

# Broomhill Bank School – North

Rowhill Road, Swanley, Kent BR8 7RP

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Broomhill Bank School is a split-site residential special school maintained by Kent County Council. It provides education for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders and are aged between 11 and 19 years of age. The residential accommodation is situated at the north site in semi-rural surroundings on the outskirts of Swanley, Kent. There are currently 66 children on the school role and 17 access the residential provision. The residential provision was last inspected in January 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 17 to 19 October 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 8 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Leaders, managers and all staff share a commitment to supporting residential students to fulfil their potential and achieve their goals.
- Safeguarding is in safe hands. Skilled and effective leaders manage safeguarding and child protection matters in line with relevant legislation.
- Residential students are positive about their experiences. They appreciate the support that staff provide and the family-like environment created by staff.
- Residential students form positive relationships with the staff and develop a sense of safety and protection.
- Effective engagement and collaboration with education staff ensure that residential students receive a high standard of support which meets their specific needs.
- Senior leaders and managers know the school's strengths and areas for development. They demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles. They continue to work, with the support of governors, to deliver the school's development plan.
- Residential students and the residential staff are very happy at the school.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- The exterior fencing and the sensory and semi-independence areas have been underinvested in.
- There is not yet a full governing body and there is no permanent safeguarding governor.

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

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

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

- All children, including those who have special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. (Residential special schools, National minimum standards, 8.1)  
In particular, improve the lunchtime meal provision to ensure that it consistently provides good-quality and nutritious food.

### **Recommendations**

- Devise a specific workforce development plan to ensure sufficiency of staffing as numbers increase in the residential provision.
- Ensure that written risk assessments are in place that detail how decisions are made about the allocation of bedrooms.
- Ensure that all current policies are reviewed and updated when needed; for example, the safer recruitment policy needs updating to reflect the changes to data protection legislation.
- Consider improving ways of ensuring the effectiveness of training delivered to staff, for example by using competency testing for the administration of medicines.
- Improve the profile of the school council around the school.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Residential students, some of whom previously experienced significant difficulties at school, respond to the individualised support provided and make excellent progress. Parents commented that '[We] couldn't be happier with the care', and 'The staff go above and beyond in order to help.' One parent said, 'My child has completely changed for the good in one year... It's a relief to see how well my child has settled at the school.' The residential students appreciate the friendly, nurturing environment and form warm, nurturing and trusting relationships with the staff.

The residential staff work in close cooperation with the academic staff to support the students who are experiencing difficulties. The staff monitor students closely and respond well to issues such as homesickness, isolation and anxiety. The residential students receive very good levels of support, and their academic progress is tracked effectively.

The views of the residential students are important to all the staff and are taken seriously. The school council meets regularly to discuss day-to-day issues relating to students' school and residential experience. However, the profile of the school council around the school is unnecessarily low. The residential students do, however, have other opportunities to put their views forward individually in meetings with their key workers.

The residential students' food varies in quality. Breakfast and dinner are taken in the individual houses and are of a very good standard. Lunch is taken in the school's dining room and falls short of being good. Feedback about the lunch provision bore this out.

The residential environment comprises domestic-style houses. Residential students enjoy an environment in which they can develop independent skills such as cooking and laundry. They have a voice in the running of the house and contribute to decision-making about issues such as which activities to undertake and the internal decoration.

The staff actively seek the wishes and hear about the feelings of the residential students. The students understand their care plans and value the help and the support offered by the staff. Staff address behavioural issues imaginatively, for example through work to address sleep difficulties, bedtime routines and social engagement.

The residential students' health needs are well managed. The staff are trained to administer medications safely. Safe storage, administration and recording practices ensure that students receive their medicines as prescribed.

The residential students achieve positive outcomes. They move on to planned programmes of education or training when they leave the school.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The residential students said that they feel safe and reported that they can easily talk to the staff if they have any concerns. Several residential students who spoke to the inspector feel that the residential service is a safe space, that their privacy is respected and that they are not subject to bullying.

Safeguarding matters are well managed at this school. The designated safeguarding lead for the school heads up a team of staff that has safeguarding responsibilities. The designated safeguarding lead is also the head of care for the residential service. She is very experienced and knowledgeable in all relevant areas of safeguarding. She undertakes specialist training for the role and keeps this regularly updated. Safeguarding professionals in the local authority commented that the school seeks advice and guidance whenever there are concerns about safeguarding, including staff action and behaviours. Information is shared promptly with external safeguarding agencies, and the school works in an open and transparent way when investigating incidents or concerns. Safeguarding matters being addressed during the inspection were managed professionally, sensitively and effectively.

The residential staff know the students well. They have the skills to recognise the students' vulnerabilities and address these on an individual basis. The family liaison officers work closely with the school, students and families to provide an inclusive and holistic approach to safeguarding. Electronic recording systems enable information to be shared so that staff can implement actions consistently. Concerns are closely monitored by the safeguarding team and discussed weekly at meetings. Risk assessments address residential students' needs, whether health, social or emotional. This ensures that the staff are consistent in implementing measures to reduce potential harm and provide effective support.

Relationships between staff and residential students are positive and are at the heart of successful behaviour strategies. Structure and clear boundaries help students develop a sense of safety, protection and trust. The focus is on understanding the reasons for poor behaviour and providing support rather than sanctions.

Recruitment procedures are sound and detailed. The current safer recruitment policy does not currently reflect the recent changes in data protection legislation.

Health and safety checks take place and ensure that students and staff work and live in a safe environment. The fencing of the school grounds needs improvement.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The head of care is very suitably experienced and qualified. She is passionate and highly committed to ensuring that residential students have a very positive experience at the school. She leads by example, setting high standards with a child-centred focus. She is very well respected by her staff team. She works closely and effectively with the head of school.

The head of care is also the designated safeguarding lead for the school. She manages the additional responsibility well. This gives her the advantage of having a good insight into any matters that may affect the safety and well-being of students across the whole school. It also means that the residential service is led by a professional with specialist knowledge and experience of safeguarding.

The school leadership has been through changes since the last inspection. A new executive headteacher oversees both school sites, and there have been changes to the membership of the governing body. The Executive head teacher is working closely with the senior leadership team to develop the school. In particular, financial investment is required to continue with the upgrading and development of the residential provision and to ensure sufficient sensory equipment in the residential houses.

The governing body has seen changes as referred to previously in this report. The Executive head teacher and the senior leadership team have written a new development plan for the school that governors are currently reviewing. In addition, current policies are also being reviewed and updated. There is currently an interim safeguarding governor; leaders plan to recruit a permanent governor to this role.

Staffing is sufficient, and there is an active recruitment programme, ensuring that staffing numbers and skills can continually meet the needs of the residential students. A workforce development plan would provide clear direction to future staff planning, especially considering the increasing numbers of students. The residential staff receive very good-quality training and supervision. However, there are currently no systems for evaluating the effectiveness of training.

Leaders and managers remain determined to develop the residential provision and provide strength and clarity in what they need to do this. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have already started to address many of the areas highlighted in this report. Independent visitor reports provide scrutiny and oversight, as do the reports to the governing body.

## **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:** SC041787

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** S Ackerley

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Liz Driver, social care inspector (lead)

Chris Russell, Regional director (one day on site)



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