

# Bleasdale House School

Inspection report for residential special school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC058077
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 November 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Joseph Hobson
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Bleasdale House School 27 Emesgate Lane Silverdale CARNFORTH Lancashire LA5 0RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 701217
<b>Email</b>	head@bleasdale.lancsngfl.ac.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Education Department
<b>Head of care</b>	Ivy Cutler
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Ivy Cutler
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	11 March 2009

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## 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 and registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families. 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 16 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**

All key national minimum standards were inspected during this visit.

Boarding pupils at the school are provided with a high quality service which consistently meet their diverse needs. The dedicated multi-disciplinary team work in strong partnership with parents and other professionals. Through the provision of excellent planning, assessment and individually targeted programmes, children's emotional, physical and educational needs are promoted. Children have access to a wide range of activities, opportunities and resources which aid their development. Comprehensive policies, guidance and procedures implemented by a well qualified and trained staff team ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were two recommendations made at the last inspection. The school was required to ensure equitable checks are carried out on care staff and staff files contain all of the elements identified in the national minimum standards (NMS). This has been addressed and all necessary checks have been updated and a record made on staff files.

The second recommendation made required the school to ensure the external monitoring system is implemented in accordance with timescales in the NMS. This recommendation has been only partly met, in that the school external monitoring system monitors the matters required, however, this is still not in accordance with the required timescales.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarding pupils receive excellent medical support provided by well qualified and experienced staff which ensures their health and intimate care needs are identified and promoted. The school employs eight nurses who oversee and monitor children's health needs. Children's health needs are assessed by a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals who contribute towards

comprehensive health plans and assessments, which clearly record children's health and development needs. Health support provided by the school is enhanced through the provision of a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist. Care staff are trained in order to support and undertake treatments and programmes provided by these therapists. Several care staff are qualified in aromatherapy and reflexology and provide alternative and complimentary therapies with parental consent.

All boarding pupils are registered with local GP practices and are able to access optical, hearing, speech and language and dental services through the school. Children also benefit from the provision of consultant surgeries which are held regularly at the school, thereby negating the need for travelling to hospital for these appointments. School staff maintain excellent relationships and communication with children's parents, carers and providers of respite care to ensure that medical information is shared and treatments and programmes are followed through in all settings.

Arrangements for the safe administration, recording, storage and disposal of medicines are generally good. However, the audit arrangements for some liquid forms of medicines are not sufficiently robust as records do not include the amount of medicine remaining. Although the perceived risk to children is low, some of these medicines are controlled drugs and require a clear audit trail of the administration of these medicines to be maintained.

Children eat in pleasant surroundings and are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They receive high levels of personal support to ensure that meals are suitably prepared and include their preferences. Children who require gastronomy feeding are provided with activities in a room separate to the dining area during mealtimes. A nurse is available and supervises staff performing gastronomy feeding of children.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The school has very effective arrangements in place which ensures children's privacy is respected. Staff are sensitive when providing intimate care viewing children's dignity as a priority. There are good arrangements in place to keep children's information confidential. Children's files are securely stored and staff are vigilant when sharing information relating to children in order to ensure children's confidentiality.

The school has a robust policy and procedure for handling complaints. This is shared with parents and ensures that they are well informed and know how to make a complaint. Although children are unable to verbalise their concerns, staff are particularly skilled in understanding the non-verbal means of communication used by children. They proactively respond to gestures and facial expressions to resolve issues affecting children, thereby ensuring their needs and preferences are met.

There are robust procedures and arrangements in place for safeguarding children's welfare which are well known to staff and managers. All staff, including domestic and administrative are trained in child protection. Care and nursing staff demonstrate a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of possible child abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns that a child is at risk of abuse. Care staff are vigilant about identifying and recording concerns, bringing these to the attention of nursing staff and senior managers. Appropriate

arrangements are in place to make referrals and notifications to appropriate authorities. These measures ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is promoted to a high standard.

There is low risk of bullying at the school due to children's profound disabilities and medical needs. However, the school has a good quality anti-bullying policy in place, together with a comprehensive anti-bullying resource pack which can be accessed by staff. Children are responded to in a quiet and gentle way which contributes towards their emotional wellbeing.

There are effective arrangements in place to monitor all absences from school. Good levels of staffing ensure that children's whereabouts is known at all times.

The school places a strong emphasis on positive handling. Children are encouraged to behave in an acceptable manner through effective positive handling strategies such as deflection and diffusion, and through the positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

There are comprehensive and effective risk assessments in place regarding the care needs of children and also in respect of premises and equipment. Regular checks of the premises and servicing of equipment ensures that these are maintained in good order and ensure that children live in a safe environment.

The school has robust procedures for the recruitment, selection and vetting of all staff. It undertakes all necessary staff recruitment checks in line with the NMS. Arrangements for the monitoring of visitors to the school are sound. These measures effectively contribute towards the prevention of children being exposed to potential abusers.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with high levels of support to access an extensive range of activities and educational programmes. The school offers a 24-hour curriculum and children's individual targets run across both school and residence, providing continuity of care and learning. Children's residential key workers are significantly involved in setting targets and are proactive in planning and supporting children's education in order to promote their attainment and celebrate success. The school benefits from having excellent resources to support learning and activities. It has its own swimming pool, a large hall equipped with lighting, information technology and sensory equipment, a multi-sensory room and a range of smaller activity rooms.

