

Buglawton Hall School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105604
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	355803
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janice Triska
Headteacher	Mrs A Schofield/ Mrs L Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
School address	Buxton Road Congleton Cheshire CW12 3PQ
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Age group	7–16
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
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Boarding provision	Buglawton Hall Residential Special School
Social care Unique Reference Number	SC041918
Social care inspector	Michelle Moss

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, an additional inspector and a social care regulatory inspector. The inspection of education and social care was integrated. Inspectors observed 10 lessons, seeing six teachers. Inspectors held meetings with teaching staff and with care staff. They also interviewed the headteacher and senior leaders, and held meetings with the Executive Principal of the federation, the chair of the interim executive board, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors talked to staff and to groups of pupils. They telephoned 16 parents to gain their views and read questionnaires completed by staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' records, including data on their attendance, progress and care. They scrutinised documentation, including the self-review submitted by the school's leaders; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and the school's plans for improvement.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The school's capacity to improve, to see whether this had been built up sufficiently since the previous inspection, and the impact of actions taken.
- The systems for tracking pupils' progress, to see how effectively these operate.
- The impact of the school's strategies to promote pupils' attendance.
- The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision and whether the school meets the national minimum standards for care in residential special schools.
- The quality of teaching, to see whether pupils are making sufficient progress.
- The provision for improving pupils' literacy skills.

Information about the school

Buglawton Hall is a small residential special school for boys aged 7 to 16 situated in a rural setting to the South West of Manchester. All the pupils have educational, social or behavioural difficulties and have a statement of special educational needs specifying the provision that must be made for them. The school is registered for up to 40 pupils. There are currently 20 pupils on roll, aged 9 to 16, all of whom board on a weekly basis at the school. Three pupils are in the care of the local authority.

The school is part of a federation of three special schools; the other two schools are day schools located some distance away. The federation is led by an executive principal. A head of centre (headteacher) is responsible for the day-to-day running of each school.

At its previous inspection in October 2008 the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate and the school was placed into a category of concern, requiring special measures in order to improve. The school is governed by an interim executive board.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Buglawton Hall has made good improvement since its previous inspection so that its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. Pupils' achievement and enjoyment are satisfactory. Much has improved: teaching is good and so pupils are now making satisfactory progress overall. In many lessons observed, pupils' progress was good. Lessons more closely meet their needs. However, pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics remain very weak, reflecting gaps in their previous learning. Developing pupils' literacy has become a priority for the whole school to address. Behaviour is good; pupils show interest in learning and generally try hard to improve. This positive attitude to learning, and skills in working cooperatively together, stand pupils in good stead for their future.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils have improved and are now satisfactory. The boarding section of the school is satisfactory. The school meets more of the national minimum standards for care for residential special schools than it did before, although a number of regulations are still not met.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has begun to explore how it might better promote pupils' independence in learning and living, and is seeking to extend the range of qualifications on offer.

The school's leaders and managers show satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement. Staffing instability has settled down of late. Newly-appointed leaders show good vision and are successfully harnessing the staff's energies behind them. Leaders' and managers' skills in self-evaluation have grown and they have determined suitable priorities for the future. Systems have been set up to track pupils' progress in meeting the individual targets set for them, though these systems are newly established and need more time to run.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs even better and prepare them well for the next stage in their life by:
 - extending the range of accreditation pupils can receive for their learning
 - fostering pupils' skills for independent living and learning.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:

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- developing pupils' skills over time to enable them to catch up to where they should be
 - identifying further opportunities across all subjects for pupils to apply their basic skills in English and mathematics, so that their literacy skills, in particular, can be reinforced
 - exploring further ways in which care staff and the residential setting can contribute to pupils' progress in literacy.
- Make more extensive use of the systems that have been set up for tracking pupils' progress over a longer period of time, so that leaders and managers can identify whether a pupil is making sufficient progress, or whether he is falling below the school's expectations, and be able to intervene promptly to support him to improve.
 - The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards for boarding which have not been met.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment are satisfactory, although their attainment is low, especially in English. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is low. This is because pupils have typically had disrupted education owing to their poor behaviour, and this has held back their learning. As a result, pupils have gaps in their basic skills and knowledge and are behind where they should be for their age. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is also low, but shows some recent improvement. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are stronger than for literacy and mathematics. They have opportunities to use and develop their ICT skills in a number of different subjects. Teachers are increasingly giving specific attention to literacy skills in lessons other than English.

A structured programme to address pupils' low literacy levels is now in place and is encouraging more interest in reading. Boarding staff help with a 'catch up' programme at the end of the school day. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' progress was satisfactory, and often good, because the quality of teaching has improved in many subjects. Consequently, pupils' current progress is faster than before.

As pupils enjoy school more, their attendance has risen and is now broadly average. The school checks attendance closely. As a result, there are far fewer pupils who persistently do not attend school. This is helping to ensure continuity in learning. Pupils generally show good attitudes to learning. Staff manage behaviour effectively, encouraging and supporting pupils to take responsibility for how they behave.

