

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.

Eight 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: 20 to 22 June 2023

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: 12 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy coming to the school and being part of the residential provision. They develop trusting relationships with staff and they feel valued and cared for by nurturing and encouraging staff who want the best for children. Children enjoy the time that they spend with the staff, and they make memories from their experiences such as going on a skiing holiday to Italy. This supports their social well-being, as the children spend time in groups developing their communication skills.

Children receive support from the psychologist to help them to manage their anxieties and improve their emotional well-being. This helps children to reflect on their emotions through child-led therapy sessions. Staff can also liaise with the psychologist for advice and support to help children. This continuity of care means that the children learn new coping strategies. Consequently, children are becoming more resilient and are able to cope better when they are sad or angry.

Staff focus on career advice with the children and help them to complete their college and university application forms, along with preparing them for job interviews. For some children, this has been successful as they are now in part-time employment. Children are supported by staff to fulfil their goals such as learning to drive and passing their driving test. This is a credit to the children and their determination to succeed.

Children attend education and make sustained progress. This has supported children to gain places at colleges and universities. The staff have a good understanding of children's needs. Seamless approaches across the school and the home help to reinforce the children's skills. Individualised support plans help the children to learn and make progress at their own pace.

Children have aspirations for their futures and are well equipped with the skills that they need when they move on to college and university. Children receive continuous bespoke support from their key workers during times when they attend college. This ongoing support provides the children with stability from a dedicated team that wants the children to do well in life.

The children make progress in all areas of their development. They become more independent and learn a range of skills that help them in daily life. Some skills they learn include independent travel and how to communicate effectively with others. The staff also work with the children's families to help the children to further develop these social skills at home and in the wider community.

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

The welfare of children is promoted as the staff are aware of how to report safeguarding concerns confidently. The headteacher takes quick action in response

to any allegations that are made. He works closely with the designated safeguarding officer to make sure that all of the information is shared. By sharing this information, the right decisions are made to protect the children.

Safeguarding systems work well. Meetings between the designated safeguarding lead and the senior leadership team take place weekly. These meetings offer reflective discussions for all causes of concerns and safeguarding matters. This sharing of information and ideas means that safeguarding is effectively monitored and acted on without delay.

Risks to children are well understood by the staff. Individual risk assessments are in place. These provide clear actions for the staff to follow to reduce and manage the risk of harm to the children. Over time, the risks to children reduce due to the support that the staff provide. This support, and the positive relationships that the staff develop with the children, means that the staff do not need to use physical restraint.

Staff are aware of the missing-from-home protocols should children leave the residential unauthorised. However, there has been no reported missing-from-care incidents since the last inspection.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff complete a range of work to educate the children on risks within the community, in school and online. Staying safe online is taken seriously by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection ambassador, who ensures that parents, school and the residential staff are aware too. This consistent reinforcement around staying safe online sends a message to the children that the staff care for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care and headteacher know the children well. Together, they form positive relationships with the children. They have a hands-on approach and lead by example. This way of working ensures that the staff are consistent in their approach and encourages the nurturing ethos that is prevalent in the settings. This creates a culture where there are high aspirations for the children.

Leaders and managers hold frequent supervision sessions, team meetings and training sessions. This provides the staff with the opportunity to reflect on the children's experiences, and their own training needs. The support provided to the team enables the staff to develop their practice and gives them an opportunity to share knowledge to better meet the needs of the children.

Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths and areas for development. The school improvement plan and other effective monitoring systems mean that leaders and managers can take immediate action to rectify shortfalls when these are identified.

The acting chair of governors said that any issues are acted on without delay by the senior leadership team. Governors visit the residential provision half-termly. They talk to children to understand their experiences. The development of the residential provision is discussed regularly in the governors' meetings, along with any operational issues and staff training. This means that the children's well-being is at the forefront of the governing body's oversight.

The residential setting does not have an independent visitor. This means that it is without independent oversight of the quality of care provided to the children. Nevertheless, an independent visitor has been appointed and is in the process of safer recruitment checks.

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 the governing body, trustees, or proprietor of the school appoint a representative who is independent of the leadership and management of the school to visit the residential provision six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. The representative is vetted in line with the school's safe recruitment policy, in accordance with the safer recruitment requirements set out in keeping children safe in education, and has the skills and authority to effectively carry out this role. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 3.1)

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: SC007922

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Simon Bannister

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Jamie Richardson, Social Care Inspector

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