

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. There are currently 303 children on the school roll, of which 115 attend the North site and 19 access the residential provision.

The residential accommodation is situated at the north site on the outskirts of Swanley, Kent. The head of residential care and safeguarding has been in post for six years and has a relevant qualification as required by the NMS.

The residential provision was last inspected in June 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 November 2021

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: 18 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Students experience high-quality care from staff who are committed to building and maintaining positive relationships with them. Interactions between students and staff are warm and nurturing. Staff are attentive and familiar with the students' needs. Students feel secure and cared for, which enables them to make exceptional progress.

Students' views are valued. Acting on the students' views and opinions is embedded into practice. They influence all decisions about the day-to-day running of the residential service. All students are closely involved in developing their written care and support plans. As a result, the plans describe students' choices about how to care for them. A few weeks after they arrived at the school, one student felt safe enough to tell staff that they were anxious about the way they were being looked after at home. They have been supported to make their voice heard and effect change. Having a say in the way they are looked after, often for the first time in their lives, is empowering for students.

Students make exceptional progress in relation to their emotional well-being. Many students have experienced significant early years trauma and neglect. Students have safe opportunities to explore their early life experiences. The inclusive and respectful culture enables students to experience and understand the importance of meaningful, trusting relationships.

Educationally, students make exceptional progress from their starting points. Teaching staff support students to choose a pathway that enables them to achieve the best outcomes possible. Attendance and progress in education improve as a result of staying in the residential provision and achievements are celebrated. As a result, students' life chances are significantly improved when they come to stay at this school.

Students report that they enjoy the social and recreational opportunities which are offered to them. The school has a goal to develop the students' sense of being part of their local community. Students are taken to facilities close to their home, such as gyms and sports centres, so they can become familiar with them and continue to attend during weekends and school holidays. This provides opportunities for students to live full and interesting lives.

The students' physical and mental well-being is managed extremely well. The head of care has developed excellent relationships with the local child and adolescent mental health services team and ensures that students receive support for their mental health when they need it. Medication administration is expertly managed by the residential staff. If students need to see external professionals for their physical health, staff are thoughtful about the best setting to take them to. For example,

students sometimes attend a health drop-in centre close to their home because they are familiar with it and this causes them least amount of anxiety. The staff team's deep level of understanding of the importance of sensitive, individualised support for the students is impressive.

Students' independence is fully promoted and staff are committed to preparing children to live more independently in the future. Teaching practical skills to students is embedded into practice. A different student cooks the evening meal with a staff member every day. One student recently completed an accredited course in completing job applications. He used his new skills to gain part-time employment at a local supermarket. Staff understand that for the students, just as important as practical skills, are life skills such as problem-solving and self-soothing. Staff use every opportunity, including key-work sessions, to help students make progress in these areas. Staff speak with pride when they describe the progress students have made. The careful support students receive gives them the confidence to achieve the goals that are important to them.

Students are treated with dignity and respect. There is a strong ethos of supporting students to celebrate being who they want to be. Students are sensitively supported to understand more about their sexual identity. An inclusive culture which promotes equality and diversity enables students to explore their developing sense of identity and to be happy as themselves.

Transitions both into and out of the school are thoughtful and well managed. Plans are individualised and adapted for students' individual needs and circumstances. The parent of one student spoke positively about the careful planning that went into organising visits for her child to the school during the summer holiday. This enabled their child to feel settled when the new term started. The parent described how good communication with the family and previous school meant that staff had lots of information about how best to support her before she arrived. The student told the inspector she had settled in well and was proud to be the residential representative for the recently reformed school council.

All students leave the school with a plan for further education. One student has recently left the school to go to university. Before arriving at this school, she had frequently refused to attend school and had big gaps in her education. Teaching staff were able to help her to achieve her goal of gaining the qualifications she needed to study art in higher education. Residential staff were instrumental in making her move a success. They helped her to get to know the local area she would be living in, and to learn the skills she needs to live independently. School staff remain in regular contact with the student to check on her welfare. Sustaining relationships with students who have left the service strengthens their belief that they are important to the adults who care for them.

There is strong evidence of transformational change for students at the school, which not only improves their quality of life at entry but also helps them to have a positive outlook and aspirations for the future.

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

Students' safety and well-being is a priority. The head of care is also the designated safeguarding lead. She is extremely knowledgeable and is passionate in her efforts to ensure the safety of the students. This not only applies to keeping them safe while they are at the school, but also ensuring they are safeguarded when they are at home in their local communities.

