



**Breckenbrough**  
*- more than a school*

[www.breckenbrough.org.uk](http://www.breckenbrough.org.uk)

## Breckenbrough in brief

- Over 70 years' experience in educating boys with complex needs.
- A unique special school with a Quaker ethos.
- Celebrates differences and allows individuality to flourish
- Educates boys aged 9 to 19 with academic potential.
- Accommodates both day and boarding pupils on a 38-week basis.
- Has expertise and success with boys with Asperger Syndrome and ADHD.
- Has high educational expectations and offers a wide range of GCSEs, vocational programmes and A levels.
- Provides highly individualised learning and programmes of study.
- Offers a relaxed atmosphere, within a holistic and therapeutic environment.
- Operates an effective ethos of conflict resolution.
- Encourages pupils to understand and take responsibility for their own actions.
- Employs a full-time registered psychologist.
- Enjoys strong partnerships with parents.
- Offers a wide range of activities and opportunities.
- Provides post-16 provision working in partnership with other local providers.
- Operates a unique After Care service to provide contact and support for pupils once they have left and in later life.
- The vast majority of boys go on to full-time Further Education, training and work.
- Has good access from the motorway and rail networks.



Chris Brown MBE with award winners





Arthur Fitch at Dunning Hall,  
the original location of the school



## Years of experience, a unique ethos

Breckenbrough has been helping and supporting young people since 1934. The school retains many of the principles of its founder Arthur Fitch, a child psychiatrist.

As a Quaker, Arthur Fitch believed that young people who had difficulties could be best served by taking them out of the environment that was causing the problem. Young people would be able to prosper in a peaceful atmosphere. He believed that with guidance and support they would be able to use their innate intelligence to help themselves. Psychiatric and psychological support was provided “as they needed it and without them knowing it.”

Today the school retains much of the original philosophy. The current Headmaster, Geoffrey Brookes, has kept many of the core values that makes Breckenbrough different and unique, whilst ensuring that the current provision is modern and includes best practice.

**“It would be wrong not to give the pupil the opportunity of Breckenbrough working its magic”**

**Educational Psychologist**

# Building on the good, allowing individuality to flourish

Breckenbrough prides itself on recognising, developing and then celebrating the good in everyone.

**“Mainstream school was like being in a box. Breckenbrough is still a box, but the walls have holes and there is no lid”**

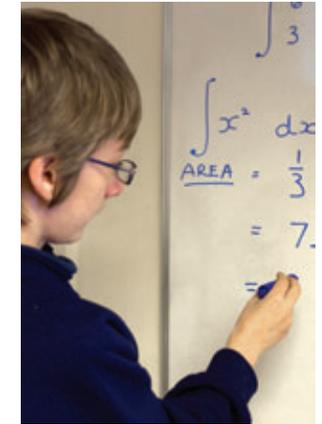
**Former pupil speaking to an Educational Psychologist**

**“Thank you for getting my son back for me”**

**Current parent**

Pupils who come to Breckenbrough are given the opportunity to be themselves, whilst being encouraged to extend their interests and face new challenges. We aim to allow pupils to come to terms with their problems and difficulties, to move forward and then to be in a position to find their place in society.

The structure of the school day, combined with the atmosphere generated by the school community, is designed to reduce the likelihood of difficulties and conflicts. School rules are applied flexibly and with sensitivity. Punishments are rarely used. Where difficulties and conflicts do arise then pupils work with staff to resolve them by finding constructive solutions. If consequences are necessary then these are applied with the understanding of the pupil in mind.





## Our pupils

There is no such thing as a typical Breckenbrough pupil but he will share some of the following characteristics. He will most likely ...

- Recognise the importance of education.
- Have been unable to cope with the pressures of mainstream education.
- Want the opportunity to succeed.
- Have educational potential but is likely to be underachieving.
- Be eccentric and challenging in his behaviour, but is unlikely to have been involved in the Criminal Justice System.
- Generally be amenable to reason and will not need excessive structure and supervision in his leisure time.
- Welcome adult concern and support even though he may not always show it.
- Prefer adult company and get on with adults better than with his peers.
- Be verbally skilled.
- Have at least one special talent, which can be developed and used to build his self-image.
- Have, not far below the surface, a genuine desire to be successful and to make a happier life for himself.



