

# Barndale House Special School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC041487
<b>Inspection date</b>	18/11/2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Dennis Bradley
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Registered person</b>	Northumberland County Council
<b>Head/ Principal</b>	Not applicable
<b>Nominated person</b>	Trevor Charles Doughty
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	18/11/2009

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

## 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

Barndale House is a local authority special school. It is primarily for children and young people who have a statement of special needs. The school provides a residential service for some students. The age of students who board at the school may range from nine years to 19 years, and they may be of either gender. The residential accommodation is sited in a building adjacent to the classroom block. This building also contains school offices and dining facilities. All sleeping accommodation is sited on the first floor. The ground floor holds a large sitting/play area and the dining room and kitchen areas. The school is situated within easy walking distance of Alnwick town centre and all its amenities and facilities.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this full inspection all the key national minimum standards were inspected. The inspection also looked at the progress the service has made with the recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to: the school's policies, procedures and records; fire safety; staff recruitment and the arrangements for monitoring the welfare of young people.

The quality of the boarding provision is good. One parent said: 'Barndale is the most helpful, brilliant school and that in our opinion is why it's Barndale Special School'. All of the young people who completed a questionnaire said the care is 'great' and the care staff are 'great'. There was evidence of very positive relationships between the staff and young people who use the service. There are good arrangements for protecting and promoting the health of the young people. The school and residential unit provide a safe setting for the young people. Staff are good at consulting the young people and involving them in decisions about their stay at the residential unit. They support the education and achievement of the young people and encourage and support them to participate in a good range of community based activities and outings. The opportunities for staff to take part in relevant training are satisfactory and staffing levels are very good. There are good arrangements for monitoring the service and the care and welfare of the young people.

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection of the residential service it was recommended the school ensures that: written permission is obtained for the administration of first aid; there is a written protocol on the provision of household medicines to children; an appropriate record is kept of any use of physical intervention and a policy is prepared on the use of physical intervention; staff take part in regular fire drills; the

arrangements for monitoring the school's records and welfare of young people are effective. The school has addressed these recommendations and this helps to safeguard young people's welfare.

A recommendation regarding the school's system for recruiting staff is not applicable because no new staff have commenced work at the school.

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

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who actively promote their health and well-being. Staff are good at monitoring and meeting the diverse health care needs of the young people. The young people's care plans clearly set out their health and personal care needs and how they will be met. The school makes sure young people have access to appropriate specialist health workers. Staff are good at communicating with parents and carers to support the health and well-being of the young people.

Staff are good at promoting healthy eating and the young people have appropriate opportunities to gain experience in food preparation and cooking of meals. There are good arrangements for making sure young people's individual dietary needs and preferences are met. Young people said they enjoy the meals that are served. Staff encourage and support the young people to take part in healthy activities, such as swimming.

There are good arrangements for storing, administering, recording and monitoring the young people's medication. These help protect their health and meet their health care needs. Staff who administer medication to young people have had relevant training and there is always a member of staff on duty trained in first aid in case a young person has an accident. Some staff are trained to carry out skilled health care tasks but the school has not received written authorisation for staff to carry out one of these tasks.

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

The provision is good.

Staff are good at respecting the privacy of the young people and they make sure information about the young people and their families is handled confidentially.

There are suitable procedures for managing complaints appropriately and ensuring young people and their families are listened to. Staff make sure the young people and their families are aware of who they can go to if they have any complaints or concerns. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The school has procedures for safeguarding young people and all of the staff have had child protection training. There are arrangements for staff to receive refresher

training. This training helps staff protect young people from abuse and ensure they respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Staff create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. There is a clear anti-bullying policy, and staff try to help the young people to develop an understanding and tolerance of each others diverse needs. Good staffing levels help make sure that any bullying behaviour would be dealt with promptly. Most staff have also taken part in training in how to counter bullying. Young people said they have not been bullied at school.

There have been no incidents involving a young person leaving the residential unit without permission. There is an appropriate procedure for staff about what they must do if a young person is missing.

Staff are good at encouraging and supporting the young people to develop and maintain socially-acceptable behaviour. They give very positive messages to young people to reinforce acceptable behaviour and they encourage and support the self-management of young people's behaviour. Staff do not use sanctions. Some young people have behaviour management plans. These are clearly recorded and staff agree them with the young people's families. There have been no incidents involving the use of physical intervention by staff since the last inspection. All of the care staff have had training in behaviour management and the use of physical intervention.

There are good systems in place to keep the young people and adults safe from the risk of fire and other potential hazards. For example, regular checks of equipment, such as fire alarms and electrical appliances, are carried out. The headteacher also completes regular health and safety checks of the school and residential unit. Staff carry out a range of risk assessments including individual risk assessments for some of the young people. These help identify what staff and young people can do to reduce or avoid risks where practicable and appropriate. A parent said that helping young people to keep safe is '... inbuilt into all the teaching and care' at the school. Young people said they feel safe at school.

