



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **Barndale House Special School**

**Howling Lane  
Alnwick  
Northumberland  
NE66 1DQ**

*Lead Inspector*  
Hilary Stewart

*Announced Inspection*  
1st February 2006      09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	Barndale House Special School
<b>Address</b>	Howling Lane Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01665 602541
<b>Fax number</b>	01665 606370
<b>Email address</b>	admin@barndalehouse.northumberland.sch.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Northumberland Local Education Authority
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr John Chappells
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	

## **Brief Description of the School:**

Barndale House is a local authority special school for children and young people who have a 'Statement of Special Needs'. It also provides a residential service for some students.

The children and young people who go to the school are from 4 - 19 years; if they are residential the age is 9 - 19 years.

Barndale House occupies two buildings on a site near the centre of Alnwick, one of which is a classroom block and the other houses the residential accommodation, office, dining facilities and infant/reception class.

The residential accommodation is mainly sited on the first floor and work is still ongoing to upgrade the bedrooms at the time of this inspection. There is a large sitting/play area on the ground floor regularly used by residential pupils as well as the dining room and kitchen.

# **SUMMARY**

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

The inspection started at 09.30am and lasted for approximately 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours. During this time the inspectors spoke to the 11 students, care staff the acting head, teaching staff and the school nurse. Questionnaires were sent to students, their parents and staff. Records and the building were examined.

## **What the school does well:**

The school has an extended curriculum for students who stay at the residential unit so they can take part in activities as a group.

Various activities are provided for the students both in house and in the community so they can gain experience in different situations.

Staff support and advise students on important issues such as keeping themselves safe and healthy eating so they are aware of how to look after themselves.

The parent questionnaires said that as a result of the residential service they have seen their children become more confident and independent.

Positive interaction was seen between the young people and staff.

The students were confident and co-operative, all said that they really enjoyed being at the school.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

- All staff at the school have now had checks carried out on them so the students are kept safe.
- The residential unit has been decorated and has some new furnishings. Students said that they think it is much more comfortable now.
- Residential staff are getting regular supervision so they are supported to look after the students.

## **What they could do better:**

- The school wants to find more work placements for students. This is so more students can experience purposeful activity which will help them become more confident and ultimately give them more choices when they leave school.
- The residential service should be available to students who have a physical disability.
- Governors who carry out monitoring visits to the school should have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. The school should also do this for agency staff and workers from other organisations or have evidence that the agency they work for has carried out the checks.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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# 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14 and 15.

Each student has a health plan in their individual file so staff know how to care for them. Their well-being is monitored and promoted so they remain in good health.

Healthy and nutritious meals are provided at the school so students learn about food that is good for them.

## EVIDENCE:

The head teacher said that the school put a strong emphasis on health living through the 'Healthy School Initiative'. Advice and help is given to students regarding personal hygiene and having a healthy life style. The student's records in the residential unit showed how the health needs of the young people are met when they stay. Policy and guidance are available for staff to follow if students need personal care.

The students are given a choice of meals. They are involved in choosing the menus. Staff promote healthy eating and have had training in food hygiene. The students said that they know they should eat healthy food. One young person said that they have cut down on 'pop and sugar'. Another said that they can have fruit and yoghurts.

The students said that they have talked about things that are bad for them such as drugs and certain types of food.

Staff said that they encourage students to make their own meals if they are able to.

The school has a medication policy. An individual record is kept of medication given to children. Residential staff administer medication in the evenings and the school nurse monitors this.

The deputy manager said that staff have been trained in first aid.

# 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 by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(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, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26 and 27.

The students have their privacy respected so they feel valued and learn to respect other people's privacy.

The school has a complaints procedure, which helps to maintain good relationships as complaints are dealt with promptly.

Procedures are in place to safeguard the young people and protect them from abuse so they feel safe.

Agency workers and visitors from other agencies who work at the school should be vetted to safeguard the students.