The whole school staff team went to great lengths to ensure students were safeguarded during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown periods. The designated safeguarding lead assessed the risk of harm to all students who were unable to take up their residential placement. They extended the risk assessment to the student's wider family. Depending on the level of risk, staff provided varied packages of support, including telephone contact, virtual quizzes, food parcels, socially distanced walks and signposting to organisations who could offer specialist support. The 'team around the family' approach has been shared with other schools and recognised as exceptionally good safeguarding practice.

Staff are adept at noticing changes in students' presentation and behaviour. They recognise that those changes may indicate that students need additional help and advice, and possibly protection from harm. Consequently, staff are providing exceptional support which safeguards children.

Managers have invested time and energy into creating very strong links with wider safeguarding networks. This ensures that any concerns are dealt with quickly. There are multiple examples of individualised support being provided to address specific vulnerabilities for students. For one student, this means being helped to develop a better understanding about the risks of sexual exploitation and self-harm, and the impact of domestic abuse. Students are supported to understand how previous trauma can affect how they view the world and how they view themselves. They learn how to protect themselves and develop coping strategies which will help reduce the risk of harm to them now and in the future.

Staff demonstrate a highly effective culture of safeguarding that is deeply embedded in all areas of practice. Students' risks are fully understood by the adults looking after them. Staff make sure that students are aware of their own risk assessments, and of the plans in place to reduce risks. Empowering students to have a view about how their own risks are managed contributes to their protection and sense of security.

Due to the relationships students have with staff, incidents which require physical restraint or sanctions are extremely rare. Managers encourage staff to respond to behavioural incidents in a way which promotes learning for the student. The overall approach to supporting students to stay safe and to learn good behaviour demonstrates managers' commitment to ensuring that students become increasingly safe while having a positive experience of care.

The governor with safeguarding responsibilities appointed immediately before the last inspection has had a positive impact. She provides good oversight and scrutiny to ensure that high standards of care and student welfare are maintained.

Changes to staff in the maintenance team since the last inspection have led to a vast improvement in the processes for recording health and safety matters and maintenance tasks. As a result, repairs are completed in a timely manner and the physical environment is safe and secure.

Safe recruitment practices are understood and implemented by the manager and staff responsible for this area of practice. All necessary checks are in place to ensure that students are protected from unsuitable people working in the school. Students are involved in staff interviews in a meaningful way, but this is not fully reflected in recruitment records. While this does not undermine the safety of the recruitment process, it is a missed opportunity to demonstrate that the student voice is strong in this area of practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers are ambitious and have high aspirations for residential pupils. They are deeply committed to improving students' life chances.

Meaningful collaborative working between the residential and education leaders and managers provides children with consistency and stability. Residential and education teams work together to ensure that child-centred decisions are made about the support students receive. For example, if students are struggling to settle into school life in its entirety, they are helped to become familiar with the residential setting first. Only when they are ready are they helped to integrate into the classrooms. They are supported to do so at a pace which they can manage. This sensitive, well-planned approach increases their chance of success.

Students' social workers and other professionals speak highly of the efforts made by managers to support and safeguard students. Managers proactively advocate for students and challenge decisions made by other professionals when they believe those decisions are not made with students' best interests in mind.

The head of care makes sure that residential students live in comfortable and well-maintained houses which have been adapted to make them as homely as possible. Each student can personalise their bedroom. This helps them feel familiar with their surroundings and to feel that their houses are homely and welcoming.

Residential staff speak very highly of the support they receive from managers. Retention rates and staff morale are high. Feeling valued and respected enables staff to give high-quality care to students.

The introduction of a new system for storing records, introduced since the last inspection, has had a positive impact. Staff can easily access all the information held

about the students. The head of care has effective systems to ensure excellent oversight of care practice.

The system for recording staff training attendance does not currently demonstrate that staff have received training that is relevant to all the needs of the students that they are looking after. Staff are being offered a range of training courses to give them the knowledge and skills they need, but this is undermined by a shortfall in training records.

Managers have clear plans for the development of the service and are aware of strengths and weaknesses and how to address these. There is an embedded culture of welcoming feedback from external sources. Criticisms and comments about the service are seen as an opportunity to learn, reflect and improve.

All national minimum standards have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The head of care should review the system for recording staff recruitment to ensure that records demonstrate that students are involved in recruitment in a meaningful way. (NMS 17.2)
- The head of care should ensure that the system for recording staff training accurately reflects the training which residential staff have received. (NMS 19.1)

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: Steve Ackerley

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01322 662937

Email address: sackerley@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk

Inspector

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021