



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **Bleasdale House School**

**27 Emergate Lane  
Silverdale  
Nr Carnforth  
Lancashire  
LA5 0RG**

*Lead Inspector*  
Elaine Clare

*Unannounced Inspection*  
30th January 2006      10:00

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](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>	Bleasdale House School
<b>Address</b>	27 Emergate Lane Silverdale Nr Carnforth Lancashire LA5 0RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 702044
<b>Email address</b>	head@bleasdale.lancsngfl.ac.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Lancashire County Council
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr Robert Wright
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Mrs Linda Walker
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	<b>6 – 19 years</b>
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2005

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

Bleasdale House School is a residential special school operated by Lancashire County Council Education department (LEA) and registered with the Department Of Education and Skills (DFES). The schools primary function is to provide pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities with a positive and safe educational experience while boarding at the school.

Sixteen pupils were residing at the school for up to a maximum of thirty-eight weeks per year. Most pupils went home every other weekend and all pupils went home during the school holidays. Other pupils attended the school on a daily basis. A large, multi-disciplinary staff group was meeting the complex educational and physical needs of pupils.

The residential area was separated physically 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 home is provided with a range of facilities to cater for individual needs of the children.

# **SUMMARY**

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

The inspection was announced and started at 10.00am. It took place over three days during the children's term time. The inspectors spoke and spent time with a number of children and spoke separately to three members of staff, the head of care, the nurse manager and the head teacher. The head of care showed the inspectors around the school. Records were also examined.

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

This is a residential school where the children are looked after well. It has a competent staff team who understand the needs of the children living there. Those children observed appeared to like staying at the school. Staff listened to them and were there for them when needed.

One parent wrote to the inspector saying 'the best things about the school are the professional and caring way all the staff care for the children. We have every confidence in the way our son is cared for and know he is very happy and loved whilst at the school.'

A social worker wrote 'the school adopts an approach based on individual need, which I find has a positive impact in the care received.'

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

The school has ensured that clearance and recruitment procedures for new staff have been undertaken appropriately, with evidence maintained at the school to support this.

A programme of external monitoring of the school, supplemented with a written report from each visit, has been devised and implemented.

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

The school has developed a school prospectus, which satisfactory meets the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills. However the Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI) recommended that the school develop a Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose allows children, parents, staff and placing authorities access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

Within one of the placement plans information was not as up to date as it should have been. It was recommended that information were regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of the individual child.

The risk assessments produced for the children tended to be generic and clearly with each child having individual needs, it was recommended that individual risk assessments were produced.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection also recommends that Lancashire County Council Education Authority ensures that all staff employed at the school have undergone a Criminal Records Bureau check.

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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# 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):

14,15

The physical, emotional and mental health needs of each child are identified and actively promoted within the day-to-day care at the school.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has a policy and written guidance, which was observed to be implemented in practice, on promoting the health needs of children in the school. The school has a team of nurses employed by Morecambe Bay Care NHS Trust who oversee the medical care of the individual children. Each child has a comprehensive and detailed nursing care plan, which is regularly updated and reviewed by the nurse manager.

The nurse manager arranges for visiting professionals to attend the school for each child to receive medical, optical and dental treatment. The school has a doctor assigned to the children, who visits regularly.

Issues of personal hygiene are dealt with sensitively. Areas of the school are designated to assist staff with changing of the children. Children are given personal attention from a single member of staff whilst dealing with sensitive issues to ensure that dignity is paramount for the child.

Staff are trained in the use of first aid and first aid boxes were seen around the school. A medical team is available 24 hours a day and have access to specific medical equipment, which is used only by people, trained to do so.

Medication was observed by the inspector, as was the medical room in which it is stored. The children at the home are on a number of medicines and tablets and these are carefully monitored by the nursing manager. The school has secure medical cabinets, which meet the needs of the Medicine Act 1968. A written record is maintained of any medical procedures, illnesses or accidents that have occurred to the children while resident at the school.

The medical input into the school and the close relationship it has with the medical team is to be commended. It was felt by the inspectors that this standard exceeded the minimum recommended.

The evening meal was taken with the children at the school on the first day of the inspection. The mealtime arrangements were set up to be well-managed, orderly and social occasions.

Each child had an individual care worker assigned to assist it with feeding. It was observed that time was spent talking and encouraging the children over the mealtimes.

Each meal had been individually tailored for each child. One child required to have a high fibre diet and been given figs and fresh fruit. Each child had a choice of a variety of drinks according to taste. A homemade smoothie of wheat germ and banana seemed a particular favourite.

The staff team involved in preparing food had good experience within the catering field. An environmental report sent to the Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI) prior to the inspection was satisfactory.

The choice available, the individual attention each child received during the meal times and the themes of meal times to sometimes to coordinate around religious festivals (eg Chinese New Year) meant that this standard exceeded the minimum recommended.

# 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):

3,4,5,7,26,27

The school follows procedures well and has good strategies of communication with parents, staff and multi disciplinary groups. Some areas have been identified as a shortfall in ensuring that children stay safe.

