



*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

Key Announced Inspection
26th September 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

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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 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

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

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

Brief Description of the School:

Barndale House is a local authority special school. It is for children and young people who have a statement of special needs. The school provides a residential service for some students.

The students 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. 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 inspectors wrote in advance to the school, the young people and their parents to tell everyone they were coming to inspect the residential block, the inspection lasted for 9 hours. During the inspection they met with all the young people who were staying at the school at that time. A number of young people, staff members and parents returned questionnaires to the inspectors giving their views on the service provided to the students at Barndale House School.

Other ways the inspectors looked at the home included:

- Talking with the young people and staff
- Talking with the two deputy heads of care (the head of care in on sick leave) and head teacher
- Reading the young people's files and other care records
- Watching the staff and young people together
- Looking around the school
- Joining the staff and children for meal's
- Reading the questionnaires from young people, staff and parents.

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.
- 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.
- This school is good at looking after children. All the young people said that they liked staying at the school. Some young people said "we like it here" and " I enjoy staying here".
- Staff talk with young people and their families to encourage everyone to say what they think about how the school is run so they know that what they say is taken seriously. Young people said that they like the staff and they get help when they need it. During the visit the young people were confident to give their views. One young person said that one of the best things about living at the school was "the staff are very nice to me". Another said "the staff know if I'm upset and talk to me".

- Staff support and advise students on important issues such as keeping themselves safe. They also try to keep the school buildings safe for everyone living and working there. This is so the students can learn how to protect themselves. All the students said that the staff help them to look after themselves, no one said that they didn't feel safe at the school.
- The students said that some people had been bullied but when this has happened staff have stopped it. Staff have been trained in how to counter bullying so they are better at dealing with it. The students are given a lot of help and support at the school so they can learn to protect themselves from bullying .One young person said that when bullying occurred "we can look after ourselves".
- The school makes sure that if students are unhappy about something they can complain about the reasons why and then the staff deal with it. Staff take any complaints seriously so the students know they are listened to.
- There are plenty of activities for young people to do and they are regularly involved in sport and exercise so they can have different experiences and gain confidence and self-esteem.
- The food at the school is nutritious and varied so the students have a balanced diet which is good for their health and development. Nearly all the young people thought that the food provided at the school was good. One young person said "the food is lovely".

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The dining room has been decorated so the students have a nicer place to have their meals now.
- Residential staff have had training in how to counter bullying so they are better at dealing with any incidents and preventing it.
- The governors of the school visit young people to talk to them and they watch the staff and young people together. They check necessary records and write reports of their visits, which they then share with the head teacher and the other governors.
- Any adults who spend time alone with students have been vetted by the school so the students are kept safe.
- Staff receive regular fire instruction so they have lots of practice about what to do if there is a fire and they will be able to protect 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.
- The staff should have all of the information they need about students before they become residential so they know how to look after them.
- The heating system at the school should be repaired so the temperature can be adjusted by the staff. The education department and social services have agreed to pay for the repairs to the heating but they haven't been done yet and the staff don't know when this will happen.

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 or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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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.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgment has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to this service.

Student's health needs are being met when they stay at the school. Nutritional and varied food is provided and they are encouraged to exercise so they are supported to have a healthy lifestyle.

EVIDENCE:

Students are given information on health living through the 'Healthy School Initiative'. Records showed and staff said that they are supported with personal hygiene and having a healthy life style. They showed how the health needs of the young people are met when they stay at the school. 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 food provided at meal times looked good. Students can suggest what they want for their menu choice. One young person stated that since being at the school "I eat healthy food". Nearly all of young people responding by questionnaire stated that they thought the food provided at the school was good. One person did say " I want more take aways and chips". Students can prepare snacks and drinks with the support of care staff. The school also promotes a healthy lifestyle through the regular involvement of young people in sport and exercise.

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.

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgment has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to this service.

Staff respect each students right to privacy so they feel valued and learn to respect other people's privacy.

If anyone makes a complaint to the school their procedure is followed, which helps to maintain good relationships as complaints are dealt with promptly.

The staff know how to protect the students from abuse. This helps the students feel safe.

Records did not verify that staff who work at the school had been suitably vetted to safeguard the students.

EVIDENCE:

The privacy of students is respected. They said that staff knock on their bedroom doors before they come in and they can't go into other peoples bedrooms, they have to show other people respect. On young person said "the bathrooms are private".

Staff said they know that some how to deal with and share information, which they are given in confidence. Personal files and information are kept in a secure place. Students can use a telephone privately; most have their own mobile telephones. All of the students said they could contact their parents or friends when they wanted too.

Staff said that if any young person is unhappy they can complain about the reasons why and staff take this seriously. The students said that they would tell the staff, the head teacher or their parents if they were worried or unhappy. They all know how to make a complaint.

Staff have had training in how to protect and safeguard children and young people and they could say what they would do if they thought a student was at risk of abuse. A copy of the schools child protection procedures and the County Councils were in the office for staff to use. The students said that staff gave them good advice about keeping safe and out of danger.

Any incidents of bullying are taken seriously in the school, records showed that staff discuss any incidents of bullying in the staff meeting. Staff have been trained in how to counter bullying

Student's said that they would go to staff if they were being bullied. They said that they are taught at school about ways of protecting themselves. One student said that they "feel safe" at Barndale.

