

Brymore Academy

Cannington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2NB

Inspection dates

06/12/2016–08/12/2016

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Requires improvement 3

The quality of care and support

Requires improvement 3

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement 3

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision requires improvement because

- Senior leaders, managers and governors have strengthened their oversight and the reporting and monitoring systems and procedures. However, these improvements are in their infancy and as such cannot yet be evaluated to determine sustainability and effectiveness.
- The records of child protection concerns require improvement. One safeguarding record retained by the school did not identify the actions that staff took or detail why the information was not shared with supporting agencies.
- Adult supervision has improved for boarders who have complex needs and are vulnerable.
- The role of mentors has been reviewed, they are no longer expected to manage behaviours and supervise younger boarders.
- Senior leaders have taken action to enhance adult supervision of boarders and the services of pastoral support and care.
- Boarding staff have been provided with training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of boarders who have a wide range of complex needs and behaviours.
- Three national minimum standards have not been met.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- 3.4 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.
- 11.1 The school ensures 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.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all national minimum standards are met.
- Ensure that boarding staff supervision addresses performance and promotes reflective practice.
- Review the arrangements of administering medication for boarders.
- Ensure that all records are dated and signed by the author.
- Ensure that care plans consider individuals' sexual health and relationships.
- Ensure that a 'Prevent' risk assessment is undertaken.

Information about this inspection

The school was notified of the inspection on the morning of 6 December 2016. Inspectors arrived at 11.00 am. The inspectors visited the residential provision, observed staff's and boarders' interaction and met with boarders and with the residential staff. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised a variety of records, documents and policies and procedures.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Sharron Escott | Lead social care inspector |
| Paula Lahey | Social care inspector |

Full Report

Information about this school

Brymore School of Rural Technology is a single-sex school for boys, which was established in 1952. The school is a maintained, state boarding school. Education is free and there is a modest charge for boarding provision. The school offers a unique opportunity for boys from 13–17 years of age to develop their knowledge of farming, horticulture, engineering and sports. At the time of this inspection, there were 136 boarders; the school has a capacity for 150. There were an additional 40 day pupils. The school is broadly Christian with an ethos based on resilience, responsibility and resourcefulness.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Requires improvement

Senior managers and staff have worked hard to rectify the weaknesses identified at the last full inspection and subsequent monitoring visit. Considerable investment has included training for boarding staff that has enabled them to meet the boarders' varying needs, increased boarding staff numbers and some changes to the mentoring system to better suit the needs of boarders.

Boarders who need them, now have their care supported by detailed care plans and risk assessments. These improvements are in their infancy and as such cannot yet be evaluated to determine the significance of the impact that they are having. However, the documents are now of a good standard.

Staff and house parents are providing boarders with excellent support. The boarding team has increased. Two experienced staff members have been appointed as pastoral managers. There are very good opportunities for positive emotional and social development. Boarding pupils readily join in with small group or one-to-one sessions focusing on social skills, anger management and activities to build their self-esteem. Boarders spoke positively about the support that they receive from the pastoral managers and their house parents.

The mentoring has been reviewed and as a result, now provides good support to boarders. Boarders are positive about 'how my mentor has helped me' and comments include: 'when I felt homesick they talked to me and listened to me, they cheered me up and I went to bed happy'; 'they help me in the mornings by reminding me if I have fitness or something' and 'they encourage me to do activities'.

Junior boarders have good opportunities for them to play and relax. Since the monitoring visit, the experiences for junior boarding pupils have improved. There are now clearer routines, which boarders understand. The allocated house parent has an improved understanding of the boarding pupils' specific needs and is incorporating his learning from a recent training course in 'understanding attachment' into his work with them. As a result, junior boarding pupils now have improved sensory experiences to support their emotional development.

The introduction of compatibility risk assessments has assisted senior leaders and managers to consider the needs, behaviours and risks of each student when allocating them to a boarding house. In addition, boarding staff work in partnership with parents to help boarders settle and to reduce any homesickness. New boarders receive sufficient information and have opportunities to visit the boarding house before they move in. Boarders are able to maintain good contact with family and friends using a variety of

methods, including by telephone, email, Facetime and Skype.

Staff continue to have high aspirations for pupils. Boarders are motivated and keep themselves fit, they are provided with a wide range of activities that support developing their health and well-being. Boarders told the inspectors that they are always busy and that their boarding experience is good. All boarders spoken with could identify their career ambitions and knew how they would achieve them.

The boarding houses are well maintained, personalised and well resourced. Boarders are able to individualise their sleeping area and are encouraged to express their views and share any ideas that they may have to enhance the boarding provision. The introduction to sensory play equipment has benefited those boarders who have sensory needs.

The quality of care and support

Requires improvement

Since the previous inspection, formal assessments are completed to determine the sleeping arrangements of boarders. The impact of a boarder's needs and behaviours, and the risk that one boarder may pose to another is now well assessed and considered.

Care planning is significantly improved. Boarders have been actively involved in devising their own care plans and individual healthcare plans. These documents include the views and comments of pupils about how they would like staff to support their care needs. Individual healthcare plans include information about the impact of boarders' health needs on their education and social development as well as their emotional health needs. These documents are written by matrons using information supplied by boarders, their families and from the NHS website. Currently, these documents are not overseen for accuracy by trained healthcare professionals.

Boarding time is well organised and runs smoothly. Boarding staff meet with line managers and their teams weekly. These meetings provide boarding staff with good opportunities to plan for the coming week. Since the monitoring visit, every member of boarding staff has met with the head of boarding for a formal one-to-one session. The head of boarding is scheduling these meetings regularly throughout the year. While these meetings provide good opportunities to talk about boarding work, they lack sufficient focus or clinical expertise to drive social care practice forward. Supervision records following discussions with staff about safeguarding incidents continue to require improvement. These documents do not specifically record line managers' expectations of staff or evidence what the safeguarding issue was. Counselling staff do receive clinical supervision provided by an external agency.

