

Breckenbrough School

Sandhutton, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4EN

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils progress well in every way. They are well prepared for the next step in their education or training.
- Pupils make consistently good and occasionally outstanding progress in their personal development. They are able to do this because they make consistently good progress in the development of their emotional and social skills.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress here because they spend time learning in other organisations, as well as using and applying their skills in an increasingly independent way.
- The quality of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expert skills, and know the needs of their pupils very well. As a result, pupils are usually highly engaged in their learning.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are courteous and polite. They say they feel safe in school and know that their needs are understood very well by everyone.
- The school is expertly led and managed by the headteacher. There is a clear shared vision of the pursuit of improving teaching, care and high standards in all of the school's work, including in alternative provision. As a result, the school continues to improve.
- The governing body holds leaders to account tightly. Governors question leaders rigorously as well as support the school. They evaluate the performance of the school, including teaching and achievement, care and every individual within it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The new leaders of subjects and areas have not had sufficient time yet to drive improvements in their subjects or areas.
- Marking does not always provide pupils with precise information about how to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed several lessons and one-to-one sessions with members of staff. All lessons and individual sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' individual learning and behaviour plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, a member of the governing body and members of the teaching staff.
- The inspector took into account 18 questionnaires from staff and 27 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body and school policies.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Murphy

Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Breckenbrough is a residential special school which caters for high ability boys with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, including autism.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are admitted to the school at any age and at any time during the year.
- Pupils are admitted from any local authority in England. The majority of pupils are day boys.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is located on a large site and is a Quaker Charitable Trust
- The school uses the following alternative providers: York College, Toolbox, Hilltop Farm and Askham Bryan College.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching further so that achievement is outstanding by:
 - marking all pupils' books with clear next steps and giving pupils the time to address them
 - using the writing skills that pupils have learnt in literacy lessons in other subjects
 - quickly providing time for the new leaders of areas and subjects to check and improve the quality and consistency of teaching in their areas and subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a highly respected leader. He is ably supported by the new deputy headteacher and school improvement has been accelerated over the last four terms. One of the cornerstones to success is the way in which everyone listens to each other. For example, the headteacher is highly valued by the pupils, because he always has time to listen to their worries.
- Members of the extended leadership team contribute well to the leadership of the school. However, roles and responsibilities of members of this team are currently under review and the team is being extended, so that the increasingly complex needs of the pupils can be met even more closely and thus raise achievement even further. The new leaders of subjects and areas have not had sufficient time yet to drive improvements in their subjects or areas.
- Monitoring of teaching is effective as it is sharply focused on pupils' achievement. School leaders use the observation of pupils' progress in lessons and in other situations throughout the school day, as well as progress data to set improvement plan priorities and set targets for teachers. The recent review of teaching identified the need for more time to be spent checking on and improving the quality and consistency of teaching to continually improve teaching practice. Training for staff is focused sharply on the complex needs of the pupils.
- Procedures for the management of the performance of staff are comprehensive and robust. There is a clear link between performance and pay.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils very well. It is planned with a sharp focus on communication and personal skills. As a result, pupils are engaged and well prepared for the next step in their education. The curriculum provides a good balance between education and pupils' therapeutic needs.
- Partnership with a range of other providers contributes significantly to achievement, as it enables the pupils' needs to be met even more closely.
- The curriculum is extensively enriched by outdoor learning and visits. Outdoor learning specifically prioritises providing opportunities for pupils to develop tolerance and build trusting relationships. The curriculum is also well planned, because it has a sharp focus on reading, writing, mathematics and communication. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next step in their education.
- Pupils are prepared well, through their study of ancient civilisations and the impact this has had on society today, for life in modern Britain.
- Partnership with parents is strong and parents value the work of the school very highly, because of the massive impact it has on their sons' well-being. Parents and pupils are made fully aware of the options available to them well in advance of leaving the school. As a result, they are able to make the best decisions for future placement.
- Checking on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour when pupils attend alternative provision is meticulous.
- The residential provision is well organised and its routines are closely matched to the needs of boarders. The leadership of the school provides a strong focus on its ethos to which all care staff are committed. All points for improvement made at the previous inspection have been addressed. This indicates good capacity for the residential provision to continue its positive development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's success. They communicate the vision of the Quaker ethos strongly and clearly. Individual governors visit regularly to see the school at work and they talk to pupils and staff to gain their views. They ensure that every pupil is given an equal opportunity to succeed. They have up-to-date knowledge of pupils' achievements, including performance data, and the quality of teaching and provide sufficient challenge to the school to move it forward. The governors ensure that financial resources are managed well, including the school's use of additional government funding, such as the pupil premium, to support pupils and are aware of their impact.
 - Governors are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and they are also fully aware that teachers' pay awards are securely linked to the progress that pupils make.
 - They ensure that all safeguarding procedures are fully met and, as a result, pupils are safe at school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The atmosphere of the school is underpinned by the Quaker ethos, which is always to identify the good characteristics in every person and situation. As a result, the atmosphere in school is very positive.
- Pupils are mostly very courteous and polite, and say they are very glad that they have had the opportunity to come to this school, because their needs are understood and they can relax at last.
- Listening to everyone's view and concerns at all times is a priority, and this sets the atmosphere, which is characterised by the respect everyone extends to each other at all times.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons and rise to the high expectations set by staff. For example, they will persevere with a particular task at the request of the teacher, in the knowledge that they will be able to spend time doing tasks that they find especially interesting at a later time.
- Pupils increasingly learn to control their own behaviour. This is because staff are well trained in how to manage behaviour. Staff are skilled in setting and communicating clear, consistent expectations.
- Strong trusting relationships with pupils mean that pupils say confidently that they feel there is always someone to talk to and help them, if need be.
- Almost without exception, pupils, including boarders, say that they feel safe. There is little bullying, but staff are vigilant to its possibility and act promptly if it occurs.
- Behaviour in the alternative provision is good, as a result of the partnership between providers and the school. This means that any issues are communicated to the school and dealt with swiftly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Safeguarding practice is understood well by all staff. Any concerns which arise are promptly notified to the appropriate agencies. Staff have a very good understanding of the individual needs of each pupil, although written risk assessments for boarders are not yet fully in place.
- Pupils are aware of the different risks posed when they are out in the community or when they are involved in more extreme sports and activities such as skiing, archery or flying small aircraft.
- Records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Any incidents which involve physical intervention are dealt with effectively and quickly by staff. Any incidents are recorded in detail and monitored meticulously, and robust action is taken as a result.
- All policies and procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Policies for e-safety are comprehensive, clear and robust. This means that everyone is very clear about procedures.
- Governors are vigilant in ensuring that full checks on the safety of premises are regularly undertaken and acted upon. Safety in alternative provision is checked regularly by leaders and reported to governors.
- Attendance is above average, both at school and at the alternative provision.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding; it helps pupils learn and achieve well during their time at school. Teachers have expert knowledge in the teaching of pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. This enables them to modify their teaching swiftly to match the way in which the pupils are learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of prompt starts to lessons, as well as the amount of work to be completed by pupils in a given time. Pupils rise to meet these expectations well because they want to learn.
- A particular strength of the teaching in the school is how well teachers allow pupils to follow their interests and needs, while at the same time achieving required learning. Also, the skill with which staff question, encourage and prompt makes a notably positive impact on the quality of the pupils' learning.
- The impact of teaching on learning and achievement in literacy, reading and mathematics is good, because teachers ensure that pupils read in all subjects as well as apply their skills in mathematics. However, staff are not always fully aware of the pupils' achievements in writing and as a result, occasionally standards insisted upon are not high enough.
- Teachers and all staff are patient and dedicated to the pupils and, as such, have excellent relationships with their pupils. These result in a positive climate for learning in all lessons.

