

William Henry Smith School

Boothroyd Lane, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 3JW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is a non-maintained special school for pupils who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. They may also have additional needs that relate to specific learning difficulties, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The school provides education to boys aged eight to 16 years old and accommodation for boys eight to 19 years old. The older students attend colleges in the regional area.

Accommodation is provided in five residential houses in the school's grounds. The school is set in several acres of land and has a range of facilities. These include an adventure playground, an all-weather sports enclosure, an indoor sports hall and gymnasium and a farm.

The school stands out in its provision of flexible weekend support and outreach work to pupils and their families during the holiday periods.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 January 2019

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**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 14 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The level of care and support is exceptionally nurturing, therapeutic and bespoke.
- The staff consistently make a huge difference in the lives of the pupils.
- There is a strong culture of aspiration and positivity that is embraced by all the staff.
- Staff practice is evidence based and pupils benefit from a range of creative therapies.
- There is seamless high-quality support from staff who have different roles, responsibilities and professional backgrounds.
- The leadership team has developed the staff into a highly effective, cohesive team.
- The pupils feel safe, develop a strong sense of their personal safety and overcome significant barriers to be responsible citizens.
- The school provides additional support and outreach work at weekends and in the school holidays.
- The pupils' current and future life opportunities are significantly enhanced by being at the school.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Develop the quality of the half-termly written monitoring reports so that they reflect a rigorous assessment of how the school safeguards and promotes the welfare of the pupils. Include the impact the school has on the experiences and progress of the pupils. (NMS 20)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The pupils experience care that is exceptionally nurturing, therapeutic and tailored towards their individual needs. The therapeutic, teaching and care staff work closely together in a way that makes a huge difference in the lives of the pupils.

The staff are talented and have a wide range of experience. They use a broad range of research and evidence-based practice to help pupils overcome diverse and complex barriers to their development.

The pupils' starting points include poor speech and language, high levels of aggression and anxiety, isolation, poor self-esteem and negative experiences of previous school placements. The staff empower pupils to turn this around. Consequently, the pupils achieve well-developed communication and social skills, their confidence is high, they make new friendships and become positive, responsible people in the local and wider community.

The skills of the staff, and subsequent quality of care, supports the pupils to manage their conditions, such as ASD and ADHD, as they become vastly resilient to new experiences. They attend a range of social events, are successful in college and some achieve university education. In the post-16 house, students learn to drive, gain employment and use public transport. These are remarkable achievements for pupils who previously struggled to come out of their room or go out of their homes.

The pupils sustain their progress and development. They transfer their skills and abilities to other environments, such as home and the community. They are more independent at home, help out more with their families and help others in the community.

The pupils enjoy being at school and take part in a wide range of activities on- and off-site. Their individual interests are promoted by the school so that they can achieve and develop responsibility, such as taking care of the school farm animals, and one pupil's bedroom included personal gym equipment to promote his boxing talents. The pupils benefit from planned trips away to places such as London and Northern Ireland and gaming conventions that provide them with new experiences. This is enhanced by additional support the school provides to the pupils at the weekend.

The pupils' current and future life opportunities are substantially enhanced. Their quality of life is significantly higher in terms of their emotional well-being, their new friendships and improved home life. They develop future ambitions and go on to succeed when they leave the school.

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

Thorough and comprehensive planning to meet the individual needs of pupils starts with the admissions process. This ensures that the school can safely meet the needs of the pupils. This continues through an in-depth 15-week assessment and ongoing reviews through the weekly learning and mentor team meetings. This provides pupils with bespoke care and support that addresses any safeguarding concerns and promotes their welfare.

There are high levels of support that reduce over time as risks reduce and the pupils progress. Proactive risk management enables the pupils to take age- and needs-appropriate risks so that they develop trust and responsibility. The pupils have off-site gym membership, take driving lessons, help run the school farm and cook in the kitchens. The pupils are proud of their achievements and acknowledge their own sense of personal safety and how much they achieve at school. They feel safe at the school and feel safe to go out into society.

The risks from criminalisation, self-harm, sexualised behaviour, isolation and going missing all reduce. The pupils' behaviour is very good and significantly improves as a result of being in the school. The staff let the pupils be themselves so that the pupils feel accepted and not judged for their difficulties. The pupils' ASD and ADHD do not go away, but the pupils learn their own coping mechanisms as they become more self-aware and develop their ambitions. The subsequent improvements in the pupils' emotional well-being have a big impact on how well they achieve with their academic learning.

There is comprehensive senior management oversight of the welfare and safety of the pupils. There is a bespoke monitoring system in place and frequent, regular meetings about the pupils. The school has productive relationships with the local authority and placing authorities. There is good communication and partnership work to ensure that the pupils' safety is protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The senior leaders continue with their track record of providing pupils with outstanding experiences and outcomes. They are ambitious for pupils to achieve well and this ethos is shared and embraced by all the staff.

Leadership and management are influential in maintaining high standards of care. There is considerable regional acknowledgement that the school is a centre of excellence.

The whole school works cohesively for the benefit of the pupils. Staff at all levels, including the senior leadership team and premises staff, have good relationships with the pupils and contribute to their care and support. The therapy staff, teaching staff and care staff consistently provide seamless and meticulous support to the pupils.

The staff understand the impact of neglect, poor attachment, trauma, mental health and ASD. The staff have the resources, skills and knowledge to support the pupils to overcome these complex difficulties.

The staff are proud of what they achieve and feel well supported by the management team. There is a strong culture of aspiration and positivity.

There are thorough governance arrangements and the governing body plays a key role in challenging the school and making improvements. Half-termly monitoring is undertaken by one of the governors. The quality of corresponding written reports does not reflect the level of challenge that takes place in practice. This is a point for improvement but has not had an effect on the care of the pupils.

The school produces 'case studies' for each pupil that track their progress from the point of admission and reflect the journey of each pupil. These show the excellent progress the pupils make. This system provides the governors with detailed information and contributes to the high level of management oversight.

The school is proactive in working with partner agencies and parents. Parents rate the school highly and are full of praise for the difference it makes to their children's and their family's lives.

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: SC001038

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Sue Ackroyd

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Inspector

Simon Morley: social care inspector (lead)



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