## EVIDENCE:

The staff receive quality guidelines on privacy and confidentiality, which include practical details about entering and leaving a child's bedroom to access to case records of children by staff. All children's records are kept safe and secure and their contents remain confidential.

A telephone is available for the children to use but within the school at present no child is able. However staff spoken with did report that parents sometimes telephone their children and the phone is passed to the child so that they may hear their voices.

Children observed were unable verbally to express their dislike of an issue or to complain. However the head of care reported when interviewed that the children are observed by staff that have been working with the children over a long period of time and would instinctively know if a child was not happy with a particular situation.

All the returned questionnaires from the parents and the placing officers indicated that they knew the complaints procedure but had not felt the need to use it. One parent wrote 'I haven't found anything to moan about yet!'. The head of care felt that this was down to being pro-active with parents and having good communication links with the multi-disciplinary team members.

Staff did not know that they could complain directly to the Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI) about a particular area of concern and the school prospectus did not outline the complaint procedure. It is recommended that within the Statement of Purpose the head teacher includes the complaints procedure so staff, parents, carers and fellow professionals alike are fully aware of what steps they can take should they wish to raise an issue about the school.

The school has a comprehensive child protection policy and staff are aware of the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns.

There are no significant unnecessary hazards to health and safety apparent in the school or grounds. Gas, electric and the boilers are all serviced regularly and copies of the certificates were available at County Hall.

Risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing and are available to staff. Risk assessments are carried out with regard to the school's premises and grounds, children's known and likely activities and risks arising from children not able to appreciate hazards for themselves. It was recommended that individual risk assessments were drawn up for each individual child for all activities. At present for example a risk assessment is in place for a group of children who wish to go to ASDA. Each child has specific needs both medically and behaviourally and what may be a risk to one particular child may not be a risk to another.

The vetting of staff that are recruited to the post of residential social workers have much improved. All new staff recruited have a Criminal Record Check (CRB), references that are verified by the head teacher and a full interview. Staff have good supervision and a thorough induction programme.

The head teacher was questioned about existing staff members that may have been employed at the school for a number of years or may have moved internally from another post within the council. The head teacher forwarded some guidance published by the Department of Education and Skills (DFES) which stated that 'there will continue to be no requirement to obtain a Disclosure on existing staff. Employers will continue to have discretion to seek a Disclosure where they have ground for concern...' The Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI) recommends Lancashire County Council Education Authority ensure that all staff have a CRB check, which is renewed on a regular basis.

# 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):**

12,13,22

The residential contribution to education is high. It is a facility that offers 'round the clock' experience for individual pupil's targeted learning needs.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Each child's learning is facilitated within individual and group sessions within which, a consistent and continuous approach to pupils learning is assured. Care staff are familiar with the educational needs and progress of the children in their care. They contribute to the annual review and participate in regular meetings about the child.

It was evident that residential, care and teaching staff work together to identify means of encouraging each child's personal, social and educational development and achievement, and contribute consistently to encourage development in their work with the child.

The inspectors had the pleasure of observing and participating in a number of activities during the evening programme. Children were observed in swimming, making ice cream, decorating valentine masks and enjoying a relaxation session called 'Sherbourne'.

The high quality of the school's residential provision and activities contributing to the individual child's educational progress exceeds the National Minimum Standard.

The school provides a range and choice of activities for boarding pupils outside class time, both indoors and outdoors and including appropriate trips, throughout the year.

During the inspection one pupil was to celebrate his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday at the home. The staff had made and decorated a cake in the style of a rugby shirt in the young man's favourite team's colours. A party was being thrown in celebration and staff were busily preparing the room with balloons and decorations.

An objective of the school taken from the school prospectus states 'A resident pupil's education begins on waking and continues through the day and evening..' Inspectors observed that children were undertaking structured activities until their bedtime. It was observed that some pupils were tired. The head of care reported that some pupils had travelled some distance in the morning to arrive at the school following a weekend at home and therefore some had had a long day.

Consideration should be given to maybe shortening the activities particularly when pupils had been up very early in the morning.

# 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):

2,9,11,17,20

The reviewing system in this home is good with children being supported and encouraged. Appropriate contact between children and their families is ongoing to help maintain relationships.

## EVIDENCE:

Families and significant others opinions are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

The school provides frequent and suitable means for any child, using their preferred method of communication, to make their wishes and feelings known regarding their care and treatment in the school. One returned staff questionnaire stated 'The pupils at Bleasdale House do not have verbal skills – but staff look for body language signs to ascertain the child's well being.' Another stated, 'although the pupils have limited communication techniques, once the staff have a better understanding of them, a lot can be gathered from their expressions, emotions and behaviour.'



Children are nearly always worked with on a 1:1 basis during all activities. Children have keyworkers and these relationships were observed throughout the inspection as being positive.

Admissions into the school are well planned and arranged with a multidisciplinary team. There are procedures for introducing children on admission to the school, the staff and the children living there.