- The skills of teaching assistants are targeted well to support individuals. This personalised approach addresses pupils' learning needs well.
- Verbal feedback is very effective. It ensures that all pupils are very clear about what they need to do. However, marking does not always provide pupils with precise information about how to improve.
- The most-able pupils are always challenged to reach the highest levels or deepen their knowledge and understanding as a result of robust assessment and careful tracking of progress.
- Staff reflect on the quality of their teaching, including what has worked well with an individual pupil. They share this with other teachers. As a result, teaching is improving continuously and pupils learn and achieve well during their time at school.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils start at the school, at any age, and at any time during the year, their attainment is usually below that typically expected for their age. This is often because their special educational needs have disrupted the smooth flow to their learning in the past. Once in the school, pupils rapidly begin to achieve their potential and so make good and occasionally outstanding progress, when compared to pupils with similar starting points.
- Pupils make good and occasionally outstanding progress in their personal development. They are able to do this, because they make good progress in understanding the world around them and relating this to their own needs. This is the result of the amount of high quality psychological therapy they receive.
- Although numbers are very small and the pupils at the end of each key stage show great variation, school data for 2014 shows that pupils achieved broadly average standards overall, with higher attainment in data handling and measuring, and lower attainment in writing. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- In Key Stage 3, 2014 data show that pupils also make accelerated progress, although it is slower in writing. A very individualised approach based on pupils' interests in art and design, and technology means that pupils complete pieces of work to a good standard.
- In Key Stage 4, data show that pupils usually achieve or exceed their predicted grades at GCSE. This is because, not only are they prepared well, but the arrangements made when pupils sit exams are very carefully considered and this allows pupils to show what they are capable of. For example, each pupil takes the exam in a different room to minimise distraction.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision achieve well, as they are able to gain a range of vocational qualifications.
- Case studies show that the most-able pupils achieve very high levels of attainment relative to their individual starting points. In 2014, two pupils achieved levels of attainment which only pupils with higher starting points would be expected to achieve. Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make the same good rate of progress as that of their peers. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils closes the longer the pupils are at the school. There is no difference overall or in any particular subject. However, results in mathematics are often higher for all pupils as a result of the particular talents of the boys. There are too few pupils to enable meaningful comparisons to be made with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The school uses early entry for GCSE occasionally and to good effect.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students continue into the sixth form whenever they can.
- Some students attend York College full time to follow A-level and GCSE courses. Often, during their free time they complement these courses by following additional qualifications at school.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress because they develop their independence further through using and applying their skills in a wide range of adult situations. For example, each student can have a budget and cook their own meals daily.
- Students in the sixth form achieve A-level and GCSE grades which often results in them gaining a place at university. This demonstrates the fact that students are able to achieve their potential.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Students always try exceptionally hard to meet the expectations they set for themselves, as well as those of the staff.
- Sixth-form provision is led and managed well by an experienced member of staff. All safety and welfare

requirements are met very well. As a result, students are settled, secure and confident. Building trust and teamwork is a considerable strength and this has a significant impact on students' achievement.

- Teaching is good. Students enjoy expressing their independent choices and views.
- Well-organised transition procedures on entry to and exit from the sixth form ensure that students are not fearful or anxious and that changes are smooth. These procedures include transition to attending York College or other alternative providers, as well as making the transition to university.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	is good
Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	are good

- The quality of care in the residential provision has a measurable, positive impact upon the outcomes of boarders, which are outstanding. Boarders have developed exceptionally good, trusting relationships with care staff. The nurture and support which staff provide help boarders to make progress in all areas of their lives. In particular, boarders make significant improvements in their self-esteem and confidence, and their ability to make, and sustain, social relationships. This helps them to flourish, and make successful transitions into fulfilled and productive adult lives.
- Care staff are effective in meeting the often complex needs of boarders. They have a thorough knowledge of the backgrounds and abilities of each boarder. This begins with a comprehensive assessment of each boarder's needs and abilities prior to admission, followed by a careful induction period. As a result, care staff are able to take full account of what makes each boarder different and tailor individual approaches which result in positive change.
- The residential provision encourages boarders to become more self-reliant and take responsibility for their own development. Where boarders have difficulty in making progress, staff are skilled in providing them with the support they need. Staff are proactive in helping boarders to stay healthy, liaising with other professionals as necessary. However, arrangements for the administration of medication do not meet best practice standards.
- Close links between education and care staff mean that information is shared and a consistent approach to meeting the individual needs of boarders can be maintained. Boarders who struggle with homework can receive one-to-one support in residential time. This promotes good academic progress. In addition, care staff maintain close communication with parents. This provides the consistency and predictability which is important for boarders with the kind of needs in which the school specialises.
- A programme of diverse leisure activities includes opportunities for sporting, cultural and recreational experiences. As well as being hugely enjoyable, these activities help boarders to improve their social skills and work cooperatively with each other.
- There are formal and informal means by which boarders can express their views and have an influence on their residential experience. For example, boarders were fully consulted about recent improvements in bathroom facilities. The atmosphere within the boarding provision is relaxed and informal, yet orderly. For the most part, boarders converse with staff with ease and confidence, evidence of the trust they place in them.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Residential provision		
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
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449485

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	9–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Number of boarders on roll	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Peryer
Headteacher	Geoff Brookes
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2012
Telephone number	01845 587238
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