

Breckenbrough School Limited

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

Inspection dates	09/12/2013 to 11/12/2013	
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

- Residential pupils have very good relationships with the care staff. They provide a warm, nurturing environment where residential pupils learn how to behave socially, emotionally and educationally. Parents are very positive about improved outcomes for their children.
- Safeguarding is regarded as a priority within the school. Residential pupils say they are safe and they can talk to any of the staff if they have any concerns. All staff attend regular appropriate safeguarding training. Strong links have been established with the local authority safeguarding service who provide the school with valued advice and guidance on all safeguarding matters.
- Case records are well maintained and these give a clear indication of each residential pupil's care needs. The care plans demonstrate how outcomes have improved significantly over time. Care plans are of excellent quality and enable staff to understand how to meet individual needs effectively.
- Staff work closely with the colleagues in school to enhance opportunities for pupils to achieve their overall social and educational potential. Staff go that extra mile supporting the residential pupils. In addition, they work closely with parents who say the staff are good at keeping them informed about their child.
- The senior management team has a clear vision on driving improvement forward. This is complemented by a well informed governing body who have a proactive role in the overall management of the school. Some areas for improvement have been identified. These are in relation to records for non prescribed medicines, risk assessments and recruitment.

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

This inspection was carried out over three days. Interviews were conducted with boarders, care staff, administration staff, headteacher, head of care, domestic staff, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and social workers. The views of parents was obtained from the Ofsted Parent View site and letters from parents giving their views about the positive impact the school has had on their children. The Ofsted point in time survey provided further information. A full tour was carried out of the buildings and surrounding site. Meals were taken with the children.

Inspection team

Michael McCleave

Lead social care inspector

Lynne Busby

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Breckenbrough School is a residential special school for boys from 9-19 years old. The school caters for up to 49 pupils, with provision for 37 boarders. There are currently 20 boarders. Boarding accommodation is in the main school building and two annexes. There are a range of facilities, including a motor-cross track and a fruit and vegetable garden. The school is situated on the outskirts of Thirsk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Non prescribed medications recording need to be clearer and audited in line with the prescribed medicines system currently in place.
- Recruitment records need to indicate who carried out verification checks on references.
- Carry out a risk assessment in kitchen areas where boarders prepare meals.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The social and academic outcomes achieved by the residential pupils is outstanding. This is a very stimulating environment where pupils are strongly supported to achieve their potential.

Residential pupils learn how to form strong caring relationships with their peers and adults. This is a significant change from their previous experience where many of the pupils led isolated lives. They lacked confidence and self esteem in their abilities. Boarding enables them to live in a caring social community where they develop their trust in each other. Friendships have flourished and a strong bond has developed between the residential pupils. They enjoy the boarding experience and feel comfortable in the safe surroundings of the school. For example, one residential pupil said, 'I felt that everyone hated me and nobody understood me before I came to this school.'

The behaviour of the residential pupils improves significantly during their time at the school. Many had previously experienced long periods of exclusion from their mainstream schools because of their excessive behaviour. Through the patience and calm approach taken by the staff the residential pupils have over time learned how to modify the way they respond to situations in which they previously reacted with anger. Residential pupils feel valued by the staff and it is evident that they have developed a more tolerant understanding of their peers and other adults. This shows that they have grown in maturity and a belief in their own self confidence. For example, staff said, 'prior to coming to the school most of our pupils could not look at adults in the eye because of the rejection they had been subject to,' and 'they have grown in confidence and made exceptional gains in improving their behaviour.'

The residential pupils are able to participate in activities that enhances their abilities. For example, some pupils have flown in light aircraft. This is an experience they would not have been able to undertake previously. Other residential pupils have excelled in sports such as rugby and are now members of the local town team. These activities promote the sporting abilities of the pupils as well as enhancing their physical health and self confidence.

The views of those who board strongly influence the life in the boarding house. Residential pupils take on responsible roles to share with staff decisions that have an effect for all boarders. They are consulted on decoration, furnishings. The most recent change brought about by the views of the residential pupils is the complete refurbishment of all the bathing, showers and toilet facilities. This enhances their sense of responsibility and ownership of the way the house is operated.

