

Bleasdale House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	9 July 2006

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Bleasdale House School is a residential special school operated by Lancashire County Council Education Department (LEA) and registered with the Department of Education and Skills (DfES). The school's primary function is to provide young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities with a positive and safe educational experience while boarding at the school. Up to 18 young people reside at the school for up to a maximum of 38 weeks of the year. All young people go home every other weekend and during the school holidays. Other young people attend the school on a daily basis. A large, multi-disciplinary staff group meet the complex educational and physical needs of the young people. The residential unit is separate from the school. It is a large country house with many historic features. There are splendid views across the bay with extensive grounds and gardens. The unit is provided with a range of facilities to cater for the individual needs of the children.

Summary

The inspection was announced and took place over two days including a day at the weekend. The purpose of the visit was to comply with current legislation that the school receive an annual welfare inspection. All outcomes were looked at. The inspector spoke with and spent time with young people and staff members. Interviews were conducted with parents, head of care, head teacher and senior staff members. A tour of the property took place.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

From the last inspection the school was recommended to enhance the placement plan. This has been taken on board by the head of care and placement plans fully meet the standard.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The local Primary Care Trust employs qualified nurses who have responsibility for ensuring young people's health needs are addressed. The school has developed individual health plans for all young people resident. These plans cover all areas required under Standard 14 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. The school keeps detailed health records on each young person resident. Young people receive regular height and weight checks and regular eye tests. Records of immunisations young people have received are on file. All medical, dental and optician appointments are appropriately recorded and records of accidents are maintained. Appropriately signed medical consent forms have been received. All staff have received basic first-aid training. The catering manager has the responsibility for the meals provided at the school and for organising menus. Young people's views on the food provided are sought and taken in to account. Most young people enjoy the food provided at main meal times. The evening meal was taken with young people in the dining room on the residential unit. Meal times are organised social occasions and the quality of food provided is appropriate and of a high standard. An alternative option is always available as well as salads and fruit. Young people who have specific dietary needs are catered for. All care staff have received appropriate basic food hygiene training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy and right to confidentiality is respected. Staff were observed working in ways that give appropriate regard to young people's privacy. All bedrooms are open-plan but may have a screen pulled around if necessary. The residential unit contains a pay phone sited in an area that affords privacy for users. The pupil handbook contains a section on the school's complaints procedures, covering formal and informal procedures. The procedures are out of date as they detail the role of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in the complaints process and contain the telephone number of the local area office. The school's documentation for recording any complaints made meets with the requirements of Standard 4 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Records viewed show that no complaints have been made about the school since the last inspection. An accident occurred during the summer months with a young person which required the school to notify Ofsted. This has not been completed. A written record of the details of the action taken and of the outcome of the investigation was available during the inspection. The head of care is the school's named person for child protection issues. She has undergone appropriate training for this role. All staff, including ancillary staff, have received child protection training. Staff interviewed responded appropriately to child protection scenarios put to them. The head of care has responsibility for overseeing health and safety issues. She has received appropriate training for this role. Relevant health and safety documentation is in place. Regular health and safety checks on all residential units and school areas are carried out. The school has access to professional advice on all health & safety issues, as the parent organisation has employed the services of a health and safety consultant on a full time basis. All relevant fire safety checks and fire drills have been carried out. Required checks on electrical equipment and installations have been carried out, as have required annual safety checks on gas installations and boilers. All appropriate risk assessments have been carried out, and are regularly reviewed and amended as necessary. Detailed individual risk assessments are carried out on all young people resident. Staffing files show the school operates recruitment policies and procedures that fully meet the requirements of Standard 27 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. The staff recruitment records are well maintained, with a written record of interviews kept, and details of the date of verification of references by direct contact with referees are kept. All staff employed have received appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure clearance before starting work, and suitable references have been sought and received.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school has compiled an individual care and education plan for each young person resident, which details the young person's care and educational needs and how these will be addressed. Care staff are allocated working hours during the classroom day to support teaching staff, and some staff from the education department work care hour duties. All young people accommodated attend school. Some young people have gained educational awards from the school. Staff spoken with detail the range of activities on offer at the school, and are quite positive in their comments. All activities are appropriately risk assessed. Young people have the opportunity to join local youth groups if they wish. Young people and staff spoken to state the activities offered include cinema visits, ten-pin bowling and swimming. Leisure space at the school is not restricted and the school has responded to this by using the grounds to its fullest potential. The school has its own swimming pool, which is used daily with the pupils.