Boarders talked about being proud of their achievements and rate their boarding experience as good. They can identify someone to speak to if they are worried or concerned. Bullying is recognised and responded to well. Boarders say that they look out

for each other. They are confident that their personal items are safe. In the main, the boarders presented as happy and confident young people.

Most boarders spoken with reported that the quality and quantity of food available at mealtimes has improved. Some said that they would like bigger portions and their dining experience could be further improved if all of the catering staff were friendly. In addition, some boarders said that it would be helpful if they knew in advance what their menu options were.

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

Senior leaders have formalised the system to determine in which dorm and boarding house pupils will live. This system is now managed by clear risk assessments and regularly reviewed. As a result, senior leaders can demonstrate why certain pupils can or cannot share with each other.

Pupils who need them, have individual risk assessments that help staff to provide the right support. These include clear strategies to mitigate the identified risks and link closely with pupils care plans. However, one pupil's risk assessment was found not to be up to date with important safeguarding information following an incident. Boarding staff spoken to demonstrated a good understanding of the care needs, risks and challenges for boarders and could explain the support that they require.

Despite receiving training and external audits taking place, there are some continued shortfalls in the safe management of medication. At weekends and during off-site trips, medication is administered to pupils by staff who have not checked the medication against the prescription label and medication administration record. This is unsafe practice and leaves pupils and staff vulnerable to misadministration. Improvements have been made to ensure that matrons and boarding staff now have an accurate understanding of the amount of medication that is kept on-site and records are kept to ensure that there is an audit trail.

The current system to administer medication is process driven and not as focused on children as it could be. Predominantly, boarding pupils visit the matron's office to have their medication rather than medication being brought to them in their houses. Senior leaders and matrons have been asked to consider how they can improve this experience. The vast majority of boarding pupils rely on staff to manage their medication. Systems are not in place to help boarding pupils to develop greater independence in this area.

Senior leaders and managers have reviewed the safeguarding procedures and systems. New procedures in place to identify, report and respond to complaints or allegations against members of staff have improved. The designated safeguarding officer has developed good links with the local authority designated officer. In the main, records are

well maintained, they detail communication with the local authority designated officer and other agencies. As a result, the school is able to take advice when needed and to act effectively on it.

The majority of safeguarding case records demonstrate that the designated safeguarding officer has taken appropriate and timely action, applying the relevant thresholds, contacting the local authority and using the safeguarding screening tools. In the main, the records are well maintained and detail the actions taken and the decision making process. However, one record reviewed lacked the necessary detail. As a result, the designated safeguarding officer and senior leaders could not evidence that on one occasion the required action had been taken to ensure the safety and welfare of boarders.

Monitoring systems are now good. Senior leaders and managers use improved monitoring systems to review concerns and behavioural incidents. Collectively, they agree on the actions to take. As a result, support strategies and targets are clearly defined within individuals' care plans and risk assessments. In addition, consultation with external agencies and parents has improved.

Boarders who spoke to inspectors stated that they felt very safe at the school and that there are a number of adults to whom they could speak if they needed to. They were very clear about how to stay safe online and welcome the systems, including electronic ones that allow them to raise any concerns that they may have. The school's internet filtering system is robust enough to prevent pupils accessing inappropriate material.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

In March 2016, the boarding provision was judged by Ofsted as inadequate overall. Since then, senior leaders, governors and other staff have been working hard to improve the procedures that are in place to safeguard pupils in the boarding provision. As a result, the arrangements to keep boarders safe have strengthened significantly. The reporting and monitoring infrastructure has strengthened and the school's culture of safeguarding is very much improved.

The local governing body has a good understanding of safeguarding in the school. An improved scheme of delegation has been drawn up. The nominated safeguarding governor has supplied a strong strategic oversight. He has a clear understanding of the school's work to keep children safe and visits the boarding provision, consults with boarders and staff and reviews any concerns. In addition, senior leaders have also completed safeguarding risk assessments training. The visibility and accessibility of senior leaders have improved during boarding time.

Senior leaders have reviewed the training needs of the boarding staff to ensure that the

boarders' needs are supported, monitored and managed. Good training opportunities have been provided to the staff team. Staff receive regular updates on safeguarding, which are refreshed on each of the in-service training days. In addition, all staff have been trained in the government's 'Prevent' strategy to tackle radicalisation and extremism. There are good examples of work undertaken with boarders in relation to extreme views. However, senior leaders have yet to formalise a risk assessment as required by the 'Prevent' strategy.

Recruitment records are well maintained. Boarding staff do not commence employment until an enhanced DBS check has been undertaken and references gained. However, records reviewed do not comprehensively detail how senior leaders have assessed individual suitability for the role that they are applying for. For example, referees have answered yes or no to the questions asked of them, which provides limited information. Interview notes do not sufficiently detail how senior leaders have explored the individual's suitability for the role that they are applying for.

Records of complaints, the actions taken and outcomes are well maintained. Senior leaders' oversight and management of complaints have improved. Records are well maintained and detail action taken and outcomes. Improved consultation systems and surveys have enabled boarders to express concerns. As a result, senior leaders have enhanced adult supervision at times where boarders have felt most vulnerable.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

| Judgement | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| Outstanding | A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced. |
| Good | A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted. |
| Requires improvement | A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good. |
| Inadequate | A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress. |

School details

Unique reference number

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.

Type of school

Boarding school

Number of boarders on roll

142

Gender of boarders

Boys

Age range of boarders

11 to 17

Headteacher

Date of previous boarding inspection

Telephone number

01278 652369

Email address

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