## EVIDENCE:

There is guidance for staff and they have a good understanding of the need to respect the privacy of young people. Staff and the students said that they

knock on people's bedroom doors and wait until they are asked before they enter.

The school's informal complaints procedure works well. Records showed that complaints are dealt with and resolved quickly. The students could describe how they could make a complaint.

Staff said that they had all received 'child protection training'. They knew what to do if they thought a young person was at risk. The staff handbook needs to be amended. Names of the designated staff who have responsibility for child protection issues within the school are not correct.

Any incidents of bullying are taken seriously in the school, records showed that staff discuss methods of countering bullying in the staff meeting. One young person said that they had been bullied but the staff had sorted it out. (This was discussed with staff at the time.) Another student said that they would tell a visiting advocate or staff. The students said that they talk about bullying and if someone tries to bully them they would 'walk away'. Risk assessments should be carried out to identify the times places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest and the action to be taken to minimise this risk. Staff said that they have not had training in strategies to counter bullying yet.

The school has guidance for staff to follow if a student goes missing.

Young people have individual behaviour management plans. Individual files tell the staff about the needs of each student and how they can be met.

The deputy manager said that staff have a good understanding about how they manage young peoples unacceptable behaviour. Physical intervention is not used at the school and neither are sanctions. If a student behaves in an unacceptable way they are expected to apologise. The staff said that more importance is placed on recognising and praising achievement to encourage acceptable behaviour. Young people's questionnaires showed that they think that discipline is fair at the school and they said this again during the inspection.

Fire records showed that drills had taken place. The head teacher said that the recommendations from the fire officers report dated 19-1-05 have all been implemented. Staff said that they were receiving fire instruction but this was not recorded.

The head teacher said that the local authorities recruitment procedure is used to check new staff. Some staff records were seen and showed that the school had carried out checks. There were copies of references and the records were signed to say that enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB ) checks had been carried out before they started to work at the school. The head teacher said that all staff have now had enhanced CRB checks.

At present the school governor who visits the school to check that everything is all right has not had an enhanced CRB check. The deputy managers were not sure if agency workers or staff who work in the school but are from other organisations had been checked.

The deputy manager said that the maintenance of the boilers and gas installations were up to date.

# 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 both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12,13 and 22.

The residential provision enables the young people to have a 24-hour curriculum at school the aim of which is for them to develop to their full potential academically and socially. Individual support is provided to young people when they need it so they can become more confident and increase their self-esteem.

## EVIDENCE:

The head of care said that teaching and care staff regularly meet and talk to each other to ensure continuity and consistency between the school day and the residential service so the young people don't get conflicting information from staff.

Care staff said that the student's needs are met and support is offered with educational, personal and social development. Young people said that the staff help them with their homework.

The young people said that they take part in a variety of activities. On the day of the inspection they were all looking forward to going to a club at a local community centre. One young person said that the best thing that had happened at the school was 'having a party for my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday'. Another young person said that they always have fun and the school is a good place to stay.

Students who are physically disabled can have extended stays into the evening but cannot stay overnight, as the living accommodation is upstairs and there is no lift.

## **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 living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

2,9,11 and 17.

Children and young people receive support when they need it .The relationships between the students and staff are positive and appropriate so they gain confidence and self esteem. All of the students have accurate written plans so the staff know how to care for them.

Staff consult the students and their parents and act upon what they say so they know that the school values their opinions.

Students go home every week end but during the week they can contact their families when they wish.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Staff were seen interacting with students in a safe and consistent way. The students said that the staff are 'great', and 'they help you'. A regular visitor from the advocacy service said that the staff treat the students as individuals and that the students and staff treat each other with respect and consideration.

Each student has a personal development and education plan. Individual files tell the staff about the needs of each young person and how they can be met. Young people's opinions are sought through regular meetings such the pupils forum, meetings with their key workers, the school nurse and an advocacy service (NYAS). Some of the ideas and views of the students have been used

in the school's residential improvement plan. Some students said that they would like to spend more time with their key workers by themselves. Records showed that reviews are carried out. The students said that they know about their files and plans.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## 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, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

16,21,23,24 and 25.