During the inspection some young people went on a walk in their local community. Other young people went to Chinatown in Manchester. Younger pupils in Bleasdale have been fully involved in putting on a Chinese puppet show. Young people are offered individual support and advice when required or requested. They have access to the services of an educational psychologist, a physiotherapist and speech and language therapist. Staff were observed giving individual support and advice to young people at various times, in various settings, in a positive manner. Comprehensive individual risk assessments have been carried out on all young people resident, and these are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. Senior staff detail specific individual, specialist support that is delivered to relevant young people who required it. Staff interviewed state that where necessary, they receive training on specific skills needed to meet a young person's needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people meet at least daily with their key worker, and the key workers maintain regular telephone contact with parents/carers to keep them updated on young people's progress. Ofsted has received 1 completed questionnaire sent to parents/carers. The carer when asked what the school did best replied, 'caring, efficient, empathic to both child and family. Find ways to educate using the strengths of the individual child. They definitely work to get a child to use their full potential. They couldn't be better.' Senior staff maintain regular contact with placing authorities. There have been no replies received to the pre-inspection questionnaires sent from Ofsted to the placing officers. Staff were observed working with young people at various times throughout the inspection and there was positive interaction between them. All staff have established good working relationships with young people. Young people smile and laugh and turn their head when staff members speak. Young people recognise who is with them and they are happy. Parents spoken to say they have visited the school before admission, and were told which bedroom their children were to be accommodated in. They said they were given information about the school before their child went to live there. These actions show young people and parents are given relevant information about the school before residing there, and that the school takes measures to ensure young people arriving at the school are helped to settle in successfully. The school compile Individual Care and Education Plans (ICEPs) for each young person. These plans cover all areas required under Standard 17.5 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Action plans for each young person are compiled and detail needs to be addressed, setting targets and strategies to achieve them. Care staff used ICEPs as working tools. Key workers address needs and targets to be met with young people at their weekly meetings. Each young person's file contains a very detailed front sheet containing all essential information. Young people are assisted and encouraged to maintain regular contact with parents/carers and friends. Key workers maintain regular contact with parents/carers to keep them informed of the individual young person's progress. All young people at the school have weekend home leave fortnightly, with some young people going home each weekend and others at the school staying only a couple of nights during the week. Care staff interviewed state that there are usually only 10 or 12 young people resident at the school on weekends during school term time.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The sleeping accommodation is very personalised with the teenage boys displaying posters of their favourite football or rugby stars and the girls having pink havens and Girls Aloud. Young people wear their own clothing and footwear during care and school hours. Pocket money is provided on a weekly basis, the amount given is dependent on age. Records of pocket money given are appropriately recorded, and staff sign to say they have received the money. The school has a leavers programme for senior pupils who are in their last year at school. The school has good links with a local specialised further education college and some young people from the school attend. The school is located in the centre of the village of Silverdale. It is within easy travelling distance of the larger towns of Kendal and Morecambe, and the city of Lancaster. Young people are accommodated in one separate residential unit over two floors, each floor has its own facilities. Some bedrooms have up to three beds other rooms are single bed rooms. The bedrooms are organised by residents' chronological age. Although slightly restricted by the physical layout of some of the buildings, the school has managed to create a residential unit that presents homely living areas. The residential unit is well maintained throughout. The school provides an excellent standard of accommodation for young people. Each residential unit contains sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities for young people accommodated. All bathroom, shower and toilet areas are well decorated and well maintained. All doors on such facilities have appropriate locks to ensure privacy for young people when using them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's Statement of Purpose has not been reviewed to reflect recent changes in the school. It is a detailed and informative document that contains all relevant information. The head teacher states this document will be revised. The school maintains a comprehensive filing system to hold information about pupils. The main files containing confidential information are maintained securely in a lockable steel filing cabinet, and the working files are kept in the care office where they can be accessed by all staff. A selection of young people's files viewed, contain all the relevant information the school requires to ensure they meet the young person's needs. The school maintains detailed records on staff and young people, and documentation viewed is of an excellent standard. The young people's register meets with all the requirements of Schedule 2 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Senior staff and team leaders interviewed state that the residential unit care staff teams generally operate on a staffing ratio of one staff to every one young person accommodated. Staff rotas show this level is being maintained and occasionally exceeded. The duty team have support members who can be directed to any young person who may require extra help. The residential unit has a senior staff member on sleep in duty each night and four waking night staff help with the young people throughout the night. Staff spoken to state there is always sufficient staff on duty to meet young people's needs, and any staff absences are suitably covered. The school has developed a good staff-training programme and has good links with the parent organisation's training provider. Inset training days for staff are held immediately prior to the beginning of school terms. The head of care assumes responsibility for the training programme for care staff, and has compiled a training grid analysis that enables her to keep a personal training profile on each staff member. The school has developed a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training programme that all staff have access to, and presently 89% of staff hold relevant NVQ qualifications. All staff recruited complete an induction-training programme that covers all required areas. Staff interviewed are positive in their comments about the training provided. They state that any specialist training required to ensure they can meet a young person's needs is provided. The school benefit from having a consistent, settled care staff team. No member

of the care staff has left employment at the school in the last 18 months. These actions show that young people receive consistent care from an experienced, settled staff team.

Documentation viewed shows staff receive formal supervision with the frequency and duration required under Standard 30.2 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Staff with responsibility for supervision of other staff have received training in supervision skills. The school's format for delivering and recording supervision enables them to ensure staff receive appropriate supervision with the frequency required. Ancillary staff receive appropriate formal supervision with the frequency required. All staff, including ancillary staff, receive either annual appraisals or annual performance management reviews. All staff sign their supervision records and receive copies of the minutes of supervision sessions. Care staff meetings and residential unit staff meetings are held regularly, and the school holds full staff meetings at least once every school term. The senior management team meet weekly, as do the team leaders and senior care staff. All staff interviewed, from various departments, are positive in their comments about the support they receive from senior staff and state the head of care or head teacher are always available to them to discuss any concerns. Records and documentation viewed show that senior managers at the school regularly monitor and review relevant practices. The school has good monitoring systems that enable any areas of concern to be identified. There is evidence to show that senior staff have monitored all areas required under Standard 32.2 of the Residential Special School National Minimum Standards, and with the frequency demanded by the standard. The head teacher produces a written report on the operation of the school each term, this report is forwarded to the organisation's board of governors. These reports include detailed, specific information on the monitoring of significant incidents. Monitoring visits are carried out on a half-termly basis, complying with the frequency demanded by this standard. The local authority representative carries out these visits. A comprehensive report covering all required areas is compiled and forwarded to the school. The head teacher is required to formulate an action plan in response to each report, addressing any issues raised.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- update the Statement of Purpose to reflect changes in the school and the new regulatory body (NMS 1)
- ensure that a system is in place to notify promptly Ofsted of any significant event (NMS 7).