

Brantridge School

Brantridge School, Staplefield Place, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6EQ

Inspection dates	27/09/2016 to 29/09/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Children feel highly positive about their experiences and the care and support which they receive during their time in the residential school. They make good academic and personal progress as a result of their time here.
- The senior leadership team is dynamic and motivated, and inspires staff to provide a high standard of care while developing and improving the quality of their care and practice.
- A wide variety of exciting and stimulating after-school activities are available to children. They are provided with opportunities and new experiences, which develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Children are learning to self-regulate and manage their behaviours through the positive behaviour approach used by staff. Children are motivated by the varied and creative reward system.
- Children benefit from an environment where residential staff work effectively and collaboratively with academic staff and therapy staff.
- The voice of the children is apparent within the school, having an impact on the environment, activities and food choices available.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard for residential special schools:

- 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

There were no areas identified on this inspection.

Information about this inspection

The school was given three hours' notice of the inspection. All boarding house groups were visited. Children's feedback was obtained through discussion, shared meals and taking part in evening activities with children. The inspector met with the senior leadership team, including the head of care and the headteacher. Residential staff, the school nurse, the speech and language therapist and the school business manager were also interviewed. Parents' feedback was obtained through telephone calls and Parent View. Documents relating to the welfare and safety of children were sampled. No governors were available during the inspection.

Inspection team

Amanda Maxwell

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

The school is a non-maintained residential special school. It is situated close to Haywards Heath in Sussex. The school provides education and care for boys who have special educational needs. Some boys have complex needs, including learning disabilities and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school supports boys from the age of six to 13 years. Residential pupils are weekly boarders. Residential accommodation is located on one site in the main school building. Currently there are 14 residential pupils.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The school's mission is to overcome barriers to social and emotional well-being and to stimulate academic learning. The behaviour and progress of children demonstrate that this is successful. Children state that they love school and enjoy the range of activities they can pursue. Each reports having a key adult whom they trust and with whom they may confide.

There have been significant changes in the school since the last inspection. A new headteacher and changes to the senior leadership team have had a positive impact through change and improvements to the school.

Staff are knowledgeable, caring and 'child focused' in their approaches. They are an effective, motivated and experienced team. Children have positive relationships with staff and report having fun together experiencing new activities.

Children make good progress developing their academic, emotional, social and independence skills. Staff routinely monitor and review progress via the key worker system. They provide frequent updates to children, parents and carers. Children are learning positive strategies to self-regulate and manage behaviour and anxiety. They are learning key life-skills that promote opportunity in the future.

Staff are positive role models. They provide clear boundaries, expectations and routines. They follow, promote and encourage children to engage in the waking day curriculum in the school and residential environment.

Senior staff have very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of those in their care. They have identified weaknesses in the provision and have addressed this. Staffing levels meet need, and staff deployment provides sufficient daily supervision. They have a good understanding of the individuals and their needs, and individual support plans enable them to care for children.

Staff have a good understanding and awareness of what is required to keep children safe. Children have developed relationships of trust with staff. Weekly key work sessions create a one-to-one opportunity to review and reflect on achievements, challenges and issues affecting them.

The voices and views of the children are evident throughout the school. The regular house meetings and school council meetings have created formal opportunities to influence key aspects of school life. Children have been involved in choosing soft furnishings, personalising bedrooms, decoration schemes, menus and activities. Staff involve children in key discussions, reviews and decisions about their daily care. Each child knows how to complain and will use the 'Tell Boris' system.

The residential accommodation is well presented, maintained and homely with a cosy, relaxed feel to it. There is little or no damage apparent and children respect and care about their living environment.

Staff work collectively and collaboratively with the whole school. This provides a

positive, consistent and robust approach, with children responding positively to the joined-up approach.

Staff have regular communication and contact with families, with weekly contact via telephone and weekly reports. They update families about achievements and areas of difficulty that children have experienced.

The quality of care and support

Good

Children access individualised planned care and support. Effective links between care, education and therapists promote a consistent joined-up approach in care and behaviour management.

Children are encouraged and supported to have healthy lifestyles through the provision of a healthy balanced diet and regular exercise and activity. Detailed health and well-being plans ensure that all aspects of physical and emotional health are addressed. Staff support and facilitate opportunities for children to address basic and complex health needs. Referrals to specialist services are made when required. Children are addressing some health needs, which they had previously not been able to do.

Children have regular contact with families, and each house area has facilities available for daily contact with families. Families report having regular good communication with staff and being updated weekly about their child's achievements and challenges.

Staff offer a wide variety of exciting on- and off-site activities each day. The daily choice of activities available are linked to the rewards achieved from the day and the previous evening. Children are engaged with and signed up to the system, all wanting to achieve their best and take part in favoured activities. They comment that they love being at school because of the activities and the fun they have. The wide variety of physical activities offered each day promote positive emotional and physical well-being. The reward system is a strength of the school and the whole school community celebrates each child's achievements.

Care plans are detailed, providing clarity and strategies to support staff in meeting need. Individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide practical advice and guidance to staff. They are reviewed termly with targets set and progress measured and monitored.

