

Brymore Academy

Cannington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2NB

Inspection dates

22/09/2016

Context of the inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the progress made to improve the boarding provision at the school. This visit follows an inspection in March 2016, when the boarding provision was judged to be inadequate.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Leaders and managers demonstrate a determination to drive change. A good deal of productive work has been carried out and continues. Some clear progress has been made. However, further work is required, as the current systems do not support and protect boarders well enough.

Steps have been taken to improve the level of adult supervision of vulnerable young people who board. Staffing levels have been increased with a view to creating a system that ensures that boarders with additional needs receive the help and support that they need. Previously, there had been an overreliance on student mentors to supervise younger boarders, some of whom present with complex care needs. This system has been reviewed and, while successful aspects of the mentoring system have been retained, recruitment of new staff and a review of rotas are well underway to ensure that adult care and supervision are available to support care needs.

There has been a drive to improve the quality of care delivered by developing the knowledge base of the team. The training matrix demonstrates that the staff team has received training in a number of the key areas that were identified at the last inspection. These relate to the presenting care needs of boarders. In addition, senior staff have received safeguarding training at an enhanced level, consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

Leaders and managers have introduced some good systems to monitor and review incidents of concern. Weekly meetings have improved the senior team's ability to identify, scrutinise and record safeguarding concerns. Oversight and ensuring that action is taken to address incidents and situations as they occur are much improved. The protocol for student transfers, including safeguarding concerns and questionnaires, is good. While still developing, by the next academic year leaders and managers should have all the required information about young people prior to them starting at the school. This should ensure that their needs are known and planned for.

While there is an improvement in the identification of concerns, weaknesses remain around safeguarding procedures and staff supervision. Leaders and managers have not ensured that the information provided to external safeguarding agencies fully reflects the detail of concerns raised by boarders. Internal investigations of potential safeguarding incidents, directed by the local authority designated officer, have not been dealt with well. Leaders and managers have failed to consult with the boarders who have raised concerns as part of their investigation. In addition, concerns raised about a member of staff working in boarding were not rigorously investigated, and the arrangements for supervising the member of staff following the disclosure of concerns are poor and fail to protect boarders.

There is a failure to identify the care needs and associated risks presented by boarders. Care plans have been revised and reviewed since the last inspection, but these documents do not identify pertinent needs. Similarly, there is a failure to identify clearly presenting risks. Each of the sampled plans examined at this monitoring visit noted the omission of needs and risks arising from the autistic spectrum disorder, emerging and developing sexuality, the potential for going missing, the risk of bullying and isolation,

and the significant risks associated with the side effects of prescribed medication. The result is a failure to set out clear strategies to meet what are often complex care needs and to ameliorate risk. While it is acknowledged that some good direct work has been undertaken with some vulnerable individuals, this is not sufficient to support and protect boarders fully.

The storage and administration of medication are much improved. Staff who deal with medication have received training and there is a good understanding of what constitutes a safe system. Some further work is required around the handling and administration of non-prescription medication and the audit trail for administering medication at weekends. In addition, the implementation of a system to highlight side effects from medication that poses a risk of harm requires work.

A full inspection will be carried out at a later date to assess the provision of boarding comprehensively.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding (residential special) schools

- 3.4: Ensure all medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so.
- 5.1: Ensure suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders. Ensure it is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and findings acted upon to reduce risk for all boarders.
- 6.3: Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 10.3: Ensure that where there are unusual or especially onerous demands on boarders, these are appropriate to the boarders concerned and do not affect their welfare.
- 11.1: 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.
- 13.1: Ensure that the school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.4: Ensure that the school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.8: Ensure that the records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and

monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.

- 13.9: Ensure that the issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 15.1: Ensure that any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding.
- 18.1: Ensure that the school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards.

Inspection team

Michelle Oxley

Lead social care inspector

Tracey Ledger

Social care inspector

Information about this school

Brymore Academy is a single-sex school for boys which was established in 1952. Brymore Academy is a state boarding school that is part of Bridgewater College Trust. Education is free and there is a modest charge for boarding provision. The school offers an opportunity for boys from 11 to 17 years of age to develop their knowledge of farming, horticulture, engineering and sports. The school has a capacity for 150 boarders. The school is broadly Christian, with an ethos based on resilience, responsibility and resourcefulness.

School details

Unique reference number	123903
Social care unique reference number	SC042165
DfE registration number	

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Type of school	Boarding school
Number of boarders on roll	142
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to 17
Headteacher	Mr Mark Thomas
Date of previous boarding inspection	15/03/2016 to 24/03/2016
Telephone number	01278 652369
Email address	MThomas4@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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