

Buglawton Hall School

Buxton Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 3PQ

Inspection dates 17–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved hugely since it was placed in special measures in March 2013. It now provides a good quality of education and a good residential experience for highly vulnerable students.
- Students achieve well. They make good progress in the core skills. They make good progress in developing life skills. For some students, their life chances are transformed.
- Teaching is good, with little that requires improvement. Students learn from the whole staff, which is unified and 100% committed to the progress and well-being of the students.
- Students enjoy being at school. They feel safe and have confidence that education and care staff will always help and support them.
- Students make good progress in managing their behaviour from their starting points. For some, the improvement is exceptional.
- The executive headteacher and acting head of centre provide a very effective leadership partnership. The governors' committee provides close scrutiny for the school.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Much is new, and improving practice has yet to translate into outstanding outcomes for students, for example, in their literacy skills.
- Teaching is not outstanding. Some requires improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection began as the school's fourth monitoring inspection since it was placed in special measures in March 2013. It was changed to a full school s5 inspection when it became clear that the school no longer required special measures.
- The school's work was observed over two full days. Interviews were held with the executive headteacher, the acting head of centre, senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants, care staff, students and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors talked informally to students and staff throughout the two days.
- A telephone interview was conducted with the Chair of the Buglawton Hall Committee and a community governor was interviewed.
- There were insufficient responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, to gather the views of parents.
- The inspection took place over the two days boys attended the Cheshire Show. When students were not visiting the show, they were following an alternative timetable. These activities were observed. In addition, students' files and exercise books for English, mathematics, science, personal and social education and information and communication technology were examined.

Inspection team

Brian Padgett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Scully

Social Care Inspector

Full report

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.

Information about this school

- Buglawton Hall School is a small, residential special school for boys from Manchester with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). It is situated in the Cheshire countryside, to the north of Congleton.
- Boys attend weekdays during term-time. They return home each weekend and during school holidays.
- The school is a member of the Manchester Federation of BESD Schools. Buglawton Hall is the only school in the federation that is residential and situated outside the city. Governance is provided by the federation governing body. However, the school has its own strategic committee, which reports to the main governing body.
- The executive headteacher of Buglawton Hall is the executive headteacher of the federation. Day-to-day leadership of the school is provided by the acting head of centre.
- Boys are almost exclusively of White British backgrounds. Three students are looked-after, in the care of the local authority. All of the students are in receipt of the pupil premium, the government funding to support children and young people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Each student has a statement of special educational needs.
- Four students are educated off-site, two with an alternative provider, Karting 2000.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further, particularly in literacy.
- Eradicate teaching that requires improvement, where it exists.
- Further improve recording in 'missing from care' risk assessments, avoiding the use of the word 'abscond' unless this meets the legal definition.
- Further improve care staff's understanding of students with autistic spectrum condition.
- Improve the monitoring reports for the residential units by including evaluations and actions to be taken.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students generally make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT). Many students make accelerated progress that is helping them catch-up from their low starting points on entry to the school. Progress in aspects of English, including writing and speaking and listening requires improvement.
- Students' GCSE qualifications are on an upward trend. Students achieve GCSEs in mathematics, physical education and art. The standards of some students in art and in physical education are particularly high. In art, students achieve GCSE in Year 10 and are about to study photography to GCSE standard in Year 11. Students are on track to reach the best ever GCSE results in 2015.
- All students achieve in English and mathematics at the functional skills level. They read every day.
- The school is very effective in helping students gain awards and qualifications. These have a considerable impact on raising students' self-esteem. Evidence towards awards and accreditations is routinely collected during lessons and activities. For example, evidence towards catering and health and safety awards was collected during the cooking and baking sessions led by the school cook during the inspection. These awards build to provide a convincing portfolio that show how well students are acquiring life skills and moving towards independence.
- Most students take up college places on leaving the school. Some students have exceptional talents or are keen to follow certain careers. The school facilitates these talents and ambitions well, accompanying students off-site to do so. As a consequence, one student is playing football at a highly competitive level and another is working towards a career in the armed forces.
- Students have a generally better chance of making good progress in improving their life chances if they enter the school earlier rather than later. Some remarkable changes have been effected over several years. However, students entering at Years 10 and 11 have much less time to improve and are more likely not to attend.
- Students take a pride in their work. Their work in their files and exercise books is of a high standard of presentation and many examples of good work are displayed around the walls of the school and within the residential units.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good, with little teaching that requires improvement and some that is outstanding. Relationships between staff and students are excellent.
- A distinct feature of teaching is that students learn from all staff, including teaching assistants, care staff, catering and cleaning staff and the school gardener; all are actively involved in teaching and enriching the curriculum. Moreover, their teaching sessions are planned rigorously. Those of care staff undertaken before- and after-school contribute to the acquisition of awards for students.
- Teaching is underpinned by a consistent approach to the fundamentals. Lesson planning to meet individual needs, target-setting and marking schemes are well established and consistently implemented. Staff are starting to use modern technology in lessons and to promote learning more widely. Expectations of students are high. The expectations of behaviour and attitudes from students are understood by teachers and students. Students are not allowed to disrupt lessons for others who want to learn. If there is an incident, students know they must go to the support room, where they are supervised by education and care staff until such time as they are ready to return to lessons. More and more often, students go to support independently if they feel they cannot cope in a lesson. The smooth working of these arrangements is in sharp contrast to the position when the school went into special measures.
- The proportion of lessons affected by inappropriate behaviour is much reduced. The balance is now towards the earning of praise and rewards rather than sanctions.