Children receive excellent support from the multi-disciplinary team to address their needs. Each child is supported by a staff team of five, which includes, their key worker (residential social worker), a secondary key worker, a care assistant, a night care assistant and a named nurse. Assessment and care planning arrangements, which are of an excellent quality, are co-ordinated by children's key workers. There is a strong emphasis placed on keeping parents and carers involved, including supporting parents to monitor and support children's individual targets while at home. The school has strong links with local health and therapy services and has made resources available so that these can be accessed by children in school, thereby reducing time spent away from school.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The school consults parents and carers about children's preferences and routines which are recorded and contribute towards care planning. The staff's adept ability to understand the non verbal communication of children provides opportunity to advocate on behalf of the children in their care.

The school has developed a robust and comprehensive system for care planning. Targets set are agreed by the multi-disciplinary team who work with the child, in agreement with parents and carers. Plans are regularly monitored and reviewed annually to take into account children's progress and any changes in need. The quality of care planning is outstanding and the information contained and the quality of the recording exceeds the requirements of the NMS.

There are good arrangements in place for parents to maintain contact with children. A parent spoken to during the inspection said that they felt welcome to visit their child at anytime and can stay overnight at the school if they needed to, for example, if their child was unwell. Good contact is maintained by staff and managers in order to facilitate information sharing with parents and carers.

The school has good arrangements in place for the admission and discharge of children and young people. Admission arrangements include opportunity for care staff to spend time in the day school getting to know children. Home visits are made by members of the multi-disciplinary team to gather information which contributes towards detailed assessments of children's needs and planning arrangements for admission. A bedroom is available within residence for parents to stay overnight to help children to settle in and aid care staff's understanding of children's preferences and routines. Good links with the Connexions service and adult social care facilitates young peoples transition to adult services.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The premises provide sufficient space and facilities to meet the needs of children. Residential accommodation is decorated, maintained and furnished to a good standard. Children's bedrooms are well equipped, meeting the requirements of the NMS. They are individually personalised with posters and photographs which reflect children's interests. Ceiling hoists are fixed above each child's bed to aid the safe moving and handling of children.

The residential unit benefits from having good sized communal areas. Specifically, it has a multi-sensory room, a large and well equipped activity hall and a number of small rooms, which can be used for activities. Throughout there is sufficient specialist equipment to aid the safe moving and handling of children.

There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet children's needs, all of which are specially adapted for use by children with disabilities. Although each bathroom contains two or three specialist bathing/showing/changing facilities, they are only accessed by one child at a time and curtaining affords additional privacy.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a written Statement of Purpose which, when read in conjunction with the school's prospectus, accurately describes the purpose and functioning of the school. It meets with the requirements of the NMS and has been approved by the school's governing body.

Children's records are comprehensive and maintained confidentially. The quality of reports, assessments and recordings are generally of excellent quality.

Children are cared for by a competent and committed multi-disciplinary team who have an excellent understanding of children's needs. The residential unit is staffed by teams comprising residential social workers, nurses, care assistants and night care staff in ratios appropriate to meet children's needs. Staff are well trained and qualified. Nursing staff are general nurse qualified and are trained in the nursing of children. Most care staff (95%) hold a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. This ratio of qualified staff exceeds the NMS.

The school has a strong commitment to staff training and development. Specialist training to support and meet children's health needs is exemplary. This includes training in areas such as the safe moving and handling of children, gastronomy feeding and the management of epileptic seizures. Some care staff are also trained to follow and carry out physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language programmes. This high level of commitment to staff training and development ensures that children's needs are met well and the quality of care provided is of exceptional quality.

Most children require a one to one level of care and the residential unit is generally staffed to meet this requirement. However, additional staffing is available where assessment identifies the need for a higher level of care. Overnight there is always a minimum of four staff on duty, including a qualified nurse.

Support and management arrangements of staff is outstanding. Residential social workers receive fortnightly supervision with other care staff receiving supervision at least once each half term. A record of all supervision and training and development meetings is kept. Staff interviewed considered the support received from management to be 'excellent'.

There is a comprehensive school development plan in which the development of the residential unit features strongly. The leadership team has effective systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the residential provision. Good systems are in place to make regular reports to the governing body on the functioning of the residential unit. However, not all of the matters listed in NMS 32.2 are monitored at the required intervals. Similarly, the frequency of the visits by persons undertaking monitoring on behalf of the person carrying on the school, do not always take place at the required intervals. Nor are they always unannounced.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school provides a high quality residential service which values children's diversity and promotes equality. Children's rights are respected by a staff team dedicated to ensuring children access fully a range of education, care and health support, which enriches their lives.



## 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
----------	--------	----------

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that a clear audit exists for the administration of all liquid medicines (NMS 14.20)
- ensure the internal monitoring system is implemented in accordance with timescales identified in the NMS. (NMS 32.2)
- ensure the external monitoring system is implemented in accordance with timescales identified in the NMS. (NMS 33.2)