

Quakers in Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting in Beverley, 25 July 2026

Brief report on Breckenbrough School

Breckenbrough School is different from most Quaker schools in two respects. One is that it operates in the public sector, though as an independent institution. The other is that it is a special school focusing on boys who are unable to cope in, or be sufficiently supported by comprehensive schools or academies. Breckenbrough students are funded by their local authority and the school is inspected by OFSTED. The students have a range of complex needs, including Autism (ASC), Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), Tourette's Syndrome (TS) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Breckenbrough school is unique in offering a bespoke approach in the delivery of its holistic curriculum. Whilst offering everything a mainstream school offers in terms of its academic curriculum, it does so within a supportive and low stress environment to help students learn to manage their anxiety levels and specific needs to make holistic progress towards their individual outcomes. Students are helped to develop strategies and coping mechanisms, and to aspire and become successful healthy, happy and successful adults. The school's vision is to improve the Quality of Life for all its students.

The school continues to thrive. There is a high demand for places at Breckenbrough school, that currently supports around 75 boys. The school has a high success rate in pursuit of its vision. Current student tracking indicates that students are on course to achieve at least the outcomes required to progress confidently to their next educational phase. Two areas I have personally been involved in as a trustee are Digital Technology and Careers provision. Information Technology is used effectively and safely for management, for teaching support and, for example, for tracking student progress. The school's range of school improvement policies includes besides IT, a draft policy for Artificial Intelligence. Careers provision is highly effective, with strong and growing employer links, meaningful work experience opportunities, and clearly defined Post 16 pathways. Students are progressing successfully into higher education, apprenticeships, and further education, supported by a programme aligned with and independently assessed against government benchmarks and strengthened through ongoing review.

The school has recently taken a lease on what it now calls its Woodland Centre. Rooted in the heart of a woodland area, this is a Centre offers Alternative Provision through nature-based learning. It offers a unique, calm, sensory-rich, immersive alternative provision where students reconnect with nature, develop essential life skills and grow through hands on sustainability-focused education. Besides offering additional means to positive engagement of individual students in education and in the development of wider employability skills. The Centre fosters a deep respect for the environment and a commitment to a sustainable future.

Another example of the school's respect for the environment is the installation of an air source heat pump for the school.

Breckenbrough school is keen to strengthen its links with Quakerism and the wider Quaker community. The school focuses generally on Quaker values and governance. The latter includes as the normal expected route to obtaining its Trustee Director governors, appointment through Quakers in Yorkshire. However, it has found increasing difficulty in securing sufficient Trustee Directors through this route and doesn't have the advantage of other Quaker schools in terms of strong alumni.

Quakers in Yorkshire are urged to consider ways of improving this situation. Also, individual Quakers who would like to know more about the school and provide more Quaker support are urged to contact the school's trustees and staff.

More information on the school and contact details are available on the school's website:

<https://www.breckenbrough.org.uk>.

This includes videos of the school, one by a former student; more are available on YouTube.

Digby Swift, Deputy Clerk of Trustees of Breckenbrough School