During the inspection three children were 'case tracked'. This is a process where a number of children's files are looked at in depth and linked to what was happening for them in practice. For each of the children case tracked there was a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with their needs. The school cares for that child in accordance with that plan and should monitor its progress.

Within one placement plan some of the information was out of date. It stated that they were not on any medication but it was observed at the teatime that medication was given. It is recommended that placement plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that they consistent with the care that is being given.

Contact with the families, where appropriate, is maintained on a regular basis. Children attend the school either on a weekly or fortnightly basis, going home at weekends. The school is closed during holidays. In returned questionnaires from parents this is one area that parents felt the school could improve on. The school holidays particularly at summer can be long period and some parents would favour respite during this time at the school.

# 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):

16,21,23,24,25

The children at this school live in a warm, friendly environment, which has adaptations to meet their needs.

## EVIDENCE:

Children are free to bring their own clothing to school. Children were observed to be wearing age appropriate clothing with the football fans wearing their favourite team colours and the rugby ones wearing theirs.

Plans for young people leaving Bleasdale school were in situ for two current residents who were to turn nineteen soon. Working with a multi disciplinary team a move into an adult placement scheme was being arranged with the young people still attending day school until an appropriate age.

The school is located in a village some miles from the nearest town. It is of a design and size that serves the needs of the children and provides an environment which is helpful to each child's development.

Suitable aids, adaptations, special furniture and equipment are provided to enable the children to live as normal life as possible. The children have full access to all parts of the building and site. There is sufficient space and

appropriate layout of premises, equipment and furniture to enable children with mobility problems or using wheelchairs to move reasonably around.

The head teacher felt that the school could improve with the development of a 'senior common room' and 'additional CCTV'. Further plans to develop the site could involve major building works.

Some children do sleep in a room with up to two other children. If it is available a single room can be made available for children who have specific night needs. Each area of the bedroom is decorated to how the family feel is appropriate and with consultation with the key worker. The bedroom areas were observed to have some wonderful displays and bright colours but there was a lack of full-length mirrors, which would enhance the bedroom further.

The school had sufficient bathrooms with assisted baths, showers and toilets that were all of a good standard.

# 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):

1,18,19,28,29,30,31,33

The school is managed well and run efficiently providing a safe and stable environment for the children living there.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has not developed a Statement of Purpose, a recommendation of the Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The school does however have a school prospectus, which meets the requirements of the DFES. The school prospectus can be used to form a part of the Statement of Purpose but it is recommended that the head teacher develop a Statement of Purpose in line with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

The case tracking exercise completed as part of the inspection process observed three children's individual case files. All information recommended to be held within those files was seen.

There were excellent staffing levels seen during the inspection. Each child had a member of staff to assist them. It was observed that there is a continuity of staff so that children's relationships are not disrupted. The school does not routinely use agency staff, however one had been employed to meet the needs of a specific child, who was known by the child.

The Inset Committee manages all training support. Each staff group has a representative who attends the committee meetings and put forward requests for training from individual's members of staff within their group. Ongoing training is planned into the work schedule for all staff where necessary. Five staff development days are provided every year to meet the necessary updates of training and to enable staff to take part in training as a group. All staff complete individual needs requests for training and wherever possible these needs are met. Regular ongoing training is provided during the specified training days, e.g. basic food hygiene, child protection, first aid and moving and handling.

Staff receive regular supervision, which is of an excellent standard. Both formal and observational supervision takes place with written records available to be observed by the inspector.

A minimum ratio of 80% of care staff should have completed their Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or have qualifications, which demonstrate the same competencies. In the school there is approximately 40% qualified to this level. This is an outstanding recommendation from the previous inspection. The head teacher explained that staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level and then leave to find employment elsewhere. There are a number of staff on the course, just about to be signed off, or just awaiting the certificate. The head of Care is confident that this minimum standard will be met very shortly.

There is an internal and external monitoring system, which ensures the school, is functioning in line with National Minimum Standards and DFES requirements. Visits are made every half term and a written report is completed on the conduct of the school. It is recommended that these reports be forwarded to the Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

# 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	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	4
<b>15</b>	4

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	4
<b>13</b>	4
<b>22</b>	4

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	4
<b>9</b>	4
<b>11</b>	3
<b>17</b>	2
<b>20</b>	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	3
<b>21</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>24</b>	4
<b>25</b>	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	2
<b>18</b>	3
<b>19</b>	3
<b>28</b>	4
<b>29</b>	3
<b>30</b>	4
<b>31</b>	2
<b>32</b>	3
<b>33</b>	3

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	RS1	The Head Teacher should develop a Statement of Purpose.	
2	RS4	Children, staff, parents should be made aware that complaints about the school can be directed to the Commission Social Care Inspection (CSCI).	
3	RS17	Placement plans should be regularly updated to meet the changing needs of the individual child.	
4	RS26	Individual risk assessments should be produced for the children undertaking activities.	
5	RS27	All staff should obtain a criminal records bureau check, which is renewed on a regular basis.	
6	RS31	There should be a minimum of 80% of care staff with a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Level three or equivalent. (Outstanding from the last inspection)	

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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