

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 and speech, language and communication needs.

There are currently 391 children on the school roll, of whom 167 attend the North education site and two access the weekly residential provision.

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

The students using the residential provision are both over the age of 18 and so are referred to as 'young people' in this report.

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 November 2024

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 previous inspection: 10 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The high-quality relationships between staff and young people are fundamental to the young people's progress. There is an atmosphere full of warmth and care and staff are clearly committed to the young people. Staff invest time with each young person to understand them and to develop their talents and interests. When young people move on, they are invited to return and visit the staff. As a result, young people have a powerful sense of belonging and connection with the residential provision at this school.

The highly skilled staff help young people to make excellent progress in developing their independence skills. They are helped to take appropriate positive risks and consequently become more independent away from the school. Young people have taken great steps forward in being able to travel independently, attend fitness classes, cook meals and gain employment. One young person said they had not had this standard of support before. Staff have captured the development of these skills in well thought out tracking tools. Young people have achieved qualifications in the independence skills that they have developed.

Staff work closely with the young people in the development of their plans and the assessment of risk. Their voice is evident throughout their plans. Staff speak regularly with young people about their lives. Conversations happen naturally around the dinner table, as well as through structured daily reflections. These help young people to explore their feelings, thoughts and emotions with staff. Staff have developed superb insight into the young people. As a result, young people have a strong sense of their own identity and have confidence in themselves.

The physical environment is decorated and maintained to an exceptionally high standard. There are large rooms in which the young people spend time with staff and each other. They can also have private space when they need it to study and to pursue interests. Young people are involved in the decisions about the décor of the home and the personalisation of their rooms. They are proud of their rooms, with one young person saying it feels 'like home'.

Staff have a strong focus on education and young people have achieved excellent attendance at school. There is effective communication with school staff that helps to support school attendance. Staff help young people to develop their skills, even when these are not on offer at the school. One young person was taken by staff to private language tutoring. They took and passed an exam, achieving a high grade, of which they are immensely proud.

Young people are helped to spend quality time with friends and family and they can speak with their families often. Staff work closely with families and arrange family time in line with the young people's routines and needs. Staff help young people to

develop and maintain friendships. Young people can invite friends to the residential provision and staff encourage young people to socialise with others.

Staff have a thorough understanding of the young people's individual communication needs. Staff work closely with the school's therapy team to help young people to develop their communication skills, with shared goals between the residential staff and therapy team to maintain progress. Young people are developing key communication skills, such as being able to ask for help and to communicate their ideas and feelings.

Staff involve the young people and their families in planning their moves away from the provision, and this is managed exceptionally well. Staff help young people to understand what they need to achieve before moving on, and how they will do this. They also help young people to apply for benefits and bus passes and enrol into education. When young people move out, staff keep in frequent contact to offer advice and support.

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

Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the young people and their vulnerabilities. Staff understand the risks that young people face, both in and away from the school. They help them to develop insight into these risks and to understand how to keep themselves safe. Assessments of risk are developed through excellent collaborative working with the young people and their families. These assessments help young people to take age-appropriate positive risks more safely.

The designated safeguarding lead [DSL] has a sharp focus on online safety for young people. The DSL circulates monthly research-based newsletters to staff and parents about current risks. Staff have developed a strong understanding of this and speak regularly with the young people about online safety, enhancing their skills to stay safe on their devices.

There is a strong focus on safeguarding. Staff are confident in knowing how to raise concerns. When staff have been concerned about young people, they have reported these concerns to the relevant agencies. Leaders work closely with social care agencies to help young people and their families to receive support away from the school if required. The heads of care meet weekly with the DSL to share any safeguarding concerns. The DSL maintains effective oversight of the safeguarding of the young people, including tracking any actions taken.

Staff have a highly person-centred approach to behaviour management. They confidently and sensitively educate young people when they do not understand social rules. Staff encourage the young people in their acceptance of other cultures and ethnicities, and they proactively talk with young people and involve other agencies to provide education in this area. Physical interventions are not used with young people. Staff support young people to repair and restore relationships after incidents.

Medication systems are strong. A named member of staff holds the responsibility to oversee these arrangements. They complete regular audits on the medication to ensure that any errors are quickly identified and that the correct stock of medication is held. There have been no medication errors since the last inspection. Their good practice has been shared with other areas of the school.

There have been no allegations about staff or serious practice concerns. The local authority designated officer [LADO] said that the school is alert to allegation management and is responsive to LADO advice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The residential provision is overseen by two new heads of care, who jointly share the role. While new in this particular role, the heads of care have worked at the provision for a long time. They are brimming with enthusiasm and are highly motivated to achieve the best for the young people. The heads of care work closely with the team to care for the young people. This close involvement means that they have a sound understanding of the young people and their progress.

The staff team has become smaller since the last inspection. This appropriately reflects the smaller cohort of young people attending the provision. The size of the team has not impacted on the quality of the care provided. The staff are highly experienced and work effectively as a team. Staff are helped to develop their skills and strengths. Staff use these strengths to provide support across the school, such as with the administration of medication and pastoral care.

Leaders prioritise staff support and development. Staff receive regular, high quality, structured supervision. Supervision times allow for meaningful conversations about staff well-being, practice and the young people. Staff are highly trained to carry out their roles to meet the children's complex needs. One new staff member joined the team, experiencing a high quality and well-structured induction. One member of staff is an assessor and helps staff to achieve their qualification for the role.

Staff are strong advocates for young people as they enter adulthood. Staff respect young people's views and wishes. This ensures that they regularly seek their consent and involve them in decisions relating to their care. Staff work closely with the local authority to ensure that young people's rights are upheld. Young people know how to complain. An independent person visits the home regularly and speaks with young people about their views.

Highly experienced governors provide a strong level of oversight. Governors visit the provision regularly, providing reports to the committees about the quality of care for young people. Governors also have close oversight of the independent visitor reports. These are of high quality and aid the leaders' development of the provision.

Staff have excellent relationships with parents. One parent said that the communication is 'perfect'. There is regular sharing of information with parents to ensure that they are up to date with their child's care. Another parent said that the provision is a 'wonderful setting' and that staff have helped their young person to make steps towards independence.

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: Steve Ackerley

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Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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