

Buglawton Hall Residential Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Elizabeth Taylor
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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

Buglawton Hall school is a community special school maintained by Manchester City Council educational services. The school is situated in its own grounds in a rural area near Congleton in Cheshire. The main building, called Buglawton Hall, is a mature, two storey listed building. The Hall accommodates offices and classrooms on the ground floor and three separate residential units on the first floor. The units each have a kitchen, lounge and own bathing facilities. Outbuildings surround the Hall and are used as additional classrooms and a games area. The school maintains a variety of animals such as horses, geese, chickens and rabbits in their own enclosures within the grounds. The school currently offers residential special education to thirty-four boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties and related needs. The school offers residential care from Sunday evenings to Friday afternoons each week during term time. Members of the care team make support visits to the students' homes at weekends. The residential accommodation is comprised of three living groups within the main hall, called Mars, Neptune and Mercury respectively. A cottage, bungalow and two semi-detached houses in the grounds are also used to provide accommodation. Pupils are usually grouped according to their age but this is flexibly applied to meet individual needs.

Summary

The inspection was announced and all key standards were inspected. An additional standard relating to the preparation of pupils leaving school was also assessed. The outcome of the inspection judged the school to be good in respect of addressing the health care needs of pupils and in the residential contribution to education. The outcome for staying safe is judged to be satisfactory. Whilst effective systems are in place to safeguard pupils whilst they attended school, the safeguards for pupils absent without authority are insufficiently robust. The outcome judgement in respect of making a positive contribution is satisfactory. Pupils do not feel they are fully consulted about their lives or about the way the school is run. The outcome for achieving economic well-being is judged satisfactory due to a variation in the standard of accommodation currently provided to pupils. The outcome judgement in respect of the organisation of the school is also satisfactory. Whilst the majority of the staff team hold a professional qualification in caring for children and young people, they have limited opportunity to access other relevant training. The Head of Care does not hold a professional qualification. Formal supervision of care staff does not take place in accordance with national minimum standards.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

A number of recommendations were made following the last inspection. Some related to the need to improve arrangements for the administration, safe disposal and recording of medication. These matters have been satisfactorily addressed and pupil's health is protected as a result. The accommodation does not currently offer a single bedroom for each pupil. Bedrooms vary in size from single to four bedded rooms. Risk assessments are used as a basis for decisions about the sharing of bedrooms and this protects the safety of pupils. However, a new purpose built unit is planned for the near future. A schools council has been formed to improve consultation with pupils about matters affecting the school. Senior managers have reviewed recording in respect of complaints, sanctions and physical intervention. They have determined

a centralised system provides a better opportunity to identify any trends or pattern. The system protects the safety and well-being of pupils.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Pupils access health care professionals as necessary. Staff actively encourage pupils to take an interest in looking after their health and ensure all pupils have routine health checks. However, health care plans contain the same basic objectives for all. Individual concerns relating to under-age smoking, drug or alcohol misuse and so on are not recorded. Therefore, it is not clear how staff support pupils in these matters. Pupils do have access to, and information about health and social issues within the school curriculum. Pupil's health is protected as there are good systems in place to ensure the safe storage, administration and disposal of all medication, prescribed and non-prescribed. However, the method of dispensing medication at lunchtime is not consistent with good practice. Quality assurance systems are being developed to ensure improvements effected in this area of care are sustained. A medication policy and procedure is in place. Staff follow good practice in respect of the recording of medication, particularly with regard to controlled drugs. However, none of the staff have received the required training. The food provided by the staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals offers a balanced, varied and nutritious diet to pupils. Healthy eating is promoted and pupils are offered a choice of hot or cold dishes, plus a vegetarian option, at lunch time and for evening meals. The catering manager routinely seeks pupils views about the menus and actively supports older pupils in preparing and cooking meals at times. Mealtimes are promoted as positive, social occasions. Fresh fruit is readily available to pupils but they have limited access to drinks other than water during school breaks. Pupils say they would like access to a variety of drinks and snacks both during school breaks and supper time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff show a respect for the privacy of pupils and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. However, bathing and showering facilities do not fully promote privacy in some units. Pupils know about the complaints process. The process is based on a written record being made but this is not the preferred method of communication for many of the pupils. However, pupils say staff will record their concerns and take action to rectify the matter. A central log is maintained. Pupils are given a verbal response to any concern they raise. There is a clear procedure for responding to any allegations or concerns about pupils' safety. Staff are fully aware of the need to report any suspicions or concerns. However, the school does not have a 'whistleblowing policy'. The recording process ensures confidentiality for pupils. Information is available on a 'need to know basis' only. However, a small number of gaps were observed in an audit trail between log books. Pupils confirm that bullying is not an issue in school and say staff act on any information that bullying might be taking place. The majority of pupils say they would tell staff about any concerns and all identified at least one adult working in the school who they felt they could talk to about any problems. The majority of pupils say staff talk to them about how they can keep safe. The school has a written procedure for action when pupils go missing from the school site. However, there is no formal procedure for monitoring the safety and welfare of pupils who refuse to attend school. This does not protect the safety of pupils who are absent without authority. The school notifies all persons and appropriate authorities of significant events, although this is not always followed up by written confirmation.