The residential pupils have access to a psychologist who provides excellent support and guidance on emotional issues. This service enables pupils to share their anxieties and concerns in confidence with a qualified professional. Any other health related requirements are provided by the local clinic or hospital located in the nearby town.

Residential pupils learn how to prepare for the time when they leave the school. Excellent facilities exist in the sixth form areas. These include modern flats with full domestic facilities that enables the pupils to plan and prepare meals with support from staff. Each pupil is taught catering skills, how to manage money through budgeting and shopping for their own provisions. They learn how to take responsibility for their independence within a supportive environment. This means that they are able to learn these new skills with advice and guidance from staff.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of boarding is excellent. The care provided to the residential pupils is of a high standard and each pupil has access to a mentor and key worker. These adult staff are chosen by the pupils themselves demonstrating a commitment to equality and diversity. The pastoral care provided including that from a qualified psychologist means that the pupils are able to share their personal thoughts and any concerns at anytime in the full knowledge that they will be listened to.

All admissions to the boarding house are carried out with utmost sensitivity and careful planning involving the parents and the child. Staff carry out a detailed assessment to ensure that the prospective residential pupil will fit in with the other boarders. This is to ensure that the prospective boarder can gain the maximum experiences from boarding life at the school.

There is an excellent record of each resident pupil's care needs through care plans and case files information. These focus safeguarding, raising self-confidence, promoting diversity and independence skills on an individualised basis. Staff both care and teaching, consistently aim high for pupils to achieve their best and to celebrate their successes. The recording of residential pupils' progress is clearly evident in the care plans and these identify the range of targets met. Staff are inclusive in their approach to sharing records with pupils and making them accessible and child-friendly.

There is an integrated approach between care and teaching staff. This provides consistency for pupils and supports their personal and academic development. Residential pupils' achievements are celebrated through certificates, cups and displays of work. Staff are knowledgeable about individual pupil's needs, and the provision of care is effectively organised to complement the achievements of the pupils.

The residential pupils enjoy an extensive range of activities that enables them to develop talents. For example some pupils have demonstrated exceptional creative skills in the design of machines, models, and works of art. These are displayed around the school to celebrate their skills. Other pupils with sporting skills have joined the local rugby team whilst others attend a university basketball training opportunity. The culture of the school is one that promotes and actively encourages them to fulfil their potential. Staff create a nurturing environment where pupils are encouraged to do their best in line with their capabilities. The school has an ethos of valuing pupils and creates a culture of respect. This promotes development of self-esteem and self-worth in the residential pupils ability to achieve.

All health needs are either met within the school or from the local health services facilities. Medicines are administered by trained staff and secure conditions are in place to store all medicines.

The prescribed medication system is robust however non-prescribed medication does not follow the same system. This is not as accountable and lacks clarity. Whilst staff retain adult responsibility for all activities in the boarding house, the older residential pupils are given the opportunity to develop responsible skills by ensuring that the younger boarders are safe and not being bullied.

The care staff demonstrate a positive enthusiasm for their work in the boarding house. They are very active in supporting the residential pupils to enjoy life at the school and to bring out the best in each pupil. In order to emphasize this point staff spoke about, 'we often take over the role of parents when dealing with personal matters with the boys in areas parents feel uncomfortable discussing with their child.'

The boarding accommodation provides the residential pupils with a safe and comfortable environment. They all have their own single bedrooms that are very comfortably furnished enabling private time or study. The common rooms enable the residential pupils to meet socially and to relax after school time. These facilities are of a high standard. The sixth form accommodation provides exceptionally high quality accommodation where residential pupils can enjoy a greater degree of independence. This gives them the opportunity to be responsible for their activities within the house and prepares them for life beyond the school. This promotes their personal development.

