their relationships with residential pupils to effectively de-escalate crisis and avoid the need for physical restraint wherever possible. Where restraint has been necessary, it has been done professionally as a last resort to protect pupils from causing harm to themselves and others. Records of such interventions are maintained. However, some records do not provide sufficient detail of the actions taken by staff, an evaluation of the effectiveness of restraint or the comments of the pupil involved.

Health and safety are given a high priority in the residential provision. Residential pupils are protected from hazards by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine maintenance checks to ensure the premises are safe. Regular fire drills

ensure all residential pupils know how to evacuate the school in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the school is good. All national minimum standards are met. The management team has ensured that the three improvement points from the last inspection, in March 2012, have been suitably addressed. All staff who have a significant role in child protection have completed the local education authority designated person for child protection training; details of how residential pupils can contact the Children's Rights Director are displayed throughout the school and the governors periodic monitoring reports now include details of their interaction with residential pupils. These improvements have further enhanced the standard of care and safety for residential pupils.

The residential provision is effectively managed as an integral part of the school. There are clear lines of accountability that are further enhanced by good oversight by the headteacher. At the time of the inspection the head of care was absent from his post. The impact of this absence was quickly recognised and has been managed effectively. The position of acting head of care is being undertaken by a very experienced, senior member of the care team who is clearly committed to making a positive impact on the lives of residential pupils. This means the quality of care will continue to develop and improve in accord with the school's strategic plan and their aspirations to be outstanding.

The residential aspect is an important part of school life. This is evident in the comments made by residential pupils and the feedback recorded in the small number of surveys returned by parents. For example, residential pupils used words including 'excellent' and 'superb' to describe their time spent at school, while parents strongly agreed that their child had made significant progress since being at the school. Communication between staff and parents is generally good, indicative of the positive relationships that exist. However, a small number of parents said they would benefit from more frequent updates with regards their child's progress and development.

Residential staff are well trained, supported in their duties and provide high levels of supervision for residential pupils. This means daily routines are well established and reinforced by staff who have the right skills, and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. Everyday practice is underpinned by the aims and objectives set out in the school's Statement of Purpose, Principles and Practice. As a result, residential pupils know the standards of behaviour that are expected and things generally run smoothly.

Issues of equality and diversity are well managed. Staff are diligent in ensuring pupils are treated fairly, respectfully and with due regard for their individual needs, backgrounds and personality. Staff are committed to helping pupils overcome their difficulties, particularly those brought about by their developmental disability. They encourage pupils to understand their own behaviour and be tolerant of that of others. This has resulted in a strong sense of community within the school.

The school has a range of quality assurance systems that are used effectively for monitoring the quality of care, pupil progress and residential records. There is a genuine commitment from the school's senior management team and governor's to drive improvement. Governor's play a key role in monitoring the residential provision and the welfare and safety of pupils. Systems have been improved since the last inspection. For example, half termly monitoring visits are supplemented by additional visits that focus specifically on key areas of development within the school. This ensures shortfalls are recognised and opportunities for improvement are clearly identified and maximised. This improves the services offered to residential pupils by the school.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	121765
Social care unique reference number	SC007922
DfE registration number	815/7002

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	9 to 19
Headteacher	Mr Geoff Brookes
Date of previous boarding inspection	13/10/2010
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