

# 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 non-maintained special school (NMSS) for up to 60 boys aged nine to 19 years. They have a range of complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorder. There is provision for 37 boarders. Currently, 18 students board between one and four nights per week. Boarding accommodation is in the main school building and in a house in the grounds. There is a range of facilities, including a motor cross track, a bike maintenance garage, an all-weather sports pitch and a gym.

**Inspection dates:** 15 to 17 October 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:** 9 October 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Students make remarkable progress in this school. Many have very complex needs and previous schools were unable to help them achieve their potential. The school helps students to aspire to succeed and to thrive in the wider world. Students enjoy significantly enhanced social and family relationships. Many go on to higher or further education. Students know they make progress. Many say that this is the first time they have felt understood by members of staff.

Students build strong, trusting relationships with key members of staff. They know that staff are invested in them. This helps students to develop a sense of belonging to the school and to accept the care and support that members of staff offer. As a result, students recognise their capacity to succeed and do so, often for the first time.

The school provides individualised care to students, based on their assessed needs. Students take part in reviewing and developing their plans. As a result of the collaboration with school and family, students feel empowered to make progress, and they do so.

Members of staff work with parents, to include them in the school's model of care. This means that many students experience a more consistent approach between home and school. This brings about sustained improvements, including in the holidays. Parents find staff very supportive. Many provided extremely positive feedback to the inspector. One parent said that not only had their son got his life back, but so had their whole family.

Members of staff help new students to settle into life at school. Individualised inductions to the school take place. Those who need more support receive it. Most students do settle and remain at the school until they are ready to move to further or higher education. This is exceptional progress for students who previously experienced significant social and educational instability.

Students benefit from a wide range of professional expertise in school. This includes psychological, nutritional and occupational therapy input. All support is individualised. It is led by the students and available when and for as long as it is needed. As a result, students are helped to make sustained progress in all areas of their development.

Members of staff help students to prepare for the future. Students develop practical and social skills needed to lead successful, independent lives when they leave the security of school. Students become more confident and their self-esteem improves. Some students attend college in the community and others begin to travel independently for the first time. For many students, this is evidence of excellent progress from their starting points.

Students take part in a range of activities that enrich their lives and improve their

confidence and self-esteem. Many students develop interests that last long after they leave school. Members of staff use their positive relationships with students to help everyone find potential interests. As a result, students experience success away from the classroom, regardless of the complexity of their needs.

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

Students feel safe and are safe in this school. Their vulnerabilities are well known to the staff team. Members of staff create individualised safety plans for students. This leads to a coordinated, consistent response to risks and any risk-taking behaviour reduces. As a result, they make progress and can access a wide a range of opportunities.

Risks associated with substance misuse, criminal activity or exploitation are rare. Students do not go missing. Members of staff help students who have a history of self-harming behaviour to reduce their emotional distress. Because of this input, students become safer over a sustained period.

The management of challenging behaviour is extremely good. Members of staff consistently follow individualised behaviour management plans. This results in a significant reduction in serious and low-level incidents. Students whose behaviour prevented them from learning in previous settings make substantial progress in all areas of their development.

Restraint is not used as a form of behaviour management. Staff only physically intervene with students to ensure their immediate safety. This gives a powerful message to students that they have autonomy over their actions. As a result, students develop improved self-awareness and they learn to manage their own behaviour.

Members of staff prepare risk assessments for activities and trips that are pertinent to the students involved. Members of staff make use of the detailed knowledge that they have of students to minimise risks. Contingency plans are well known to the staff team. As a result of such detailed planning, students take part in a wide variety of activities that are safe and enrich their experiences.

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

Leaders and managers are passionate about the students, their welfare and their progress. All senior members of staff, regardless of their role in the school, are directly involved with the students. Students know that managers work together in their best interests, which reassures them. As a result, students can focus on their learning and overall development.

Leaders and managers encourage an ethos of aspiration and achievement throughout the school. Members of staff help students to understand and meet their potential. The staff team is ambitious for students and encourages them to develop high expectations for themselves. Because of this approach, students believe in their

own abilities and achieve success.

Senior leaders inspire members of staff and act as role models. They are available to the staff team for advice and support. Senior leaders listen to and respect the opinions of the staff team. Because of the approach of the senior team, students are cared for by staff who feel valued and are invested in the school.

Senior leaders use a range of innovative tools for monitoring of all aspects of the school. Leaders know where and when changes are required. They act swiftly to improve the experiences and progress of students. The students consistently receive the care that they need, when they need it. As a result, they make considerable progress from their starting points.

Leaders and managers use external resources to help some students with specific needs. Some of these services are innovative and result in students being able to sustain the improvements they have made. Because of this approach, the school can help students to succeed when other schools have been unable to do so.

Senior leaders recognise and take effective action when the behaviours of some students are not safe at the school despite the significant efforts of the staff team. On such occasions, the headteacher decides that the school can no longer meet the needs of a student. This means that students who need a different level of care can be referred to more appropriate settings without delay.

Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They want it to improve further. For example, the headteacher has plans to evolve the extended school day to benefit more students. This approach to change means that the school does not stagnate. It continues to develop innovative practice in line with the needs of its students.

The school is very well supported by its governing body. Governors visit the school regularly. They complete statutory responsibilities and get to know the students. Governors have an excellent understanding of the progress that students make and whether they are safe. The written reports from these visits could have more evaluation of these aspects of students' experiences.

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

### **Recommendations**

- 20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).  
In particular, when undertaking half termly checks, the independent visitor should ensure that the written report includes the evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded.

### **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:** SC007922

**Headteacher:** Simon Bannister

**Type of school:** residential special school

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## **Inspector:**

Jane Titley, social care inspector



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