

Breckenbrough School Limited

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

Inspection dates

06/03/2017 to 08/03/2017

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Students make exceptional progress socially and academically. They learn a range of skills that equip them well for later life.
- Students thrive because of the very nurturing approach taken by staff.
- Students enjoy exceptional relationships with staff. As a result, their confidence and self-esteem flourishes.
- Individuality is celebrated and students' identity and personality develops.
- Students' anxiety significantly reduces because of the positive structures and routines that are in place.
- Students learn a range of coping skills which help them to manage their anxieties.
- Safeguarding is highly prioritised.
- The senior management team is extremely committed to continual improvement of the service for students and their families.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop additional ways to support parents and help them to feel included in the school community.

- Where appropriate for individuals, develop alternative accreditation of vocational and personal skills.

Information about this inspection

The deputy headmaster was given two hours' notice of this inspection. The inspector worked closely with the headmaster, the deputy headmaster, the head of residential social education, the deputy head of social education and the school bursar. The inspector spoke to a wide selection of social educators and team leaders throughout the inspection. Some social educators were spoken to alone and others in a group. Some social educators also completed surveys. Time was spent talking to pupils in groups and alone. The inspector spent time observing students over two evenings. The inspector joined the breakfast, lunch and teatime routines. The inspector spoke to the head governor and the safeguarding governor. The inspector had further conversations with parents and social workers. Parental views were collated from the Ofsted Parent View website during the inspection. The inspector consulted a representative from the local authority safeguarding team and examined a range of policies and records in relation to the safeguarding and care of residential students.

Inspection team

Jamie Richardson

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Breckenbrough School is a residential special school for boys aged from nine to 19 years old. The school caters for up to 60 students, with provision for 37 boarders. There are currently 15 boarders. Boarding accommodation is in the main school building and two annexes. There are a range of facilities, including a motocross track and a gym. The school is situated on the outskirts of Thirsk.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Students have an outstanding residential experience at this school. One student commented: 'I wish I could stay here all the time.' Another student said: 'It's like a little piece of Eden in a little part of North Yorkshire.' For many students, their lives change as they start to develop their personality and their sense of identity for the first time. They begin to believe in themselves and make positive plans for their future. One parent commented: 'It's given him hope he never had before. I can see them turning him around. He has never talked about his future before, and now he does.'

Students enjoy excellent relationships with staff who know them extremely well. Staff are highly skilled in identifying students' interests and personal skills. They use these effectively, to empower students to learn and develop socially. As a result, their self-confidence significantly improves. One student commented: 'Staff are respectful and easy to approach. The best thing here is the respect and autonomy given to me.'

Staff successfully tailor the 24-hour curriculum to each individual's very specific needs. The school has a range of on-site facilities, such as a workshop and motocross track, which enable students to gain an excellent range of skills. New accreditation for vocational and personal achievement is an area requiring further development. This is significantly boosting some students' confidence and self-esteem. For some, this is the first time that they have experienced achievement. All students make excellent progress with their education. As a result, students successfully move on to university, apprenticeship and employment.

Students benefit from a residential provision that is focused on their needs. Consequently, they feel safe and happy. Safety is a high priority across the school. One social worker commented: 'They are very quick at sharing information. They are very transparent and quick in terms of addressing any issues.'

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Students benefit from the continuous approach between the school and the residential provision. The consistent staff team works between settings. Consequently, staff know individual students extremely well. Students feel secure in this environment because they know that they can ask staff for emotional support day and night. In addition to this, specialist support from the school's psychologist ensures that students' complex emotional needs are met.

Staff educate students about the advantages of keeping healthy. Students' understanding of these issues develops, and they start to make their own healthy choices. Students undertake a range of activities which improve their physical health, including using the on-site gym, joining the school running club, swimming, and climbing. One student commented: 'Before I came here, I did not take pride in my appearance. I was unhealthy. I was scared of heights. Now I go climbing every week and I go to the gym six times a week.'

Students' individuality is celebrated. This helps to build relationships between staff and students based on respect and trust. As a result, students enjoy spending time with staff and sharing hobbies such as the school motocross track. As students' self-belief improves, they gain the social skills and confidence to undertake activities such as skiing holidays and meals out. One student commented: 'I could not go out for meals with my family, and now I can.'

The student's voice is at the heart of residential care. For example, students choose their own meals and activities. Students make requests to change the environment, which staff follow through. For example, they requested a bigger lounge, which has just been created. Students are now choosing the decoration for this. Recently at students' request, several new carpets have been fitted.

Students enjoy an excellent range of home-cooked food. Input from the nutritionist ensures that students' specialist dietary needs are well catered for. Staff help students to understand the need for a balanced diet. As a result, students start to make healthy choices. Some students who chose very limited food options are now eating new food and starting to vary their diet. Mealtimes provide an excellent social experience and social learning opportunity. Students successfully transfer these skills to other settings, such as restaurants.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

Students thrive from the nurturing approach taken by staff. There is a continual focus on the value of each individual. Staff provide students with the skills to regulate and manage their own behaviour. Consequently, incidents of challenging behaviour dramatically reduce as students develop self-belief and coping strategies. This empowers them to manage their own anxieties.

Staff understand the risks that students face in the community and online. Staff members' in-depth knowledge of individual students allows them to manage risks yet still provide students with life opportunity. Risks significantly reduce because of the individualised work that staff do to educate students about keeping safe both in school and in the community.

All students feel safe here. The warm and caring approach from staff provides an excellent model for students. There is no bullying, as there is emphasis on regard and appreciation for others. Because of the strong relationships between students and staff, students feel confident to speak to staff if they are worried or upset.

Senior managers are quick to respond to any safeguarding issues or allegations. They have strong links with other professionals, such as social workers, local authority designated safeguarding officers, and the police. This ensures that there is effective sharing of information and immediate action to protect students from harm.

Students enjoy living in a safe environment which is well maintained. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that only adults who do not pose a risk to children are employed to care for them.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

The school has an inclusive community approach, which incorporates boarding as an integral part of the school. Residential care is exceptionally well managed by a dedicated senior management team that leads by example. As a result, staff mirror its high expectations and enthusiasm.

Highly effective monitoring systems track the quality of student care, their progress and safety. The board of governors assists management monitoring arrangements extremely well. They provide support and challenge when necessary in order to keep standards of care high. Students work closely with managers to monitor their own quality of care and progress. This helps them to celebrate and recognise their achievements.

Staff receive on-going training that is tailored to students' needs. This ensures that staff have the understanding and skills to meet students' very complex needs. Staff benefit from regular and reflective supervision. Consequently, staff feel well supported and happy in their work. One staff member commented: 'You get excellent support from the managers here. They are always there for you if you need them. Supervision is supportive too.'

The senior management team maintains close links with parents to ensure that they are up to date with student progress. Due to the long distances that some students travel, it is harder for some parents to receive direct support from the school and to link in with the school community. This is an area requiring development to ensure that all parents feel included and connected to the school.

This residential provision fully meets its statement of purpose. It provides individualised, outstanding care, which recognises the full potential of every student.

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	12765
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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	60
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	9 to 19
Headteacher	Geoff Brookes
Date of previous boarding inspection	19/01/2016
Telephone number	01845 587 238
Email address	geoff.brookes@breckenbrough.org.uk

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