The development of pupils' social skills is good. The school regards this as a high priority. In this respect, pupils leave the school with positive attitudes and better prepared for life than when they arrived. Links between the boarding and educational aspects are strengthening, so that both aspects work together to promote pupils' development. This is noticeable in the good opportunities for pupils to take exercise and keep healthy. Pupils' learning about diverse cultures is satisfactory. Provision for this has improved since the previous inspection. Information about other cultures is now a more routine feature in lessons.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and meets pupils' needs well. Teachers use a good range of methods and strategies to capture and retain pupils' interest, including good use of ICT to add relevance to lessons. For example, in a vocational studies lesson in Key Stage 3 when learning about materials for car parts, pupils watched first a short video clip of simulated car crashes in old and new vehicles. In a Key Stage 4 GCSE art lesson on tattoos, pupils used internet resources to research and prepare a presentation and then listened in to a popular website to people who have had tattoos explain the significance for their culture.

Importantly, teachers are increasingly seeking ways to encourage pupils to take on more responsibility for their own learning and to behave responsibly. In an outstanding Key Stage 4 science lesson, pupils were trusted and enabled to safely conduct a chemistry experiment using hazardous substances and bunsen burners. They rose to the challenge, gaining a good understanding of the chemical changes involved. Lessons with a good balance of theoretical and hands-on practical activities, such as these, are promoting a faster pace in learning. So, too, was this evident in a teacher's highly effective use of games in mathematics to check learning.

Teachers and assistants set out the tasks and learning outcomes expected from individual pupils very clearly at the outset of each lesson. They are aware of each pupil's stage of learning. Consequently, lessons are tailored well to move learning on. However, systems

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for recording pupils' progress over time are only recently established. As yet, they show that pupils are making satisfactory overall from their various starting points. Nevertheless, this represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are steadily filling in the gaps in their knowledge to begin to catch up to where they should be.

The curriculum enables pupils to develop skills they will need for the future, notably more appropriate attitudes to learning and to working cooperatively with others. A good programme of extra-curricular activities helps pupils to enjoy school and to develop interests, social skills and self-esteem.

There are suitable opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation for their learning, including, if capable, at GCSE level. The school's leaders are actively exploring how to extend the range of qualifications pupils can gain, for example, by introducing a greater range of vocational courses. At the same time, the school is conscious of the need to foster pupils' independence more to better equip them for life and learning when they leave.

Due emphasis is given to improving pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics as key to promoting their achievement overall. A structured programme for developing literacy is now in place. Increasingly, teachers in all subjects and within the residential setting are seeking ways in which to improve pupils' literacy skills. Some opportunities have been identified though, as yet, these are few.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are better than at the time of the previous inspection. The management of this important aspect of school life is stronger, reflected in greater compliance with the regulations that set out the minimum standards for pupils' care. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect, encouraging cooperation and promoting a safe environment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Partnership working, through the federation, has helped the school to build up satisfactory capacity in leadership and management. The school's leaders and managers have ensured that their vision for improvement is shared and understood by all staff. In this they are very ably supported and guided by the Executive Principal and the Chair of the Governing Bodies, who both bring much relevant expertise in strategic planning. A new 'shadow' governing body is ready to take over the running of the school, getting more directly involved with the school's leaders and staff. Opportunities have been taken, across the federation, to share good practice in teaching and learning.

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Further links operate with another school whose children have educational needs of a different nature, and with pupils' home communities, as means to promote further cohesion between the different communities to which the pupils belong. This is raising pupils' awareness of other people's needs. The promotion of equality and diversity is good across all aspects of the school's work: staff expect that activities, such as outdoor education, will be open to all, and that pupils will demonstrate that they can approach these in a sensible, mature way.

Safeguarding procedures and practice are satisfactory, representing an improvement since the previous inspection.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Boarding provision

The school meets a good number of the national minimum standards, although there are areas of weakness, especially in the management of medication; the assessment of pupils' needs; and in the stability of staffing levels. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is satisfactory.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher and head of care have ensured that staff are increasingly ambitious to secure improvement and to play their full part in promoting care. Significant improvements in training and supervision have increased the staff skill in caring for pupils. However, there are still some re-emerging shortfalls, for example, in notifying concerns to official authorities, and in systems for recording information.

The school has a good approach to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. This is at the heart of the care and support that is provided for pupils and ensures that

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they make a positive contribution towards their life in school. This includes making suggestions for the future of the residential provision.

Engaging in active lifestyles at school helps the pupils to stay healthy. For example, pupils take part in a broad range of physical activities on the school site and within the wider community. They can pursue interests that positively challenge their development and keep them healthy. The care staff work alongside pupils to develop a health plan, although this does not capture well aspects of pupils' emotional well-being. Nevertheless, the school is ensuring that pupils have access to practical support from mental health services. Pupils use this additional support to help them explore their feelings and behaviour, and to understand how these impact on their learning.

Care and education staff work closely together to secure a shared understanding of pupils' needs and are working towards a consistent approach to managing behaviour. The school plans admissions to the boarding units effectively, but is slower at assessing the risk of individual pupils, after joining the school.

