

# 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 a local authority. The school offers day and residential provision for children aged between 11 and 19 who have communication and interaction difficulties associated with autism spectrum disorder, speech, language and communication needs.

There are currently 353 children on the school roll, of whom 147 attend the North site and 12 access the weekly residential provision.

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

### Inspection dates: 21 to 23 November 2022

**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 last inspection:** 10 November 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are looked after by staff who are genuinely committed to teaching them how to build and maintain positive relationships. This makes children feel safe and secure, which enables them to make exceptional progress.

There is a deep-rooted ethos of treating children with dignity and respect, and this helps children to feel comfortable to explore and develop a sense of their own identity. Staff provide high-quality, nurturing care, balanced with giving children freedom and choice. The result is a very relaxed atmosphere.

The processes staff follow when children move into the residential provision are thorough and thoughtful. Managers and staff work closely with children's families and other professionals to ensure that moves are planned meticulously. The parent of one child told the inspector that the way the staff had introduced the child to weekly boarding was perfect. A responsive and individualised approach to meeting the child's complex needs has enabled them to make remarkable progress with their social and emotional well-being.

There is a sharp focus on making sure that children are fully prepared for leaving school and living more independently. As a result of sensitive support, which has significantly improved their self-esteem and confidence, three of the older children have secured part-time jobs. Once children have left the school, staff go to great lengths to continue to give them practical and emotional support if they need it.

Staff support children to engage in education, and children make excellent progress from their starting points. The residential staff understand children's individual education goals and they help children to achieve them. Residential staff celebrate children's success by awarding them accredited certificates to recognise their achievements.

Staff make good use of the on-site facilities to ensure that children can take part in activities that they find comforting and enjoyable. Children also have access to a wide range of community-based activities, which allows them to fully explore their talents and interests. One of the children said, 'Being a residential student is special. I get to do football club, go to the park, play tennis and do lots and lots of cooking with the staff.'

Staff understand and implement children's care and support plans. These are written in collaboration with children. Consequently, the plans describe children's preferences about how to care for them.

Staff provide an excellent level of support to ensure that children's physical and mental health needs are met. Careful planning and strong communication with

external health professionals leads to the best possible health outcomes for each child during their stay and beyond.

The residential areas are well maintained to ensure that they are as comfortable and homely as possible. This homely atmosphere is enhanced by the introduction of a school dog, which has been warmly welcomed by the children.

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

Children's safety is paramount in this school. The head of care, who is the designated safeguarding lead, swiftly develops an awareness and understanding of each child's vulnerabilities and strengths. She is exceptionally good at advocating for children to get the support they need from external professionals, to ensure their safety and well-being.

The residential staff team has extensive knowledge, skills and experience in relation to safeguarding children and meeting their mental health needs. In addition to working with the residential students, they offer support to day students when needed. In one example, staff offered nurturing care to a child who was in hospital for an extended period, and they gave advice and guidance to her carers about how to look after her and keep her safe. The social worker for the child said, 'The staff involvement was amazing. They went above and beyond. The child trusted them and knew she would be listened to.'

The systems for storing and administering medication promote safe practice. Record-keeping arrangements for medicines are excellent. Managers complete regular medication stock checks and audits. There have been no medication errors. Residential staff share their expertise with other staff by taking on responsibility for medication management for the day students.

Positive behaviour is promoted through helping children develop self-control, resilience and an ability to learn new coping strategies. There have been no incidents requiring physical restraint, and very few consequences.

The governor with safeguarding responsibilities provides a rigorous level of scrutiny. Her visits to the school include a focus on the welfare of the children in the residential provision. School leaders have recognised that they need to name a governor who has specific responsibility for the oversight of the residential provision and are taking steps to address this.

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

A priority for the head of care this year has been to help the children and staff come to terms with the passing away of a child who had been an important part of the residential provision. There has been consultation with bereavement specialists to find the best strategies to use and these have been creatively adapted to make them

suitable for the children's specific needs. Staff report that the head of care offered them a great deal of support, and this has enabled them to give children the loving care they have needed to cope with the loss of a friend.

Managers highly value children's views. There is a commitment to ensuring that residential students are part of the school council. One example of children's views influencing decisions is that their idea of adapting the outdoor play area to make it suitable for use in all weathers was adopted. As a result, children are empowered by staff to understand that they can effect change.

Collaborative working between the residential care leaders and education leaders is embedded in practice. Leaders have introduced weekly meetings between children's key workers and their form tutors. As a result, the wraparound service which promotes consistency for children is now clear at all levels.

Staff receive regular, meaningful supervision. Managers use these sessions to assess staff performance and ensure that staff know how to safely meet children's needs, in line with their care plans and risk assessments. Managers offer staff who are ready for career progression supported development opportunities. The head of care has recently started to have clinical supervision, which gives her an important space for reflection on her own practice.

Managers show a commitment to continuous improvement. They have addressed the two points for improvement identified at the last inspection. There is now a proforma for recording children's input into staff recruitment, and the training matrix accurately reflects the extensive range of training courses staff attend.

All the national minimum standards are met.

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

### **Point for improvement**

- School leaders should formalise the arrangements in relation to governor responsibility for the oversight of the residential provision.

### **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

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## **Inspector**

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

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