

Breckenbrough School Limited

Breckenbrough School Limited, Sandhutton, Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 4EN
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special 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 17 boarders. Boarding accommodation is in the main school building and two annexes. There are a range of facilities, including a motocross track, a bike maintenance garage, a design technology room and a gym. The school is situated on the outskirts of Thirsk.

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

Date of previous inspection: 6 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The unified application of the 24-hour curriculum consistently reinforces students' academic and social learning. As a result, the students make excellent progress in all areas of their development.
- Individualised work with the students helps them to improve their social confidence and understanding.
- The students enjoy a range of new life experiences, such as skiing trips abroad.
- Students benefit from the excellent range of on-site activities, such as the design technology room and the motocross track.
- The staff team nurtures each student's unique personality. Consequently, the students' confidence and sense of identity grows. They feel a sense of value and belonging.
- The students thrive in a well-structured environment. Clear and consistent boundaries help to reduce the students' anxieties and incidents of challenging behaviour reduce or cease.
- The leaders have high expectations regarding the quality of care they provide. They lead by example. As a result, the staff team mirrors their model.
- The leaders are highly ambitious for all of the students to achieve and progress. Consequently, the students accomplish their goals, and go on to undertake further study or gain employment.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Consider a review of the staff supervision and appraisal system. This will make the most of every reflective learning opportunity and will support ongoing staff development. (National minimum standards, standard 19)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff team has an exceptional knowledge of the students' very complex needs. It places great emphasis on identifying each individual's special qualities and promoting each student's individuality. As a result, the students become confident in their own identities and start to believe in their own abilities. The staff team leads by example, promoting relationships based around equality, trust and respect. Consequently, the students trust the staff and enjoy outstanding relationships with them.

The students who have failed in other settings come here and thrive due to the highly personalised and specialist approach. One of the students commented: 'We have been kicked out of other schools, this is the second-chance school.' The staff team helps the students to believe in themselves and understand areas they need to develop. As a result, the students' self-esteem and confidence grows. This helps them to develop high aspirations for themselves, which they go on to achieve. One of the students commented: 'From coming here I have more confidence, not just in going out, but also in myself.'

The students benefit from support from highly skilled staff who are able to understand and support their very complex social and emotional needs. Additional specialist support from the school's psychologist ensures that all of the students make excellent progress with their social and emotional development. The students go on to develop an awareness of themselves. They start to understand their emotions and develop coping strategies, which helps them to function in daily life.

The staff in this school work as one united team. Consequently, the delivery of the 24-hour curriculum is seamless. The students benefit tremendously from all of the staff spending quality time with them in the school and in the residential setting. Staff spending quality time with the students ensures that the staff team has an all-round understanding of each student's social and academic needs. This strengthens the student-and-staff relationships, and continually reinforces social and academic learning.

The staff team nurtures the students' talents. For example, in design technology, they have undertaken projects such as making a wheeled toy for disabled children. The students' design was so successful that they won a regional competition and gained a place in the national finals. The students have gone on to make several toys for a local special educational needs school. From this activity the students have gained a huge sense of achievement. They have learned problem-solving skills, gained an understanding of others needs and become part of the local community.

The students' life experience significantly improves because of the skills they learn while boarding. The students learn the skills to be able to enjoy overnight stays and

holidays abroad. They enjoy a range of weekly off-site activities, such as climbing, bike riding, shopping and swimming. On the site, they benefit from access to a gym, a design technology room, a gardening area and a motocross track with a bike maintenance garage. This enables the students to develop their own interests, and significantly improves the students' social skills and confidence.

The students prepare well for their transition to adulthood. They are equipped with the academic and social skills they need to move successfully into employment or higher education. The introduction of the new independent living skills hub and social skills accreditation scheme is helping the students to learn to manage their lives independently, ready for when they leave. The students express how much this is helping their social learning; they are proud of their social skills achievements, which are now being accredited. One parent commented: 'He has made lots of progress there. They take him shopping. They help him learn how to use public transport. He is making good progress for when he leaves.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

The staff team has high expectations of the students' behaviour. The staff team provides clear, consistent boundaries and routines. Consequently, the students' anxieties lessen and their behaviour improves. The staff team is skilled in identifying the subtlest of signs that a student may be becoming upset or a situation is escalating. Staff are quick to redirect this positively, avoiding significant incidents. If any challenges do arise, they deal with these positively and physical intervention is extremely rare.

Detailed assessments of risk help the staff team to predict and manage any risks to the students. The staff team works closely with the students to help them take small steps towards independence and help them understand how to keep themselves safe in school and in the community. In addition, the students undertake individualised work sessions around topics such as internet safety. This helps the students to learn the skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The students' levels of social understanding vary. Consequently, at times, through their lack of understanding, some of the students offend others. Some students perceive this as bullying. They feel confident about reporting such issues to the staff team. High staffing levels enable them to be constantly on hand to address these issues, and to help the students to learn to manage social situations positively.

The staff team is confident about following safeguarding procedures to keep the students safe. No students go missing from this school, but the staff team is familiar with procedures should the situation arise. The staff team benefits from training around the wider risks to students, such as radicalisation, online safety and child sexual exploitation. This provides the staff team with the knowledge to identify the early signs of risk so it can act quickly to prevent the students from coming to harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leaders are highly ambitious for the students to achieve. They pride themselves on modelling high-quality care practice. They are innovative in their approach to adapting the environment and learning to meet each individual's very specific needs. Consequently, the staff mirror this approach and dedicate themselves to ensuring that the students receive high-quality care and attain excellent outcomes.

The leaders' focus is centred completely on the students. As a result, the students feel a sense of value and their confidence improves. The students develop trust in the leaders, and actively voice their opinions about their care. The leaders dedicate their time to listening to the students taking on board their thoughts on a regular basis.

Robust monitoring systems enable the leaders to monitor the students' social and academic progress. This allows them to identify any reductions in their achievements. They are swift to analyse issues and take effective action to address them. A strong governing body provides support and challenge where necessary, to enhance the leaders' monitoring and oversight of care practice.

The leaders have a sound understanding of the strengths of the school. They are dedicated to continual progression. The focused development plan, which centres on the students' needs, helps them to achieve this.

A new initiative, the virtual parent support group 'The School Gates', is enabling the parents that are spread across the country to contact each other. Through this, they are able to share ideas and receive the essential support they need.

The leaders are keen to work with outside services to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the students. When necessary, they act as advocates for the students and provide challenge to other services to make sure that the students get the support they need. They are committed to providing continued support for the students who are moving on from the school, to make sure that their success continues, through the schools' aftercare charity.

Staff supervision and appraisals do not always happen within the specified timescales. This has been identified as an area for development to ensure that the staff team has the opportunity to review and continually develop its practice. Despite this, the staff team is enthusiastic. The staff are happy in their work, and all reported feeling well supported by the leaders.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and

young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC007922

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Simon Bannister

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Inspector

Jamie Richardson, social care inspector



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