Care staff ensure that every pupil receives individualised support and care to meet their needs and personal circumstances. However, sometimes this is hindered by staff shortages. These restrict the levels of staffing and, consequently, how effectively staff can fully respond to pupils' needs whilst having to cover all the residential units. Pupils are able to complain about the standard of care they receive without fear of becoming victims because they have made a complaint. The procedure for parents and carers is not as well established. This hinders parents and carers from having the same level of confidence about how their concerns will be addressed.

The school provides pupils with a safe and nurturing environment. Staff respect pupils' personal dignity and their rights. They handle information about pupils confidentially and securely, but do not always keep appropriate records of the medication administered to pupils. Staff recognise the importance of helping pupils to receive a balanced diet, but areas of dietary concern are not always followed up and then closely monitored.

The recruitment of staff is meticulous. Written safeguarding policies are, however, insufficiently updated. Nevertheless, pupils are appropriately protected from hazards associated with fire, water and electrical safety, and from going missing. The vast majority of pupils report feeling safe and have built up trusting relationships with staff. Staff recognise the importance of building up this trust and of respecting pupils. Pupils have good opportunities to talk to staff about personal difficulties. This helps pupils feel reassured.

Staff appreciate the serious implications of bullying and its potential harm to pupils' well-being. They provide clear direction about acceptable behaviour and only use physical intervention as a last resort. Where used, this takes into account the pupil's age and the seriousness of the situation. Nevertheless, care staff are, at times, inconsistent in how they apply the school's agreed behaviour management strategies.

The school has established procedures for ensuring that significant events are notified to the required authority. However, these procedures are not always followed to ensure correct reporting take place.

The governing body plays a strong role in promoting the care of pupils. The quality of the leadership for boarding is good. The leadership team's skills are effective in helping pupils to benefit from 24-hour curriculum support that opens up increased opportunities for them

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in which to thrive. However, pupils' levels of independence and preparation for adulthood are not yet being sufficiently well developed.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

Make sure the health plan clearly covers the emotional and mental health needs of pupils. This must include how the elements of a pupil's health will be monitored (NMS 14. 2, 14.6).

Make sure a clear written record is kept for all medications administered and that it is regularly monitored by an appropriately designated senior member of staff (NMS 14.20).

Make sure families are provided with information on how to raise a complaint (NMS 4.2).

Make sure the school promptly informs Ofsted of any serious incidents within the school including where it is necessary to call out the police (NMS 7.6).

Make sure all sanction logs provide clear records about the effectiveness of the sanction, and ensure sanctions are not excessively used (NMS 10.6, 10.9).

Make sure risk assessments are particular to individual pupils (NMS 26.3).

Make sure the school provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and the skills they will need for their likely future living arrangements (NMS 21.2).

Ensure staffing cover arrangements for staff sickness and absence enables the level of staffing set out in the school's staffing policy to be maintained; and ensure the level of staffing is adequate to meet the school's statement of purpose (NMS 28.2, 28.11).

Make sure the needs of pupils are identified in their placement plan, including how all needs are to be met. This includes pupils' dietary needs and the level of surveillance required (NMS 17.2, 17.5).

Make sure all policies, including all safeguarding policies and procedures are kept up to date and accessible to staff (NMS 30.7).

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	3
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Views of parents and carers

The inspectors contacted parents and carers by telephone to conduct the questionnaire and the response rate was high. Parents and carers are very pleased with the education and care provided for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buglawton Hall School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 20 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	31	9	56	1	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	50	7	44	1	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	69	3	19	1	6	1	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	38	9	56	0	0	1	6
The teaching is good at this school	8	50	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	50	6	38	0	0	1	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	63	3	19	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	44	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	63	4	25	1	6	1	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	56	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	56	4	25	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	56	5	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buglawton Hall School, Congleton, CW12 3PQ

I am writing to thank you for your help when I visited your school recently with Mrs Moss and Mr Ellwood, and to tell you what we found.

I am very pleased to tell you that we judge your school has made good improvement since its last full inspection. It no longer requires special measures. This is because:

- your school is now satisfactory overall
- you are making satisfactory progress in your learning
- the boarding aspect of life at school is satisfactory
- attendance has improved and is satisfactory, with far fewer pupils staying off school regularly
- teaching is good
- your behaviour is good: we were pleased to see you taking an active part in your lessons
- the range of subjects you do is satisfactory and there is a good activities programme for you after school and in the evening
- the care, guidance and support the staff provide for you are satisfactory
- the headteacher and senior leaders have clear ideas for how to improve the school further. We feel they have shown over the last two years that they are able to lead the school forward so that it continues to improve.

We have asked the headteacher to ensure that:

- you get better at English. This is a very important skill for all that you have to do. Mathematics is important, too
- you grow more independent in your learning, and in developing the skills you will need for life when you leave school
- the systems for tracking your progress develop further, so that the school can check whether you are making sufficient progress and help you if you fall behind
- all the regulations for the boarding section of the school are met. These include things like how the staff keep records, but also that there are always the right numbers of staff on duty.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Honoree Gordon

Her Majesty's Inspector

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