- The quality of the work of teaching assistants is very good. They take on a high degree of responsibility for learning in lessons and provide an essential bridging role between education and care. To this effect they spend time with care staff before the start of school, as students have breakfast, and when school finishes, during the handover to the care team. They are a major factor in the seamlessness of provision, the degree to which staff know students and the quality of communication between staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour and safety were inadequate when the school was placed in special measures. They are now good and improving strongly.
- The behaviour of students is good. Classrooms and the residential units are nearly always calm and purposeful places. Students generally have a good attitude to and take a pride in their work and their rooms. During the week of the inspection, the students' residential units were colourfully decked out in support of the various teams in the FIFA World Cup. Students make good and sometimes exceptional progress in managing the behaviours that led to their admittance to the school.
- The number of incidents where physical intervention is required has fallen sharply. It fell significantly throughout 2013 and is continuing to fall term by term. The level of seriousness of incidents is falling. Incidents with an individual student do not spread to others and are not allowed to affect the learning and well-being of others.
- Positive behaviour is promoted well. All staff are trained in behaviour management and apply these skills consistently. Staff are highly skilled at de-escalating challenging situations. They have an excellent understanding of each student's diverse and complex needs. In particular, they are sensitive to the situations where incidents are likely to occur. Swift and robust action is taken to ensure students receive the right support.
- Bullying has all but disappeared as students' respect for others grows and their social skills develop. They demonstrate, for example, high levels of sportsmanship when playing against other teams at football. Damage to the building has reduced by over 90% within the year, freeing funding to reward students for good work and achievements. Classroom doors are frequently unlocked and metal grills are being removed from windows, increasing the positive ethos of the school and the sense of normality.
- Students are happy at school. They know they are making progress with their work, and for many, overcoming their emotional and social difficulties. They feel the way they are treated by staff is fair and consistent. The school plans to introduce therapy sessions in the near future to tackle the root causes of students' anxieties.
- Lunch times are social occasions. Students often have a hand in preparing and serving food, and in clearing away. Staff and students sit together in informal groups. The ethos is very positive, something noted by visitors to the school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All students feel safe. They trust staff and know they will listen to them and help them.
- All aspects of safety and safeguarding are given a high priority. Risk is always assessed and e-safety rigorously implemented. Healthy eating is promoted. There is a whole-school approach to keeping students safe. All staff, including the care staff responsible for the students out of school times, have a secure understanding of the child-protection procedures and how to report concerns to the designated persons.
- The school is exceptionally rigorous about keeping records of students' progress, supplementing their very good personal knowledge about them and leaving no opportunity for an individual to be overlooked.
- Attendance approaches 90% and for most students it is 100%. At the time the inspection took place, four Year 11 students were educated off-site, which included one student who refuses to attend school. Attendance is a high priority for the school. Contact is made with off-site providers each day to ensure off-site students are present. They regularly contact the persistent

