

# Brompton Hall School

High Street, Brompton-by-Sawdon, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO13 9DB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Brompton Hall School is a residential special school and is part of an academy trust. The school has 74 children on roll, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Following a period of consultation, the local authority has decided to close the residential provision of this school by September 2024. No new children will begin to attend the residential provision. As a result, the number of children who access the residential provision has reduced since the last inspection.

The residence provides accommodation for four children, offering weekly boarding places. There is one residential area in the main building of the school and there are plans in place to move the children to another area once the building work has completed.

The school has a headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead and the head of care. She has been in post since September 2022.

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

Brompton Hall School was taken over by Venn Academy Trust in March 2023.

### Inspection dates: 11 to 13 July 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children are poor.

**Date of previous inspection:** This is the first inspection since the school became an academy in March 2023.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not previously inspected under the current trust arrangements.

## Inspection judgements

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

The residence was last inspected on 9 January 2023 before becoming a trust in March 2023. Since then, there have been significant shortfalls in the safety and protection of children. These shortfalls have left the children at risk of harm.

Senior leaders have failed to ensure that children live in a safe and nurturing environment. The residential provision is dated and the decor is tired. The bathroom areas are in dire need of attention. Toilets used by children do not flush. The grout is discoloured, the floors are dirty and the paint peeling from the walls makes the bathrooms look uncared for. Furthermore, mould identified at the last inspection behind the main bathroom tap is still there. Immediate safety concerns identified during the inspection in the residential area were addressed. There is a plan in place to move the residential area to another part of the school site and upgrade the quality of the environment.

Children have the opportunity to share their views and have choices when they visit the residential setting. The independent visitor further improves the children's voice and influence with regard to their experience. The visitor seeks the children's views regularly through their independent role.

Children benefit from daily planned activities such as football and motorbiking. They also attend group trips. This helps the children to build and maintain trusting relationships with the staff. For some children, these trips increase their social skills and develop their confidence.

Staff help the children to learn a range of skills that help them to be independent. Skills they learn include cooking, cleaning and budgeting. Children successfully transfer their learning to home, which makes a huge difference to family life.

Parents and carers value the support that their children receive in the residence. One parent said that their child transfers the independence skills learned in residence when they are at home, and that the child is making progress in all areas of their development as a result of the care they receive.

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

Procedures to keep the children safe are ineffective. Staff do not follow internal policy or statutory guidance when reporting and recording safeguarding matters. This means that, on some occasions, the headteacher is unaware of safeguarding concerns relating to the children. This means that risks to the children are not managed safely.

The staff have regular training to help them to understand how to keep the children safe. However, some staff do not always transfer the skills that they learn into their practice and do not follow the safeguarding procedures. This failure has the potential to expose the children to the risk of harm as appropriate action is not taken quickly.

The headteacher takes allegations seriously. When she becomes aware of risks to the children, she takes appropriate action to protect them. She works closely with other agencies such as the designated safeguarding officer. Information is effectively shared to make sure the right decisions are made in the best interests of the children.

Children rarely go missing from the residence. On the rare occasion that they do, immediate action is taken to try and find the child. The staff work closely with the police to help them to search for missing children and bring them back as quickly and safely as possible.

Leaders and managers have completed the required safer recruitment checks for new staff in the residence. Pertinent questions have been asked when verifying references to further explore the new workers' employment history, and thorough interviews take place to help evaluate their suitability.

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

There have been recent changes to the leadership and management of the school. The new headteacher has been in post since April 2023. The residential provision is going through a transition to close. The headteacher has a plan in place to improve the quality of the service while it remains open.

The headteacher has three demanding roles in the school and all are of high importance. These competing roles result in poor management oversight. This means that breaches in statutory guidance such as 'Keeping children safe in education' and poor staff practice go unnoticed and unchallenged.

During the inspection, teaching staff shared concerns with inspectors about issues in the school. Staff said that they do not feel confident to use the whistleblowing policy as they would like to remain anonymous. Leaders and the managers should ensure that there are ways for the staff to use this procedure confidently.

The school governing body has not had effective oversight of the residential provision and they have not identified the shortfalls that have been found at this inspection. The school has recently been taken over by an academy trust. The headteacher is reporting to the new board of governors. However, these meetings have only just started and the impact cannot be assessed.

Supervision sessions take place with staff and they focus on the needs of the children and their risks. Supervision sessions offer the staff the time to reflect on their practice and discuss any training needs.

The independent visits are thorough and focus on the experiences of the children and the progress the residential makes from visit to visit. The visitor explores key aspects of the children's care, and the leadership and management of the setting.

Meeting all national minimum standards (NMS) is a requirement of this academy's funding agreement. This school has failed to comply with all NMS and this has been referred to the relevant regional director of the Department for Education to consider what further action is required.

## **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 standards for residential special schools:

- Leaders should ensure that the school's governing body, trustees and/or proprietor monitor the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the residential and welfare provision in the school, and take appropriate action where necessary. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 8, paragraph 2.1)
- Leaders should ensure that the school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 8, paragraph 2.4)
- Leaders should ensure that there are sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the children and that they are in good working order and clean. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 13, paragraph 9.3)
- Leaders should ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 18, paragraph 13.1)
- Leaders should ensure that all staff are aware that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility throughout the school and its residential facilities. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 18, paragraph 13.2)
- Leaders should ensure that the accommodation is homely and welcoming, and that the accommodation should be clutter free from old furniture to create more space for children. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 13, paragraph 9.4)

### **Points for improvement**

- The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility and the postholder should be given the additional time and support needed to carry out the role effectively. ('Keeping children safe in education', page 29, paragraph 104)
- If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). ('Keeping children safe in education', page 19, paragraph 69)
- It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. ('Keeping children safe in education', page 69, paragraph 70)

- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them. ('Keeping children safe in education', page 20, paragraph 76)

## **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:** 2735040

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs P Dubas

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

**Telephone number:** 01723859121

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## **Inspectors**

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Jamie Richardson, Social Care Inspector



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