

# 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

This school is a split-site residential special school maintained by Kent County Council. It provides education for pupils aged between 11 and 19 years of age who have communication and interaction difficulties associated with autism, speech, language and communication needs. The residential accommodation is situated at the north site in semi-rural surroundings on the outskirts of Swanley, Kent. There are currently 72 children on the school roll and 20 access the residential provision. The residential provision was last inspected in October 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 18 to 20 June 2019

**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:** 17 October 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

The residential students experience a very good standard of care that enables them to engage in education and make progress across many areas of their lives, including speech, language, inclusion and communication. A strength of the school is that the staff embrace difference and can adapt the care to meet individual needs. Residential students spend time together harmoniously despite their different needs and behaviours. Students have a real empathy towards each other's differences; they are able to understand and share the feelings of each other. Parents commented that their children have a great experience, with really good responsive support and education.

Residential students thoroughly enjoy their time staying overnight in the residential houses and quickly develop supportive and caring relationships with the care team staff. They are encouraged to join in activities that staff propose, and those that the residential students suggest. As a result, many develop improved social skills and gain confidence in mixing with adults and their peers, both in the school and out in the community. The residential students also learn other skills that they will need as adults. A programme that ensures that residential students gain independence skills is skilfully delivered and positively received by the residential students. The processes for students moving into the school and moving on are extremely well organised and managed, with very good outcomes.

Those residential students who experience difficulties are highly supported by a skilled staff team. The residential staff work in close cooperation with the academic staff to provide consistency of care. Residential students' emotional well-being has a high priority at the school. This is an area that the leaders continue to invest in for the residential students and staff. Relationships formed mean that residential students feel comfortable in the school surroundings knowing that they are always treated with respect and dignity. The staff team demonstrates cultural competence and all residential students are treated sensitively and fairly.

Individual records show the progress that residential students make. Leaders continue to invest in software that will further evidence individual progress. Individual plans identify goals and targets that are achievable but also aspirational. Residential students have a voice in their goal setting and review. Many make excellent progress and are proud of their achievements.

This visit evidenced an improvement in the lunchtime food provision. Leaders are aware, and are taking action, so that more can be done to encourage and promote healthy living, especially around healthy dietary provision. Individual dietary needs are catered for. Residential students expressed a desire for the school to decrease the use of plastics and to increase recycling. This is being taken forward to the school council.

Residential students use accommodation that is satisfactory. There are plans in place that need to be expedited to upgrade the residential houses before further decline

occurs. Some areas around the school and residential accommodation are not well maintained, with requests for maintenance and refurbishment taking far too long to be actioned.

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

Many aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures and practices are excellent; however, areas relating to health and safety need improving to ensure that the residential students' physical safety is also of the same high standard. In addition, there has been no governor with safeguarding responsibilities until a very recent appointment. Her impact has yet to be tested and embedded.

The lack of a safeguarding governor, however, has not distracted away from the well-managed safeguarding procedures in place, nor the protection of the residential students. Safeguarding matters are very well managed at this school. The knowledgeable and effective designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is also the head of care for the residential service. She has a considerable range of knowledge concerning all safeguarding areas. She is passionate about safety and is not shy to challenge other professionals if it is in the best interest of the residential students. One professional stated that the school goes 'above and beyond' in keeping students safe. The DSL is supported by a team of staff who also have specific safeguarding responsibilities.

Well-trained residential staff understand the many aspects of good safeguarding practice. They identify risks and changes in individual residential students' behaviours and understand each residential pupil's specific vulnerabilities. The family liaison officers work closely with the school, students and families to provide an inclusive and whole-school approach to safeguarding and child protection. There are clear procedures for staff to follow if they have concerns. Appropriate referrals are made to external safeguarding agencies.

Residential students said that they feel comfortable around the staff team and that the residential houses are a safe space. Relationships between the staff and the residential students are positive and are at the heart of successful behaviour strategies. Structure and clear boundaries help the residential students to develop a sense of safety, protection and trust. The focus is on understanding the reasons for poor behaviour and providing support rather than sanctions.

Residential students are further protected by detailed recruitment procedures that meet safe standards.

Although regular health and safety checks are undertaken, including fire risk assessments, the systems to enable auditing and monitoring are messy. There are gaps in the processes for recording health and safety matters and maintenance tasks, for example the disorganised recording of when recommended actions and works made by external agencies have been completed. Consequently, it is not always clear that necessary maintenance and repairs have been completed in a timely manner, thus providing the best protection.

The inspector was present for an unannounced fire drill during this visit and it was very well responded to by the residential students and staff. Good record-keeping was observed; however, no evaluation of the drill was undertaken by leaders following its completion. This was a missed opportunity for leaders to either be satisfied or to instigate improvements.

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

Since the last inspection there has been a change of leadership. Currently, there is an acting head of school, with plans to recruit a permanent head of school.

The head of care is very suitably experienced and qualified to fulfil her role and responsibilities. Her DSL role means that the residential provision is led by a professional with specialist knowledge and experience of safeguarding. She is highly effective in promoting change, has excellent leadership and communication skills and engages very well with the residential students, staff and families. She is well-respected by the staff team and works closely with the acting head of school.

There is a stable team of residential staff who have many individual skills that they share with each other. As the number of residential students increases, an active staff recruitment programme ensures sufficiency of staff to meet the residential students' needs. Staff are supported to develop, and recent pieces of work with regard to medication competency testing and the development of a workforce plan have seen individual members of staff produce high standards of work with good impact.

The school continues to experience challenges when recruiting members for the governing body, despite the continuing determined efforts of leaders. This presents further challenges to ensure that all required matters are effectively monitored. For example, monitoring the residential provision is undertaken internally as well as by an external visitor. Regular checks of practices and records in the residential houses do take place, but the recording of these matters is cumbersome and unwieldy. A more streamlined approach is recommended so that leaders can be confident that all matters included in appendix 3 of the national minimum standards are covered. Despite this shortfall, all of the recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

Leaders and managers remain determined to develop the residential provision. However, decisions need to be made by the provider in the very near future about financial investment to prevent a deterioration of the quality of the school and residential buildings.

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

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

- The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of children are ensured. (Residential special schools, National minimum standards 6.2)

In particular, the processes for recording health and safety works and maintenance tasks need to be better organised, with improved monitoring and auditing. In addition, improve the response timings to maintenance requests.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the school's website contains the most up-to-date policies.
- Evaluate fire evacuation drills.
- Create improved systems to evidence that the aspects referred to in appendix 3 of the Residential Special School, National minimum standards, have been monitored.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** Mrs Tina Bissett

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

**Telephone number:** 01322 662937

**Email address:** [tbissett@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk](mailto:tbissett@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk)

## **Inspector**

Liz Driver, social care inspector



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