# Trust, time, space and listening

We recognise that our pupils need time and space to help them better understand and cope with the pressures of education and informal social situations. Fundamental to the work of the school is our determination to listen to our pupils and act positively on what they say.

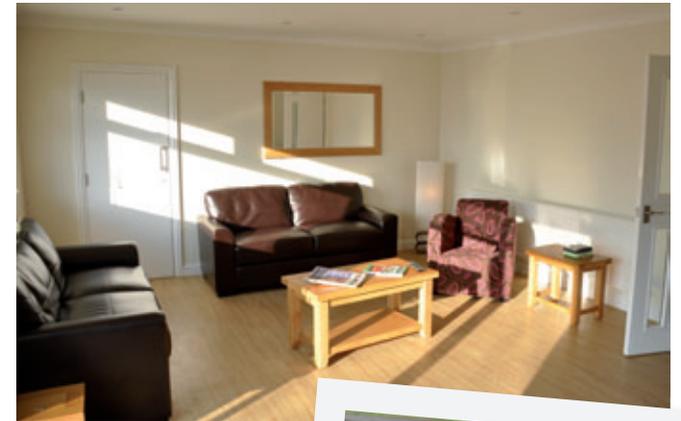
Each residential pupil has his own room which he is encouraged to personalise. Before and after lesson times pupils are free to go to these. In the evenings there is a wide range of activities and experiences available, often including an excursion out of school. If a pupil has a particular interest this will be catered for.

**“This is the first school where I have been listened to and staff try to understand me”**

**Current pupil**

Meal times are a relaxed social occasion with a wide choice of dishes available including a salad bar. Lunches rightly have a high reputation amongst regular visitors. Our cooks are always willing to cater for special diets where required and will provide dishes that a boy particularly likes. In addition pupils have the opportunity to cook their own food in the evening.

If a pupil is upset he is encouraged to use a place where he feels comfortable to calm down. Our experienced staff focus on listening before supporting the pupil to find constructive ways forward. Pupils themselves develop and apply effective conflict-resolution skills. Where there are more complex issues pupils can meet



with the school psychologist. The psychologist, and other staff where appropriate, will work with families to address issues and difficulties.

The formal curriculum supports the pupils' emotional, moral and cultural needs with further support provided by the informal curriculum.



## Achieving in the classroom

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Pupils are taught in groups of rarely more than four boys. They are offered personalised programmes of learning, and also given additional support as required including individual tuition.

The majority of the pupils follow the core curriculum, with the expectation that they will take at least 8 GCSEs, aiming for a Grade C or above in each. Some pupils will be offered accelerated programmes of learning whilst others go on to more vocational programmes, usually based around Outdoor Education, the school market garden and other areas of interest.

The school offers an impressive range of GCSE subjects, together with an increasing number of NCFE courses and A levels. The school has good links with York College, where pupils can choose to study the more vocationally based subjects to a high level.

There is a clear focus on achievement in Maths, Science, English and IT. Our Art Room is a wonderful resource with its adjoining therapeutic garden. Design and Technology is another strength where the focus is on making and

succeeding. It is also at the heart of much cross-curricular work, especially our film productions. The Science Department is also developing a wildlife area around the school pond.

**“As a result of well-targeted intervention strategies and an imaginative approach, pupils are now starting to make accelerated progress in literacy.”**

**“The calm and industrious atmosphere in the classroom was clearly linked to the pupils’ obvious enjoyment of the task and the strength of their relationships with staff.”**

**Ofsted 2012**

## Opportunities and experience

The beautiful landscape of North Yorkshire is utilised fully by the Outdoor Education department. All pupils spend at least one day a week participating in a range of activities including climbing, mountain biking, kayaking and flying.

