

Buglawton Hall Residential Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Michelle Moss
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Address	Buglawton Hall School Buxton Road CONGLETON Cheshire CW12 3PQ
Telephone number	01260 274492
Email	head@buglawtonhall.manchester.sch.uk
Registered person	Manchester City Council; Childrens Services
Head of care	
Head / Principal	Nicola Jane Avery
Date of last inspection	17 March 2010

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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 overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are areas of care that are increasingly improving outcomes for pupils. These centre strongly around the trust pupils have built up with their carers who give them confidence to succeed, acquire new knowledge and feel safe. Nevertheless, despite these positive aspects, there is a decrease in the level of improvement since the last visit. This has resulted in

re-emerging shortfalls that are hindering progress being made to meet all national minimum standards. For example, there has been only marginal improvement in securing training for staff. This has meant pupils continue to be supported by staff who may have gaps in their knowledge of first aid, food hygiene, managing complaints, countering bullying and child protection.

Pupils are now having their needs assessed more effectively and captured within a placement plan. Their participation in this process ensures they are empowered in making decisions that directly affect them. However, placement plans are not holding all the correct information or kept under review, for example in relation to changes to pupils' circumstances.

Admissions to the residential provision are planned effectively and meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Pupils' health needs are increasingly being met by stronger links emerging with various health-related agencies. Pupils have excellent opportunities to enhance their physical well-being through a comprehensive array of activities both within the school and through community links. However, the content of health plans is sketchy and therefore limits key health information being formally known. There are some good arrangements for recording, storing and monitoring medication. However, some elements of managing medications are less robust. For example, the school is not evidencing they have assessed a pupil's competency to self administer their own medication before being given this responsibility

Pupils are encouraged and supported to develop life skills that prepare them for adulthood. Also, their views and opinions are increasingly sought and these are helping to reshape the school's future. Effective links with pupils' families are secure, with families being provided with clear and regular information about the school, the residential unit and their child's progress.

Staffing levels have been increased by appointing a number of new staff to the care team. However, there remain shortfalls in areas of recruitment to ensure all the required suitability checks are completed to safeguard pupils. Also, new staff are not provided with a structured induction or access to frequent supervision. This limits them gaining key information and receiving support whilst new to their roles and responsibilities. More positively, all shifts start with handovers, care staff have access to regular meetings to discuss pupils' welfare, and staff confirmed good communication exists throughout the school which enhances pupils' learning and care. Personal development plans are now being used which enable staff to contribute to planning and their future development, but there is no annual appraisal process in place in which their performance can be assessed.

The care staff are sensitive to the promotion of pupils' privacy and address without delay any anti-social behaviour, including tackling bullying. Complaints procedures are understood by pupils and they have exercised their rights to complain. However, they are less confident in the overall effectiveness of the school taking their concerns seriously. Added to this, records of physical interventions do not always provide a clear and concise account of how staff are applying the different categories of restraint, including direct holds. Despite this shortfall there is an increased emphasis placed on debriefing pupils following restraints and as a consequence, pupils' opinions and feelings are more formally known.

The school conforms to requirements in most areas of health and safety including fire and electrical safety. However, the monitoring of hot water temperature is not rigorous enough.

This means the risks associated with scalding are not adequately managed. The school does not offer waking night staff an annual health assessment so is not meeting all the requirements of the Working Time Directive.

The promotion of equality and diversity has become a more integral part of care and support. Pupils having increased opportunities to develop their social networks and participate in multi-cultural activities that help prepare them for life in a diverse society. A proactive approach is taken to limit potential discrimination that can emerge through isolation of placement. This includes pupils being given the opportunity to sustain strong links with their own communities through attending clubs and accessing facilities that can continue to be resourced during both term time and holidays.

Pupils are increasingly settled in their upgraded residential accommodation and have formed a strong sense of trust with care staff which is based on mutual respect, courtesy and honesty. The pupils are offered a variety of meals that reflect diverse food preferences and they particularly enjoy cooking meals for themselves. Pupils comment that there could be some slight improvements to the meals and the quality of toiletries supplied.

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):

- make sure all staff receive training that addresses all the issues detailed in appendix 2 of the national minimum standards (29.4)
- make sure the school has an induction training programme for all newly appointed staff. This should include guidance on child protection (NMS 29.2)
- make sure all new staff receive one to one supervision at least fortnightly during the first two terms of their employment (NMS 30.2)
- make sure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised annually by their line manager (NMS 30.6)
- make sure the local authority carry out a visit to the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. (NMS 33.2)
- ensure that the placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary (NMS 17.2)
- ensure the plan contains information about whether the child is in care and details of any known court orders affecting their care and contact with family, including any restrictions (NMS 18.2)

- ensure the recruitment of all staff follows the school's recruitment policy and procedure and meets the national minimum standards (NMS 27.1)
- ensure staff are training in safeguarding and the school's child protection procedures (NMS 5.8)
- ensure staff are trained in countering bullying (NMS 6.2)
- ensure checks are made to assess hot water temperatures accessible by pupils and ensure they do not exceed 44 degrees C (NMS 26.8)
- ensure the records made for physical interventions are clear in recording the nature of the physical intervention used (NMS 10.14)
- ensure pupils feel able to complain and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay (NMS 4.1)
- make sure all staff are trained in the use of first aid. Also that at least one staff member on each shift where pupils sleep holds a current first aid qualification (NMS 14.9)
- make sure all pupils have a health care plan that meets national minimum standards (NMS 14.6)
- make sure any pupils that are administering their own medication are first assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 14.19)