The residential building is clean, tidy and looked comfortable so it is a pleasant place for the students to stay.

Students' rooms suit their needs and promote independence.

Privacy is respected in bathing and toilet areas so the students feel valued. There weren't any offensive odours present.

## EVIDENCE:

Students take care of their own belongings and wear their own clothing.

The residential accommodation looks comfortable and is warm.

Three students showed me their rooms, which had been personalised to their own taste. They said that although they share with others their bedrooms are designed so they have their own private area. Other students and staff ask before they enter their rooms.

Staff said that the residential area had been improved a lot. The head teacher said that there are plans to continue to improve the building and facilities.

Bathing and toilet areas were pleasant and warm. The school has adequate laundry facilities.

# Management

## 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 is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both 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)

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

1,18,19,28,29,30,31,32 and 33.

The school provides information about what it sets out to do for the students so they know what to expect.

Records are kept about each student's needs and how they will be met so staff know how to care for them.

There are sufficient staff so the students can be supported to go out and enjoy themselves and gain more confidence.

Staff receive training and supervision that enables them to meet the needs of the students.

The school has procedures in place to promote and monitor the health and safety of the students.



## **EVIDENCE:**

The school provides information to the students and parents about the school and its purpose.

Each student has a progression chart. The head teacher said that this is used at the school and in the residential unit to measure each young person's achievement.

One student said that they were happy at school and they liked the staff because they helped them and they have 'learned a lot'. Another student said the staff are 'good fun' and 'the staff are great and help you with your work'. The deputy manager said that staffing levels allow for the students to have enough support to ensure their assessed needs are being met.

Five staff are in the process of completing an NVQ 3 and the head of care is completing the NVQ 4 in 'caring for children and young people'. The two deputy managers are undertaking Open University training in social work. Staff said that they have had mandatory training in food hygiene and first aid. One staff member said the training helped them work with the students. Records showed that staff meetings take place and that regular training is given to staff in fire safety so they are familiar with the procedures that must be followed if there is a fire. The students said that they did fire drills and that they all know what to do even if it's the middle of the night. The deputy manager said that risk assessments are carried out and recommendations from the fire authority are complied with.

The deputy manager and staff said that regular checks are carried out on the equipment in the school; this includes testing electrical goods and the central heating boiler.

Staff said and records show that they get regular supervision from their managers. They spoke highly of the support and guidance they are given. The staff rota showed that there are enough staff on duty to ensure the needs of young people are met.

School governors visit the school. The visits have not been unannounced.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	3

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>6</b>	2
<b>7</b>	3
<b>8</b>	3
<b>10</b>	3
<b>26</b>	2
<b>27</b>	2

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3
<b>13</b>	3
<b>22</b>	3

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>9</b>	3
<b>11</b>	3
<b>17</b>	3
<b>20</b>	X

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	3
<b>21</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	3

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	3
<b>18</b>	3
<b>19</b>	3
<b>28</b>	3
<b>29</b>	3
<b>30</b>	3
<b>31</b>	2
<b>32</b>	3
<b>33</b>	2

yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS6	Staff should be trained in the awareness of and effective strategies to counter bullying. Risk assessments are regularly carried out to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying.	01/05/06
2	RS27	The school should carry out an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks on adults who carry out monitoring visits or work unsupervised with the students. Or if agency staff the school have evidence that they have had checks carried out by the agency.	01/04/06
3	RS26	Fire instruction should be recorded as directed by the Local Fire Authority.	01/04/06
4	RS31	80% of all care staff should achieve NVQ level 3 in 'Caring for Children and Young People'. (Timescale outstanding 31/3/05).	01/04/06
3	RS33	A representative of the schools governing body should carry out unannounced visits.	01/05/06

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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