absentee and are fully prepared to collect the student from home in Manchester.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the executive headteacher and that of the head of centre have been central to the school's rapid improvement. They have the confidence of all staff. The school is in a strong position to improve further. The executive headteacher and the head of centre share a clearly articulated vision for the school. They have ambitious plans for the school as part of the federation and to exploit its unique character to the full.
- The executive headteacher and the head of centre have an accurate view of the school's work. All the systems and practices typically seen in good schools to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of teaching and students' learning are in place. Being part of the federation is of clear benefit as policies and practices are shared. The leadership for safeguarding and child protection are particularly effective.
- Priorities for the school partly determine the provision of training and the outcomes from performance-management exercises also play a part in determining the continuing professional development needs of the staff. Performance management is relatively new at the school and also benefits from the more developed systems within the federation. These aspects are informed by the student progress meetings held by leaders, where students' achievements and progress are discussed and progress tracked.
- Staff with management responsibilities are effective. They know their work is valued by the executive headteacher and the head of centre. They are very committed to the school and the boys, they work very well as a team and communicate very effectively to ensure students' learning and well-being.
- The leadership and management of care are good. Insightful management by the senior managers for care actively promote a culture where students are listened to and respected. They promote a clear vision and values that lead to a stable, nurturing environment within the residential setting. They work exceptionally closely with education staff, particularly the teaching assistants, to provide seamless, wrap-around care.
- Links with the other schools in the federation are developing at a pace and links with external agencies, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), are strong. As the school has become more confident, it is seeking outside partnerships, such as with a local agricultural college, and, especially, an improved partnership with parents. Communication with parents is already much improved.
- The curriculum, which previously has been too academic, is being developed with a more vocational emphasis, to improve the chances of employment for students when they leave school. To this end, the school's character, as a country house of Grade 2 listed status, set in extensive grounds, offers great potential for development. Already, plans to introduce horticulture and animal husbandry are underway. Art and physical education are existing strengths. There is an appropriate emphasis on students acquiring core skills, at a functional level as an absolute minimum.
- All students receive the pupil premium. The grant is spent appropriately on furthering opportunities for students to achieve regardless of their social and economic background.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is in two tiers. Each is effective. The federation governing body maintains an oversight of the school and the Buglawton Hall Committee of governors provides detail support and challenge. Both are led by a knowledgeable and very experienced Chair. With the progress being made at the school, the school is increasingly perceived as a full and effective part of the provision within the federation. Its finances are secure.
 - There are no parent governors as yet. However, a community governor living near to the school and with considerable experience with vulnerable young people makes a very positive, independent and distinct contribution to governance. He visits the school regularly, including the residential units, to talk to students. In addition, the Committee invites a representative

from the school council to its meetings.

- The local authority provides good support and challenge for the school. It has continued to provide funding throughout the troubled recent past. It supports the school’s plans to engage more closely with parents. The school improvement officer knows the school well and has supported the senior leaders effectively.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are good
Quality of residential provision and care	is good
Residential students’ safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	is good

- Students receive good quality care and support from the dedicated team of care staff. Care staff have high aspirations for students and actively support their engagement in education through an extensive range of after-school activities that include fishing, cycling football and youth club. These also make an important contribution to students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.
- Training opportunities for staff are good and training enhances their skills and knowledge and promotes their professional development. One current gap in training is the need for more in-depth understanding of autism as more students are being diagnosed on the autistic spectrum.
- Senior managers have taken appropriate action to address the large majority of the shortfalls in care provision identified at the last inspection. The recording of students’ health care needs is much improved and contributes to their improving health and well-being. ‘Missing from care’ risk assessments have also been improved, although some do not state where a student may likely go and other associated risks. The use of the word ‘abscond’ should be avoided due to the legal associations with this word. However, these are recording issues and do not impact negatively on the care provided for students.
- Sanctions and restraints are recorded better, in a bound book where students can record their views.
- Senior care managers regularly monitor the quality of care within the residential units. However, monitoring reports lack evaluation and do not make clear what action has been taken.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	105604
Social care unique reference number	SC041918
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	441686

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It was deemed a section 5 inspection under the same act. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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	17
Number of boarders on roll	13
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body of the Manchester Federation of BESD Schools
Chair of the Manchester Federation of BESD Schools	Pauline Newman
Executive Headteacher	Alan Braven
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2013
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