

Bramfield House School

Bramfield House School, Walpole Road, Bramfield, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 9AB

Inspection dates	24/09/2013 to 26/09/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Residential pupils achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their social development. They have high aspirations for their future and demonstrate confidence and belief in themselves, which has been encouraged and enabled by the staff. Extending pupil contribution to their care planning and using more accessible language in care plans would promote further improvement in this area.
- Staff ensure that residential pupils' safety is promoted through robust risk and behaviour management, a well-maintained physical environment and high quality communication and relationships with external professionals. Although staff take action in response to bullying, this action is not comprehensively recorded.
- Staff promote equality of opportunity for all residential pupils in accessing a wide range of social, educational and leisure experiences. Consequently, residential pupils learn that they can overcome perceived barriers, regardless of disability or complexity of their needs.
- Residential pupils, their parents and external professionals are extremely positive about the residential experience. Residential pupils enjoy boarding and value their high quality relationships with the nurturing staff team. Pupils cite the refurbishment of the onsite gymnasium as an area they would like improved.
- The residential provision is effectively managed and organised. There are seamless links with the education provision. Additional training in supporting pupils to manage their sexuality, sexual identity and relationships would further enhance staff skills.

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 inspection of the residential provision, covering two boarding houses, took place within three hours of notice given to the school. The inspection activities included meetings with: pupils, the residential care staff, the head teacher, the senior management team, the maintenance staff, administrative staff, external professionals and parents. Telephone discussions and observations of the premises, activities, meal times and residential routines formed part of the inspection. Documents, policies, records, monitoring reports and surveys were scrutinised; no surveys were received from Parent View and there were no survey submissions from parents or pupils.

Inspection team

Louisa Bayley	Lead social care inspector
Tina Shepherd	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Bramfield House School is situated in a rural setting on the outskirts of the small village of Bramfield in Suffolk. The school premises include the Main House, with a residential area for Years 3 to 10, and the main offices, Ibstock House, which is a semi-independent residential provision for Year 11 and a range of separate buildings used for teaching and recreation. The school is set in 10 acres of grounds which are used for recreation and learning. The school also has its own swimming pool.

Bramfield House School is an independent special school providing education and care for young people aged from 7 to 18 with special educational needs including emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. It offers weekly boarding for up to 45 boys, with a total school capacity of 65 pupils. Presently there are 37 residential pupils and 28 day pupils. The majority of boys are resident for a maximum of four nights from Monday to Thursday. It is part of the Acorn Care and Education Group. The school was last inspected in November 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consider how pupils would benefit from an up-to-date refurbishment of the gymnasium to provide a space for physical activities in poor weather.
- Provide training for staff regarding managing emerging sexuality, sexual identity and relationships.
- Further promote pupil involvement in their care planning and behaviour management, with reports produced in accessible language.
- Ensure that records are fully reflective of the action staff take in response to incidents of bullying, in respect of both the instigator and the victim.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils in this school are outstanding. Residential pupils present as confident, polite and respectful. They are relaxed in the residential provision and throughout the school. They are clear about expectations and boundaries, which gives them a sense of security and belonging. One residential pupil said: 'This is my second home; it is like my second family.' All residential pupils understand the idea of community and mutual responsibility for each other, property and behaviour. They develop empathy as a result of the positive role modelling from staff and positive reinforcement of behaviour. Residential pupils build their confidence because of their network of support within the school.

Residential pupils can identify how the school has helped them to positively change their behaviour and make progress in their lives. One pupil said that he used to bully others and would not do this now because the school has helped him to understand the impact on other people. Parents gave overwhelmingly positive feedback about the progress their children have made in the school. One parent said: 'This school has changed his life. He never thought he would sit his GCSEs; the staff encouraged him to make the most of his life.' Another said that their child had made 100% progress in his emotional and behavioural development, including managing aggression.

All residential pupils develop independence skills, regardless of their age and stage of development. They increase their range of skills as they progress through the residential provision, enjoying additional responsibilities over time. This means they are prepared for later life, with skills such as budgeting, menu planning, shopping, cooking and group living.

During the inspection, all of the residential pupils who spoke to inspectors said they enjoyed boarding. They talked animatedly about the wide range of activities they take part in and identified the potential they have to develop new skills. Residential pupils recognise the opportunities they have to try out new experiences that they could not otherwise access.

Residential pupils make a successful transition to adulthood; 10 out of 11 pupils, who left in the last academic year, have gone on to further education or employment. Residential pupils have high aspirations for their future and benefit from the opportunities they access in the school to identify how they can achieve their potential.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of the residential provision and care is good. The comprehensive induction and transition process supports residential pupils to settle in to the school. Staff ensure that residential pupils are happy and feel safe and secure, by providing warm and nurturing care and recognising and addressing individual needs and preferences. The well-established and dedicated staff team provide consistency for each residential pupil, which is underpinned by highly effective links between academic and pastoral staff. Individual needs are consistently met as a result of a good level of communication between the residential staff, academic staff, parents and carers and external professionals.

Parents and carers have highly positive views of the residential provision. Parents said: 'The individualised support he has received has made a real difference, he has blossomed as his own person' and 'the staff are fantastic and know the children very well.' Another parent said: 'If my child had not gone to the school, I do not know where he would be; they have pulled out all the stops to help him to get to where he needs to be.'

Teams consisting of staff representing each discipline provide holistic support for residential pupils. There is a dynamic approach to care planning. This includes a multi-elemental plan, which identifies individual needs well, including disabilities and barriers to learning and development, with specific interventions tailored to the individual residential pupil. Weekly meetings provide the opportunity for key staff to regularly review care plans, to monitor individual progress and make changes in response. There is scope to further improve care planning by increasing individual pupil's contribution and using language that is more accessible to young people.

