

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

This is a non-maintained special school, with a Quaker ethos, for boys aged from nine to 19 years. The children have a range of complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorder.

There are 69 children on the school roll. Thirteen children have residential placements and, overall, there is capacity for 23 boarders. Children stay between one and four nights per week. Boarding accommodation is in the main school building.

The school provides a range of facilities, including a motocross track, a bike maintenance garage, a dedicated music room and a gym.

The head of social education has been in post for several years and has the required experience and qualifications.

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

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 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: 24 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children thoroughly enjoy their residential stays at the school. They feel a strong sense of belonging to the residence. For some, this is the first time they have enjoyed a shared connection with other children. Several children said that staying in the residential provision is 'life changing'. They particularly value its low-stress environment. Children are open about their views, which is an indication of the high value they place on being part of the school.

Children's confidence in their own abilities grows over time. Staff are respectful and nurture children's differences. This means that children's self-belief improves, and they challenge their own capabilities. Most children fulfil their potential as a result.

Children develop strong, trusting relationships with staff. This is fundamental to the progress that they make. They learn to talk to staff about their concerns and to accept the support they are offered. The care they receive is individualised because staff know children extremely well.

Children make good social progress. For example, some children who are isolated when they arrive at the school learn to make friends. Staff track children's progress and help them to work on areas of difficulty. Family members see the changes in their children. One parent said, 'The transformation through boarding has been phenomenal for him and the family. They give them wings to fly and flourish.'

Children's educational needs are met. Children who have been out of school for a long time are helped to return to structured learning. This includes taking national examinations. Many children go on to further and higher education. Others take up employment or apprenticeships. For some children, the improvement in their academic attainment is life-enhancing.

Children's emotional health needs are met. Children benefit from the school's psychologist and occupational therapist. Both are well used by children and this avoids lengthy waiting lists for external therapists.

High-quality meals contribute to children's physical well-being. Staff eat alongside children, who learn about the value of healthy eating from a young age. Staff are trained to give children prescribed medication safely. However, staff do not always record the administration of non-prescribed medication. Although children have not been affected by this shortfall, it is not in line with professional guidance.

Children enjoy a broad range of activities during residential time. They make use of the extensive school grounds, including the motocross track. Away from the school, children enjoy outdoor pursuits, residential trips, and regular walks in the local countryside. Some children take part in such activities for the first time. They

recognise that these opportunities are significantly increasing their life experiences and self-confidence.

Children learn a range of skills that help them to become increasingly independent. These skills are invaluable if children go on to further or higher education. Parents say that children also take more responsibility for themselves at home, which has a significant impact on family life.

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

Children learn strategies that help them to manage how they react to the world around them. The level of trust they have in staff means that children respond well to the nurturing and supportive guidance they receive. As a result, children's behaviour in school, at home and in the community becomes increasingly settled.

Residential staff rarely need to physically restrain children. When this is required, staff are effective, and difficulties are resolved quickly. Written records do not always contain full information about the actions that staff take. This limits the learning from these incidents. It also means that children will not have a clear understanding of what happened, should they want to read their records.

Children learn about the impact of risks such as online and criminal exploitation. Staff help them to develop strategies to become increasingly safe. As their awareness of risk grows, children become more independent. They step out of the safety of school and take more responsibility for their own decision-making. This means that children are learning essential skills that will be invaluable as they enter adulthood. The progress that some children make is remarkable.

Staff undertake a range of training to help them understand risks to children. This includes learning about online risks from a specialist teacher. Staff use this knowledge to talk to children about these issues. As a result, children are helped to be safe in school and to become safer at home and in the community.

The designated safeguarding lead responds quickly to safeguarding concerns for children. He works closely with other services, such as children's social care, to ensure that children receive the support they need. Staff understand their duty to keep children safe. They know how to report any concerns and feel confident to do so. This gives children a powerful message that staff will act in their best interests.

Staff are employed using safer recruitment practices. Processes established since the last inspection show how references are verified. This strengthens the value of the information provided about candidates.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders have an excellent understanding of children's needs. The head of social education and headteacher work closely together to ensure that children receive a

consistent approach across the school. They promote the importance of understanding, tolerance and respect. Leaders create a low-stress, nurturing and supportive environment that enables children to be able to make progress socially and academically.

The residential provision is an integral aspect of the school. Leaders want more children to benefit from the support that residential staff provide. A new framework that will underpin high-quality residential care is being developed for the whole school. This forward-looking approach means that children are cared for by staff who are being supported to develop their practice and expertise.

Staff feel supported by the head of social education, who has responded well to the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. For example, the arrangements for supervision are much improved. Staff have contributed to the changes made and feel that their views are valued. Changes are relatively new and are still being embedded. However, staff are pleased and hopeful for the future.

Leaders undertake monitoring of the residential provision. Routine checks on the quality of accommodation take place. Repairs are identified and carried out quickly. This means that children's surroundings are consistently well maintained. This gives children a positive message of how well staff value them.

Staff undertake a wide range of online and face-to-face training. When new staff are employed, they undertake a comprehensive package of learning. This means they have the knowledge to perform well from the outset. Staff also receive bespoke guidance from the school's psychologist and occupational therapist. As a result, children are cared for by staff who have the knowledge to meet each child's individual needs.

The school is well supported by an experienced governing board. A governor with responsibility for the residential provision visits the residence. This is a new development, which raises the profile of the residential provision. It helps governors to understand the strengths of the service and informs their support for the school.

The residential provision is visited each half term by an independent visitor. Checks are carried out on a wide range of aspects of the setting. These include health and safety matters and monitoring of incidents. Visits do not always take place during residential time. As a result, reports do not show how the independent visitor evaluates the quality of care that children receive.

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

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard for residential special schools:

- Leaders should ensure that any treatment received by a child is recorded in a written or electronic school record (separate from NHS records) to which only appropriately designated staff have access. In particular, staff should record the details of how much non-prescribed medication is given to children. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 3.9)

Recommendations

- Leaders should ensure that the written record of any incident accurately record all aspects of staff intervention, so that children and others can easily understand how an incident was resolved. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 12.6)
- Leaders should ensure that monitoring visits are carried out so that the independent visitor can speak to children and staff during residential time and consider the quality of the accommodation. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 20.2)

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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Inspectors

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