

# Bramfield House School

Walpole Road, Bramfield, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9AB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Bramfield House is a privately owned residential special school for 95 pupils aged between seven and 16. There are currently 14 children who board at the school. The residential accommodation is provided in the main school building and Ibstock House, which is situated on the school site. The school, which is based in Suffolk, caters for children who have social, emotional or mental health needs and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

The boarding manager has been in post since September 2021 and has an appropriate qualification.

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: 22 to 24 February 2022

**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:** 28 January 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Children benefit from strong relationships with caring staff who understand their needs. The staff speak positively about the children. They are proud of the children's achievements. The buildings are decorated with lovely canvasses showing the children enjoying themselves.

The staff and managers have high expectations of the children. The children are making progress in both their academic skills and social skills. The staff help and encourage the children to learn new skills. For example, older children budget for the week's meals and subsequently cook them. These children enjoy and learn from this experience.

The children benefit from an excellent range of varied activities. Children consistently spoke with enthusiasm about the recreational opportunities available to them. The staff are creative and ambitious about the activities that they provide. This includes children accessing external clubs, such as animation and martial arts, as well as new, exciting experiences, such as skiing and swimming.

The staff and children benefit from the availability of therapists. The staff seek therapists' views and expertise. This helps staff to gain a better understanding of how children who have experienced trauma behave and communicate. As a result, staff's responses to children's behaviour is more empathetic.

The children say that staff are interested in them. The staff seek children's views and then act on them. This conveys the message to children that their thoughts and opinions are important.

School surveys are completed. However, these do not gather views on the residential provision. This is a missed opportunity to further understand children's experiences and the views of the children's family members, and the staff.

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

The children feel safe. The children say that they can talk to staff if they are upset or angry. The staff understand important risks and how to mitigate them.

Managers ensure that appropriate recruitment checks take place before staff work in the residential provision. The staff are provided with the school's code of conduct as part of the induction process. The staff access a good range of safeguarding training. As a result, appropriately checked staff have a clear understanding of how to raise safeguarding concerns.

Managers have ensured that appropriate health and safety checks take place. Following these checks, action is taken to address shortfalls. Therefore, the recommendation raised at the last inspection has been responded to effectively.

Staff have a good understanding of contextual safeguarding. They are mindful of extra-familial risks that the children may experience. Managers have provided information sessions for children on new and emerging risks in the local area. Managers have spent time with individual boarders when concerns about racist language and behaviour have arisen. This has included one-to-one training sessions on risks of radicalisation.

The staff generally manage behaviour well and without recourse to physical intervention. There has only been one recent incident necessitating restraint during boarding time. The restraint was necessary and proportionate. Families say that staff support children to manage difficult feelings positively.

On occasions, managers have referred information to the local authority designated officer (LADO) later than they should have. On one occasion, records did not clearly state when safeguarding information was shared with a social worker. In addition, managers have sometimes moved beyond basic fact-finding into what could be considered investigative activity before speaking to the LADO. While there is no indication that any of these issues have affected the children's safety, failure to share information promptly with other professionals may hinder multi-agency responses and place children at increased risk of harm.

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

A new boarding manager is in post. He has been receiving support and guidance from the organisation's national care manager as he develops his knowledge. The manager is keen to make improvements, with several changes being implemented. Most of these are in their infancy but have the potential to contribute to improvements.

Middle managers and senior managers have a generally good understanding of the residential provision's strengths and areas for development. Good, external monitoring is in place. This monitoring has highlighted issues that managers have needed to address, resulting in improvements to the provision.

The headteacher takes complaints seriously. She has worked with staff to help them understand what a complaint is and how it should be responded to. As a result, the previous unmet minimum standard is now met.

Families are generally positive about the residential provision, and some are very positive.

The staff say that they are happy in their roles, are well led and well supported.

The quality of some records is not good enough and does not offer sufficient clarity or accuracy. Managers recognise this and have recently provided additional training for staff. However, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of this training.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that when safeguarding concerns arise, information is shared promptly with safeguarding professionals.
- The registered person should ensure that when safeguarding concerns arise, managers do not cross the threshold from basic fact-finding to investigating incidents before sharing information with the local authority designated officer.
- The registered person should ensure that when consultations and surveys are completed across the school, these enable feedback about the residential provision to be gathered.
- The registered person should ensure that all records, including individual risk assessments and records required by Appendix 2 of the national minimum standards, are clear, accurate and up to date.

### **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:** SC024575

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Miss Davina Bell

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01986 784235

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## **Inspector**

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector

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