No new staff have commenced work at the school since the last inspection. The school does not use agency staff to cover shifts on the residential unit but the school carries out appropriate checks before agency staff commence work in other parts of the school. The arrangements for monitoring and managing visitors to the school are satisfactory and help ensure they do not have inappropriate access to young people.

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

The provision is good.

The residential care staff are good at supporting and promoting the education and achievement of the young people. For example, they ensure young people attend school punctually. Communication is good between the care staff and school-based staff and this helps make sure young people's needs are understood and addressed appropriately. Care staff also contribute to young people's annual education reviews.

A parent said their child '... has developed massively in their speech, confidence and mobility and this is due to the excellence and commitment of all of the staff at Barndale'.

The young people benefit from having care plans and risk assessments based on their individually assessed needs. Staffing levels provide good opportunities for staff to give the young people support and assistance to meet their individual needs and wishes. For example, staff are able to provide one-to-one support to enable some young people to take part in an activity. A parent said that residential staff '... are great at taking (their child) to places he wouldn't normally go and encouraging him to do activities involving other children'.

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

The provision is good.

Admissions to the school and the residential unit are well planned and handled sensitively. The school is good at consulting young people and their families and preparing young people for moving into adulthood. Staff actively encourage and support young people to develop skills in self-care and daily living. They also encourage and support young people to have their say about their day-to-day lives on the residential unit and how the school is run. Staff take the views and opinions of the young people seriously and, where possible and appropriate, act upon them.

Young people benefit from having plans of care that set out how the school will meet their assessed needs. There are good arrangements for reviewing their care and progress. There is good communication between staff and the young people's families. This helps staff keep up to date about any changes needed regarding the care and support of the young people. A parent said that one of the things the school is good at is '... keeping parents well informed'. Staff support young people to maintain appropriate contact with their families.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for ensuring young people are prepared for the transition into adulthood. For example, planning for this commences when a young person reaches 14 years of age. The daily life of the school and residential service provides good opportunities for young people to develop the knowledge and skills they will need for daily living. Young people confirmed they get help to be independent.

The accommodation in the residential unit is comfortable, clean and decorated, furnished and maintained to a satisfactory standard. There is an attractive and easily accessible Eco garden in the school's grounds and the young people were actively involved in designing this. They are also involved in the decoration and refurbishment of the residential unit living areas and bedrooms. Some of the young

people have created very attractive paintings that are on display in the residential accommodation. The ground floor accommodation provides suitable areas for dining, relaxing and leisure activities, such as board games and arts and crafts. Bedroom accommodation is on the first floor and young people who require the use of a wheelchair cannot access this area. There are two single bedrooms and four bedrooms that can each accommodate up to four young people. Young people can have a say in who they share with. The school has recently purchased new curtains and bedding for the bedrooms used by the young people. There are sufficient bathing and toilet areas for the number of young people who stay on the residential unit.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Young people and their families have access to clear information about the school and the residential unit. Staff are preparing information about the residential unit in a format that can be more easily understood by some of the young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs and preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and try to make sure their needs are being met at all times. There is a commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice.

Staffing levels are good and they are flexible to ensure sufficient staff are on duty to meet the individual needs of the young people. The residential unit uses a small number of relief staff to cover staff absences. This helps maintain continuity of staffing and reduce potential disruption to the young people.

Staff feel well supported. However, the arrangements for providing staff with supervision and guidance in safeguarding and promoting the young people's welfare are not fully satisfactory. Some staff do not receive one-to-one supervision sessions from a senior member of staff each half term.

The residential care staff are experienced and knowledgeable and have appropriate opportunities for taking part in relevant training. There is a rolling programme of core training, such as child protection and first aid, as well as training covering the specific needs and conditions of the young people. The majority of staff have a relevant qualification confirming they have the competencies needed to care for young people. Those who do not are undertaking training to obtain a relevant qualification.

The headteacher and heads of care are good at monitoring the school and the residential service to identify and address any issues requiring action. A school governor also carries out regular visits to monitor the welfare of the young people who use the residential service. This helps make sure pupils and staff benefit from a school that is run efficiently.



## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Compliance with national minimum standards**

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure that where staff carry out medical or nursing procedures for a child, these are only carried out on the written authorisation of the prescribing doctor or responsible nurse in relation to the individual child concerned, and by staff authorised to do so (breach of national minimum standard 14.23)
- ensure that all staff working in the school receive at least one and a half hours one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term. (breach of national minimum standard 30.2)