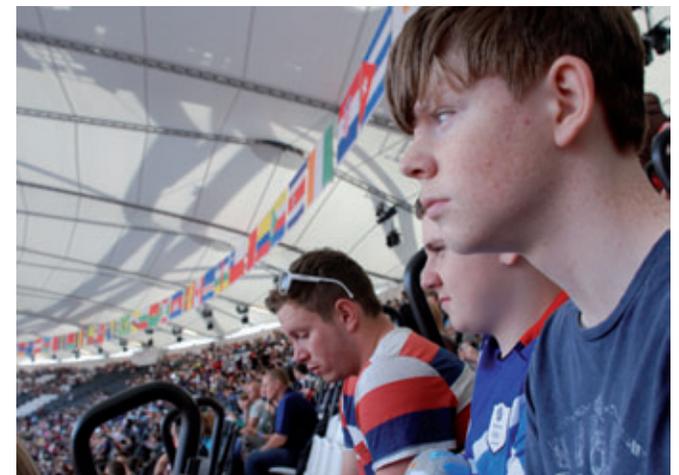
**“Enrichment activities play an important role in engaging pupils, and staff, in the words of one pupil ‘work exceptionally hard to help us to follow our interests, whatever they are.’”**

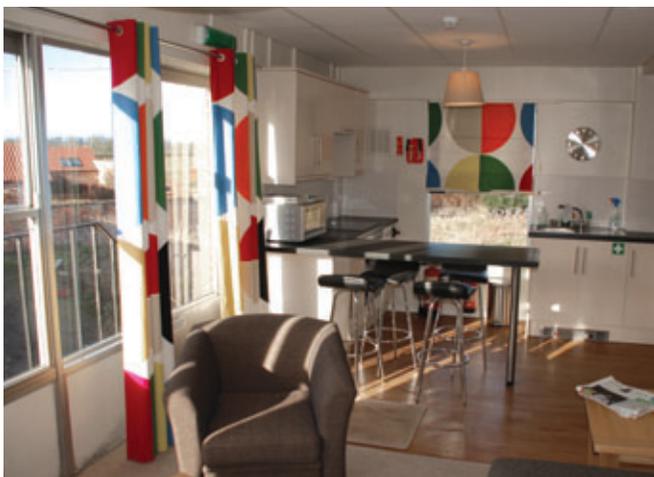
**“Pupils participate in an extensive range of sports, leisure and recreational activities and readily involve themselves in many social events.”**

Ofsted 2012

There is a strong emphasis on personal challenge, taking responsibility for each other, problem solving and leadership skills. There are also opportunities for residential experiences culminating in the annual ski trip for senior boys. Increasingly pupils are gaining qualifications in Outdoor Education.

The education provision also includes opportunities for music and drama. In addition the Life Skills programmes and Work Experience are important components of the broader curriculum and are linked to our care provision and the wide range of evening activities.





## The Sixth Form

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The Sixth Form areas have been recently refurbished. Here students are given greater freedom and follow the Independent Living programme. They regularly buy for and cook meals in their own kitchen.

In conjunction with specialist external agencies, the school produces effective transitional plans. Courses are tailored to the needs of pupils. Some follow a wide range of courses through our partnership with York College, whilst others in school can do GCSE retakes and take A levels in Maths,

Physics, Psychology and Film Studies. There are also opportunities to obtain qualifications in Outdoor Education. The emphasis throughout is on students acquiring skills which underpin and encourage increasing independence.



**“Students are successful in completing an increasing number of qualifications and accreditations..... they achieve good levels of spiritual, moral and social development and transfer successfully to further education or the world of work”**

**Ofsted 2012**

**“Our son came to Breckenbrough and immediately found a place where he felt safe enough to be himself”**

**Parent of an older boy**

## Support for life

Breckenbrough prides itself on preparing boys for independent living. This ranges from the care provision, ensuring all boys have a good understanding and appreciation of health and hygiene, to having a good understanding of themselves and their educational achievement.

This preparation for life is delivered in close partnership with parents and continues after the boys leave school. The school has a long-established, separate After Care charity, which employs a member of staff to keep in touch with and provide support for old boys. There is always a listening ear for former pupils and parents.

**“Where would we all have been without Breckenbrough?”**

**Old boy visiting July 2010**

**“There are many times when I wish I could tell the present pupils how lucky they are and how Breckenbrough will be in them (for the good) forever”**

**Old boy email 2011**



After Care Officer Denis McCarthy



Former students meet up



“Breckenbrough is a ‘special’ school in so many ways. It offers a unique environment to nurture and support young people who have experienced major difficulties in mainstream education. We are part of an ongoing journey in delivering an appropriate and effective education for our pupils”

Geoffrey Brookes (Current Headmaster)

“Boys need our help to make sense of their often turbulent world and to release the potential in each of them”

Arthur Fitch 1940



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Close proximity to the main East Coast Line, nearest stations, Thirsk, Northallerton, York.