The school has guidance for staff to follow if a student goes missing. There is a record for staff to complete and staff could describe what they would do if a young person did go missing.

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. Students said that they think that discipline is fair at the school.

Fire records showed that drills had taken place. The head teacher said that the fire officer had inspected the school the previous week and they were waiting for the report.

The deputy managers said that the local authorities recruitment procedure is used to check new staff. Staff personnel records at the school and at County Hall did not verify this. The sample of records that were checked at the school showed that enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks had been carried out before staff started to work at the school. Records at the school and at County Hall did not contain copies of references, contracts and employment histories.

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.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgment has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to this service.

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.

Student's leisure time activities are supported by the staff and take into account of the needs of both the individual student as well as the group.

EVIDENCE:

The deputy manager said that teaching and care staff meet every week and talk to each other. This is to make sure there is 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 are very nice. One student said, " The staff can tell if I'm upset and talk to me".

The students said that they take part in a lot of activities. On the day of the inspection some young people had been taking part in sports. One young person said that they " go to the pictures" another young person said that they take part in lots of activities but " would like to go to the theatre more". Another young person had asked to stay for more nights, as he liked being residential so much.

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):

2,9,11,17 and 20.

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgment has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to this service. Students receive support when they need it .The relationships between the students and staff are positive and appropriate so they gain confidence and self esteem. Most of the students have accurate written plans so the staff know how to care for them but some of the new students did not. 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 weekend but during the week they can contact their families when they wish. The school had good systems in place for consulting with young people and their parents and finding out their views.
NMS 20 N/A

EVIDENCE:

Staff were seen talking with students in a safe and suitable way. The students said that they are " well cared for", and they are "happy at Barndale". Most of the students have a personal development and education plan. The individual files tell the staff about the needs of each young person and how they can be met. New students who had recently started being residential had

very little information on their files. The deputy manager said that the information they needed, had not been returned by the students parents.

Young people's opinions are sought through regular meetings such the pupils forum, meetings with their key workers, the school nurse and the National Youth Advocacy Service who visit the school every fortnight. Some of the ideas and views of the students have been used in the school's residential improvement plan.

Records showed that reviews are carried out. The students said that they know about their files and plans.

The questionnaires returned by students and their parents confirmed that they are asked for their views over important decisions.

The students said that they would speak to their key worker or any of the staff if they were worried about something. Staff said and records showed that parents are in regular contact with the school and they are told of any significant events. One young person said that " I would ring my mam if I was upset, I would ring her on my mobile".

The students said that they could say what they wanted and that staff listen to them.

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.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgment has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to this service.

Students had and wore their own clothes, there have a place to store their valuables securely and advice was given to them by staff on how to look after their money so they can learn to be more independent.

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.

EVIDENCE:

Students take care of their own belongings and wear their own clothing. Clothing, toiletries and personal items are bought by the young people and their parents.

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 students said they liked their rooms, one young person said " I really like my new room".

The school has adequate laundry facilities.

Young people's pocket money and personal possessions can be safely locked away.

Staff said that they are involved in the planning for young people when they leave the school. Written records showed that young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills. These include areas of personal care, cooking and budgeting.

Records showed that the checks and servicing of the fire system were carried out at the right times. An inspection had been carried out the previous week by the local Fire Brigade the report had not been received at the school yet.

Students said that the staff respect their privacy and don't come into their bedrooms or the bathrooms unless they are asked too. Staff were seen knocking and waiting before entering children's bedrooms.

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.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgment has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to this service.

The school and residential areas are managed well so the students benefit from a well-run service.

Information is given to students about what the school sets out to do for them so they know what to expect.

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:

Information is given to the students and parents about the school and its purpose.

The deputy manager said that each young person has his or her progress recorded. This is done at the school and in the residential unit.

One student said that they liked the school and they liked the staff '. Another student said that they "get looked after"" and "the staff take us shopping in Alnwick" and " the staff are nice and help you".

The deputy managers said that five staff have completed vocational qualifications for caring for children and young people. They have both completed vocational qualifications and are continuing with formal training in social work.

Staff said that they have had mandatory training in food hygiene and first aid. 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 always 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 their managers and 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 were met. Enough staff were on duty on the day of the inspection.

Staff had regularly undertaken training and records were maintained of this training for example: countering bullying and child protection training.

School governors visit the school. The visits have not been unannounced. The Statement of Purpose includes information on all of the appropriate areas.

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

BEING HEALTHY	
Standard No	Score
14	3
15	3

STAYING SAFE	
Standard No	Score
3	3
4	3
5	3
6	3
7	3
8	3
10	3
26	3
27	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
Standard No	Score
12	3
13	3
22	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
Standard No	Score
2	3
9	3
11	3
17	2
20	N/A

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
Standard No	Score
16	3
21	3
23	3
24	3
25	3

MANAGEMENT	
Standard No	Score
1	3
18	3
19	3
28	3
29	3
30	3
31	3
32	3
33	3

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.	RS27	The school should have a recruitment record for all staff that verifies that they have all been carefully vetted.	01/12/06
2.	RS17	The school should have a written placement plan specifying how they will care for each student in accordance with their assessed needs.	01/12/06

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