

The William Henry Smith School and Sixth Form

Boothroyd Lane, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 3JW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is a non-maintained special school for boys who may experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. Pupils may also have additional needs, including learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and communication needs.

There are 89 pupils on roll at the school and there is capacity for 35 boys to stay in the residential provision. The school provides education for boys aged between five and 19 years and accommodation for boys aged up to 19 years. Older students attend sixth-form provision or other colleges in the local area.

Accommodation is provided in four residential houses in the school's grounds. The school provides flexible weekend support, as well as outreach work, to pupils and their families.

The head of care has been in post since September 2020. He has suitable qualifications for the role.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 June 2025

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: 19 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children's residence is maintained to a very high standard. Each of the student's bedrooms are personalised with their belongings and decorated to their choice. Additionally, the school grounds are exceptionally well maintained by a dedicated team who take pride in ensuring that the environment is attractive and welcoming for all.

Students say they love staying at the residential provision and enjoy spending time with staff doing activities such as fishing, rock climbing, and visiting different parts of the world. For some, these experiences are the first of their lives. Parents and other family members express their gratitude for the opportunities their children have.

All students' heritage, characteristics, and personalities are celebrated. Staff know and understand each student's individual circumstances, and this is reflected clearly in their records. This understanding enables staff to adapt their care to meet each student's unique needs. As a result, students feel accepted and valued.

The loving environment that staff create across the whole school enables students to thrive, both in residence and in their learning. Parents report that the support from the staff has had a positive impact on family life. One parent said, 'I genuinely owe the school a debt of gratitude for how they have helped my son; I wouldn't have trusted anyone else to do it.'

Students benefit from the support of a skilled, experienced and child-centred clinical team. They build positive relationships with students through creative and responsive therapies, such as drama and music. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of each student's needs. Staff actively listen to students so they can act to improve their social, emotional and mental well-being. This includes making adaptations to the environment to meet any sensory need students may have.

The school produces detailed and insightful annual reviews of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. These reports bring the student's experience and any support needs to life. They provide valuable information for professionals and parents, enabling them to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's interventions. There is a clear, focus on improving student's educational outcomes, with the residential provision playing an important role in supporting this progress.

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

Before students start their stays at the residence, the clinical and care teams assess each student's needs and identify ways to mitigate any assessed risks. A family

therapist said, 'We have time to help students over the several years that they stay with us.' This long-term approach is evident in the progress students make across all areas of their development. Staff remain patient but persistent, keeping this long-term perspective at the heart of their practice.

Staff encourage students to take age-appropriate risk. For example, students make their own way to and from college, and go to the shop on their own. Not only does this help students to manage contextual risk, but it also helps them to be more socially aware and allows them to be more responsible.

When there are concerns about a student's behaviour, staff use the reporting and recording systems to ensure the safeguarding team is promptly informed. Leaders and managers make timely referrals to specialist agencies to help understand and assess the student's presenting risks. The professionals then come together to discuss what support can be put in place for each student.

Designated safeguarding leads work closely with the head of care and staff to promote a whole-school approach to safeguarding. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which they carry out effectively. Consequently, multi-agency collaboration is strong and contributes to improved protection for students.

Staff receive appropriate training and carry out direct work with students to help them understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. This work is delivered in a non-judgemental manner, supporting student to explore their actions without shame and promoting learning and self-awareness. This approach leads to harmonious relationships developing between students.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The school principal and head of care continue to demonstrate highly effective leadership and management. They bring drive, energy and a clear commitment to all aspects of the school's work. Their strong and resilient leadership has embedded a student-focused culture that is recognised and valued by professionals outside of the school and student's family members.

The principal has played a remarkable role in establishing networks that collectively advocate for their students. In doing so, a community of residential special schools have forged a united approach to championing their student's learning experiences. For example, the school's residential football teams compete at a famous football stadium. This is a further example of the innovative practice that demonstrates how well the school and residence operates.

Staff say that their training programme is meaningful and bespoke to their learning needs. Staff say that their development programme is meaningful, and they are keen

to further develop their roles and skills. Leaders and managers have created an embedded learning culture that enhances the student's experience of care. Leaders and managers have a transparent approach to caring for students in residence. The independent visitor, regulator, and the board of governors, have unrestricted access to the relevant information that they need to fulfil their roles effectively. This openness reflects leaders and managers' commitment to embracing external scrutiny and learning opportunities to improve outcomes for the students.

The new development with weekend drop-ins in the school has been well received by parents. Staff are guided to use this opportunity to enhance the parent's ability to engage their student through activities that would cost little or nothing at all in the community. This is a further example of how the resources in school are put to good use to strengthen relationships and enhance parenting skills.

The outreach programme for parents is developing well. Staff are innovative in their approach and actively encourage parents to understand their child's journey through the school. They create welcoming and inclusive opportunities, such as coffee mornings held in neutral settings, to help parents feel at ease. Whole-school events involving care and teaching staff, senior leaders, and the clinical team create a strong sense of community, while ensuring a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

No shortfalls were raised following this inspection.

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: SC001038

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Sue Ackroyd

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01484 710123

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Inspectors

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector

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