Residential pupils access a wide range of leisure activities, including; go karting, concerts, swimming, bowling, football, roller-skating, mechanics and cooking. Activities are appropriate to age and ability and fully consider individual's preferences and skills. Consequently, residential pupils are able to develop their skills and interests and experience social interaction outside of the residential environment. They say the activities are 'the best thing about being in the school.'

The residential accommodation is spacious, with expansive outside areas where pupils can play safely and enjoy a range of activities, including swimming in the pool in the school grounds. Residential pupils are able to personalise their bedrooms as they wish and they have secure areas to store their possessions. Semi-independent living areas are equipped to a good standard, with good resources that enable the pupils to develop their skills. During the inspection, pupils expressed their views that refurbishment of the gymnasium would enable them to continue to enjoy physical exercise on site during the colder weather.

Residential pupils' health needs are well managed by trained staff and overseen by a qualified nurse. This is a particularly positive aspect of the school, given the wealth of experience the school nurse has and her knowledge of child and adolescent mental health. Staff support individuals' emotional, physical and health needs and access external professionals where needed. However, the staff team do not currently benefit from training in emerging sexuality and sexual identity.

The food provided in the school is nutritious and varied, with a good level of choice. There is a healthy option salad at lunch and tea times and kitchen staff cater for special diets. Staff monitor individuals' food intake to ensure they access a healthy diet, and they work with parents and pupils to address any food issues. This supports pupils' growth and development and helps them to make responsible choices.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

Residential pupils' safety is good. The school follows safe recruitment procedures and ensures that all visitors are checked. Volunteers are subject to the same checks as employed staff. This helps to prevent unsuitable people having access to the pupils.

Staff manage behaviour well; they promote positive behaviour through recognition and reward systems and give sanctions only in response to higher-level behaviours. Staff give responsibility to pupils to make active choices about reducing their sanctions, by engaging in reflecting on their behaviour and the impact it has on others. This empowers pupils to work restoratively with staff if they are willing to do so. Consequently, such reflection contributes to reductions in future incidents.

Staff only use physical restraint as a last resort, with a very low number of restraints during residential time. The figures show that for most pupils, the frequency and number of restraints reduces over time. During the inspection, pupils told inspectors that if staff had physically restrained them, it had been in response to serious behaviour. They said that staff always talk to them about any incidents of restraint to ask for their views. Staff fully complete reports following any incident and they include the pupil's view. The use of restraint is proportionate and used to

reduce the likelihood of harm to the pupil or others.

Residential pupils say they feel safe. Staff protect them from harm through effective risk and behaviour management, good supervision ratios and consistency of the routines in place. Some pupils said they had experienced bullying in the past but it has stopped, a very small number said they experience name-calling. All pupils agreed that staff listen but some were unclear what action staff take. It is evident that staff use circle time activities and mediate group discussions around the topic of bullying but there is lack of recording of staff responses. This makes it difficult to see a clear audit trail of action and means they can miss opportunities to feedback to individuals about the action they have taken.

Staff monitor incidents of physical restraint and bullying using graphs to create visual representation and identify patterns and trends. They use the information to update the individual pupil's risk matrix and multi-elemental plan. This demonstrates that staff make good use of monitoring and analysis to inform behaviour management and de-escalate known triggers.

The school environment is well maintained, physically safe and secure. Managers ensure that health and safety checks take place, with specific responsibility allocated to the staff and maintenance team. There are comprehensive records of the regular checks, details of remedial work and systems in place to alert staff when checks are due. Additionally, staff ensure that pupils are aware of safety issues and areas that are out of bounds to them, such as staff accommodation. Pupils respect these boundaries, which helps them to take responsibility for their own safety.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. There is a well-defined management structure, supporting a committed staff team. During the inspection, observations of staff interaction with pupils, behaviour and routines demonstrated that managers translate the aims for boarding into everyday practice.

Daily routines provide for good levels of communication and cooperative working between academic and pastoral staff, which supports residential pupils in all aspects of their school life. Effective handovers between staff and many opportunities to recognise and reward good behaviour contribute to promoting individual's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff receive good levels of training and supervision to support them to undertake their roles. The majority of staff have achieved a relevant level three qualification or higher. There is consistency within the staff team and team members cover sickness absence. This means that agency staff are not used; those staff working with residential pupils know them and are fully aware of their needs and preferences. The staffing arrangements ensure that the residential provision is managed effectively and supports pupils to make progress socially and emotionally.

There have been no complaints. Pupils know how to make a complaint and there is a clear complaints procedure, which managers make known to parents and pupils at admission and through induction. Pupils identify other ways they can raise issues if they wish to do so. Residential pupils have given their views on their menu planning, which has led to a change in the provision of more healthy fruit options. All pupils have a good awareness of the ways in which they can give feedback to the school and staff and are open and honest in doing so.

The feedback regarding communication from the school is positive from all parties. Parents and professionals say the school keeps them well informed and they are always welcomed into the school. Managers and staff work hard to provide support to pupils through multi-agency work. They promote strategies between home and school and integrate youth offending arrangements

within the residential and education provision. This helps to support pupils to achieve positive outcomes.

Staff ensure that individual needs are comprehensively recorded and recognise residential pupils' characteristics, disabilities and barriers to accessing education and social opportunities. Staff advocate on behalf of pupils to promote equality of access and provide an experience that helps them to reach their full potential.

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	124879
Social care unique reference number	SC024575
DfE registration number	935/6036

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	Independent residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	37
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	7 to 18
Headteacher	Mrs D Jennings
Date of previous boarding inspection	20/11/2012
Telephone number	01986 784235
Email address	d.jennings@bramfieldhouse.co.uk

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