A 'token' system is used to encourage pupils to behave in an acceptable manner. The system is understood by pupils and staff are flexible in implementing it, particularly with pupils who struggle to maintain self control. The use of sanctions and restraints is appropriate and fully recorded. Staff impose low level sanctions in response to unacceptable behaviour. For example, staying in for an activity instead of going out or quarter of an hour early bedtime. Staff receive training in physical intervention during their induction and refresher training on an annual basis. Risk assessments in respect of the premises are not comprehensive. This places pupils at risk. The fire safety system has been upgraded since the last inspection and safety checks and drills are carried out regularly. However, staff do not receive regular fire safety training in accordance with guidance issued by Cheshire fire and rescue service. The vetting of visitors is sufficient to protect pupils on site. Staff files are maintained in good order though the staff recruitment process is not robust in some aspects. The current system does not include the verification of references or highlight employment gaps.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The contribution made by care staff to the education of pupils is good. Each residential unit ensures there is time allocated for all pupils to complete their homework each evening. A member of teaching staff is available to support care staff and pupils during this period. Care staff also work alongside teaching staff during school hours. However, education and care plan objectives for individual pupils are not linked. A strength of the school is the recreational activities which pupils can access. Care staff offer a range of activities both on and off the school premises during weekday evenings. A balance is maintained between activities promoting an educational content and others which promote social skills and integration. Pupils feel able to talk to staff about any problems. The school has an external person who fulfils the role of an independent person for pupils to contact directly to discuss any concerns. The independent person is new in post and is only just beginning to become known to pupils. However, contact details of various helplines and agencies are displayed on each residential unit for pupils to see. Staff have established links with a range of helping agencies and professionals to ensure individual support is available to pupils. For example, a school nurse provides education and advice to pupils on matters such as relationships, sexuality and protecting oneself from exploitation. Staff are aware of the individual needs of pupils though records do not always exemplify this. Care plans contain the same broad objectives for groups of pupils.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Pupil's opinions are sought over some school matters though they feel their views are not taken into account in respect of decisions about their daily lives and future. For example, only 10 of the 20 pupils say they feel involved in decision making about their own lives. The schools council is viewed by some pupils as a good way of effecting change in the school. However, only a small number say they are involved in decision making about the residential provision and then in a limited way, such as choosing wall posters. Pupils say they attend their annual review meeting. Parents and carers views are sought during the review meetings and they are contacted about significant events involving their child. However, there is no quality assurance system centred around the views and suggestions of either pupils or their parents and carers. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and to consider the consequences of their actions. Placement plans do not encompass the

whole needs of pupils. Each plan has separate education and care objectives and only a small number of pupils say they were fully involved in drawing up their care plan. Recording in respect of care plans and daily reports does not exemplify how pupil's progress is evaluated. Contact arrangements for pupils with their families are satisfactory. Pupils can either use a phone sited in each residential unit or can use their own mobile phone. Although the phones in the unit are sited in lounges and calls can not be made or taken in private, none of the pupils raised any concerns about lack of privacy.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Arrangements are in place to support older pupils in preparing for leaving school and to assist them in acquiring the skills for adulthood. However, the arrangements do not form part of a cohesive plan for each pupil. The residential provision is a mix of small, family size houses sited in the school grounds and three separate 'units' sited in the main school building. The accommodation is domestic in parts but it is decorated, maintained and furnished to an uneven standard. Pupils are proud of the quality of accommodation in some areas but consider many of the bedrooms need redecorating.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose does not set out very clearly what care the school will provide and how this will be provided. However, the document is in the process of being reviewed. A pupil's guide is available though not in different formats to take account of different abilities. Pupil's individual case files and the general school records are well organised and maintained. There are sufficient staff to meet the needs of pupils though the deployment of staff does not always support continuity of care for pupils. For example, pupils in the separate houses are required to move to another house if staff in their own unit are absent due to sickness. However, pupils generally know who will be on duty. The care staff team has a balance of male and female staff although they do not reflect the cultural mix of the pupils. Staff are competent to care for pupils. The majority of the care staff team have achieved National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, in accordance with the national minimum standards. However, there are limited opportunities for them to gain additional training relevant to their role and responsibilities and to establish links with other residential services. The Head of Care does not hold a professional qualification. Good informal support is provided to care staff but they receive formal supervision only once a term. This frequency is not in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. The Deputy Head provides clear leadership and support to the Head of Care and care staff. However, systems for running the residential provision are not fully effective in gaining the best outcomes for pupils. For example, the lack of a key-working system to support individual pupil's needs. The school has implemented some quality assurance systems though pupil involvement is limited. Termly monitoring visits are usually carried out on time.

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):

- ensure all staff involved in the administration of medication receive appropriate training (NMS Appendix 2)
- implement different ways for pupils to make a complaint, in accordance with their preferred method of communication (NMS 4)
- implement a 'whistleblowing policy' (NMS 5)
- ensure action is taken to promote the safety and well-being of pupils absent without authority (NMS 8).
- ensure staff receive fire safety training in accordance with their role and responsibilities (NMS 26)
- implement a robust staff recruitment process (NMS 27)
- ensure effective consultation systems are implemented for gaining the views of pupils in respect of decision making about their lives and the way the school is run (NMS 2)
- develop care plans, in consultation with pupils, to demonstrate how their individual needs will be met (NMS 17)
- ensure plans for pupils preparing to leave school are cohesive and support their transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- ensure the residential accommodation is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard (NMS 24)
- ensure care staff receive formal supervision each half-term (NMS 30)
- ensure the Head of Care has a professional qualification relevant to working with children (NMS 31.2)

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for residential special school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.