The development of each child's social and emotional learning skills are assessed and monitored, and clear targets are identified. Children are developing individual skills and achieving personal goals. Children are developing resilience and skills, promoting life opportunities and improved coping strategies.

Staff provide a good quality, well-balanced menu for children. They have sought children's views through surveys and child voice. The theme days have been popular and children enjoyed the recent 'Indian curry day' and 'Chinese' themes. The dining arrangements provide a family feel and create a key social event in the day. Staff encourage children to follow a healthy lifestyle and make positive food choices. Staff

are currently developing a red and green system to assist with food choices.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

The senior leadership and designated safeguarding leads have developed positive relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff attend and represent the school at all required meetings, including child protection conferences and reviews.

Staff report, refer and record concerns, with an evidence trail available regarding actions and outcomes. Staff have good knowledge and insight into what is required to keep children safe.

Assessments and plans identify key, known risk factors, with actions required to minimise and reduce risks. An example of this is the decision-making process about bedroom sharing. Staff identify risky behaviours, exploring and minimising them in all assessments and support plans. Staff provide education and information to children about the impact of risk-taking behaviours.

The school is going through a period of change with regard to records. They are moving from a paper-based system to an electronic one. This is being achieved smoothly.

Staff have referred allegations and followed required actions, with records evidencing investigations and decision-making. Records clearly detail investigations and outcomes. Police are currently investigating a historic allegation. Staff are cooperating with these investigations.

Policies and procedures are effective. The safeguarding policy and procedure is currently being reviewed by an independent organisation.

The environment is well maintained and safe, and each child reports feeling safe. Recent changes on the site and the installation of a perimeter fence between outside areas and car parks has improved safety.

Staff follow a positive behaviour management approach. They are using a new recording system for recording and reporting incidents and physical interventions. It provides a high level of detail and data, enabling a quick view and review of incidents. Records clearly detail all types of physical interventions, with clarity of the type and length of time each intervention is applied and by whom. A debrief is always offered to children and staff. Staff are trained in the school's preferred method of behaviour management. Staff use a vast array of distraction and de-escalation strategies and techniques to avoid the use of physical intervention. Senior staff apply robust daily evaluation and monitoring of all incidents and physical interventions. Children who have previously required high levels of physical intervention are now learning positive ways to calm and self-regulate their behaviour.

Each child knows how to make a complaint and uses the 'Boris' complaint system, or they request to speak with a trusted adult. Senior staff have investigated complaints

thoroughly and provided an outcome to the complainant. Senior staff have made changes within the school following feedback and complaints from children. Children report that they feel listened to by staff.

Staff have thorough knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff have access to a wide variety of training, having completed training about child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty this year.

There have been no episodes of missing in the past year. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities if an incident occurs, and the school policy and procedure are up to date.

Staff have acted on incidents of bullying and managed these effectively. They regularly educate young people about their interactions and the impact on others. There are several displays in school detailing how to behave and treat others.

Staff have not applied robust, thorough vetting and safer recruitment processes. There are inconsistencies in records, as staff have not consistently implemented the school's policy and procedures, and not ensured that all checks have been completed. They have not gained references for staff prior to employment. There was no application form and were no sufficient references for another new member of staff.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

An appropriately qualified manager leads the residential provision effectively. Maintaining strong positive relationships between residential, education and therapy staff is an integral part of school life. The statement of purpose clearly identifies the aims and goals of the boarding provision. The school's ethos and mission is for children to learn through fun and enjoyment and this is delivered in practice.

The school has been through a period of significant change, including to the senior leadership of the school. Children, parents and staff report that these have been positive changes.

Sufficient staff support children who reside in the residential provision, and there are staff vacancies which are being actively recruited to.

Regular, effective monitoring provides a clear overview of all areas. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, with plans in place for continual improvement. The plans identify key areas to be addressed over the short- and long-term. Independent visitor reports provide a regular additional layer of scrutiny and an opportunity for children to share their views. Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the school and the residential provision, and act upon these aspirations.

The positive culture and ethos of the boarding provision is evident throughout daily life

here. Staff are positive in their interactions with children, treating them with respect and dignity. They provide consistency, role-model expected behaviour and celebrate achievements.

Most staff are suitably qualified and new staff are enrolled on and working towards the required qualification. Staff access a varied programme of training specific to their role. Staff have updated their safeguarding knowledge with a clear understanding of all current risk factors and considerations. They access regular effective supervision and their performance is appraised at least annually. Staff have been enabled to access specific training, which was identified through the appraisal system. Staff are encouraged to develop and progress professionally. Those with key interests are supported to develop skills further.

Leaders and managers have met previous recommendations and requirements set. They have acted on areas identified as needing to develop and improve, but the area of safer recruitment continues to require further embedding and improvement.

Governors provide strategic scrutiny, with reports showing evidence of their impact and oversight of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	134063
Social care unique reference number	SC042663
DfE registration number	

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	Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	41
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	6 to 13
Headteacher	Mr Heath Mason
Date of previous boarding inspection	07/10/2014
Telephone number	01444 400228
Email address	schooloffice@brantridge-school.co.uk

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