The meals provided are aimed at encouraging healthy eating among the pupils. The quality of meals is good with an excellent choice of salads, meat or vegetarian option if preferred. All special diets are met by the experienced catering team. The high standards of meals provided support the aim of encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

Parents are pleased with the quality of care provided for their children. They gave their views as follows,

'Our son is a mature, confident, independent, happy young man. The school's ethos of conflict resolution and holistic approach allows students the emotional wellbeing to be met as well as their educational abilities. Without Breckenbrough our son would not be where he is today and we feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to meet such a wonderful group of people in the form of Breckenbrough staff. Breckenbrough saved our son and us as a family and for that we will be forever in their debt.' Another said, 'The LEA describe our son as a success story.'

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of all the pupils is taken seriously by the school. Safe robust recruitment practices are in place. All required checks are undertaken before a staff member begins work. This ensures pupils are protected by the appropriate appointment of staff. However, the checks made through telephone contact with referees is indicated in some records by a tick rather than a signature of the person conducting the check. This makes verification of the check difficult to authenticate. This does not have a direct impact on the safety of the pupils.

There are clear risk management systems in place for the most of the buildings and grounds. However, there are no risk assessments for kitchen areas used by the residential pupils. Therefore this does not identify hazards. Residential pupils are clear about fire evacuation procedures, and regular drills take place. Risk assessments for pupils clearly define their vulnerabilities and identify strategies to minimise hazards. The safety of the pupils is enhanced through the extensive checks carried out on all domestic, electrical and gas appliances. Any maintenance required in any building that impacts on the safety of the pupils is acted upon immediately.

Residential pupils say that bullying is not an issue. However, if any bullying issues are identified, the staff act quickly. Bullying in any form, is not tolerated. Residential pupils are confident that any concerns they report to staff will be acted upon. There have been no instances of pupils going missing but staff are aware of the procedures to follow should this occur and there are clear protocols in place with the police.

All staff are trained in behaviour management including restraint. The positive behaviour strategies adopted by staff to help them to manage any disruptive behaviour. However, restraint is rarely used within the school and staff are competent in using de-escalation techniques to manage any behaviours effectively. Sanctions are infrequent and individualised to pupils. Residential pupils' views are sought on incidents, this gives them an opportunity to give their thoughts on the causes and outcomes of any behaviour incidents. This promotes their ownership on the situation.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The boarding facility is managed by a head of care and supported by two deputies who demonstrate a strong commitment to excellence in boarding. The aims of boarding at the school are clearly identified in the school's statement of principles and practice. There is an open culture encouraged by the management where everyone has a stake in the success of the school and all views are welcome.

The performance monitoring of the boarding facility is conducted by the head of care and this informs the Headteacher's annual report to the board of governors. The links between the care and teaching staff is strong and this contributes positively to the achievements of the pupils. The staff team are well managed and they demonstrate a professional commitment to their work. In order to ensure the safety and appropriate care of the residential pupils the management ensures sufficient staff are available to carry out their duties.

All staff are trained or are commencing required training in order to be competent to carry out their roles and responsibilities. There is a culture of supporting staff to develop their skills through regular supervision and training. Staff handover meetings are conducted efficiently to ensure that all information is appropriately shared.

The records maintained at the school are underpinned by the policies and procedures in place. These are generally well maintained. However, management quality assurance checking of the accuracy of some records such as medications, risk assessments and human resources show some deficiencies. These do not impact directly on the care of the residential pupils.

Boarding is seen as an integral to the whole school and plays an important role in the overall ethos of encouraging each residential pupil to achieve their potential. There is a commitment to continuous improvement and this is demonstrated in the way that the recommendations from the last inspection have been completed.

The management welcomes the views of those within and external to the school. The residential pupils have a significant input to the decisions made about boarding operations. The governors are active in supporting the school. Unannounced visits are conducted by a governor every half term to monitor the management and smooth running of the school. The headteacher demonstrates a strong commitment to external scrutiny visits to ensure change and outcomes are achieved. For example, moving the school from being judged inadequate to a judgement of good by Ofsted in five years. There have been improvements to the boarding facilities in particular the showers and toilets and refurbishment of the sixth form independent unit.

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	20
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	9 to 18
Headteacher	Mr Geoff Brookes
Date of previous boarding inspection	19/03/2013
Telephone number	01845 587238
Email address	geoff.brookes@breckenbrough.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

