

Bleasdale School

Bleasdale School, 27 Emesgate Lane, Silverdale, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA5 0RG

Inspection dates	15/01/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils look forward to and enjoy being in residence, where they receive outstanding levels of care and support in a comfortable, stimulating environment that meets their individual needs. This results in them benefiting from improved personal, social and emotional outcomes.
- Residential pupils enjoy living in an environment where they feel safe, can relax, develop their social skills and celebrate achievement. The promotion of equality and diversity is strong and disability is not seen as a barrier to experiencing a full, enriching lifestyle.
- Residential pupils live in an inclusive environment where aspirations for them are high. Opportunities are provided to make genuine choices and contribute positively to life in the residential provision.
- The ethos, culture and working practices developed in the residential provision, promotes, guides and encourages pupils towards a more independent lifestyle.
- The organisation, management and leadership of the school and its residential provision is good, with a particular strength being a continued commitment and desire for improvement. The management team demonstrate a willingness to accept guidance, as well as constantly critically evaluate the whole schools performance.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The inspection of the residential provision commenced three hours after notice was given to the school. The inspector met with: residential pupils, the head teacher, head of care, senior school staff, residential care staff, the chair of governors and teaching staff. Inspection activities included: a tour of the premises; observation of activities, meal times and residential routines; and examination of policies, records, monitoring reports and a number of the school's own surveys completed by parents.

Inspection team

Elaine Clare

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Bleasdale School is a residential special school operated by Lancashire County Council Education Department and registered with the Department for Education. The school's primary function is to provide children with profound and multiple learning disabilities with a positive and safe educational experience while boarding at the school.

Up to 19 children reside at the school for up to a maximum of 38 weeks of the year. All children go home every other weekend and during the school holidays. Other children attend the school on a daily basis. A large, multi-disciplinary staff group meet the complex educational and physical needs of the children.

The residential unit is separate 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 unit is provided with a range of facilities to cater for the individual needs of the children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- provide good opportunities for any member of staff who wishes to meet the independent visitor or chair of governors to ensure that any monitoring of the residential provision of the school encapsulates their views and opinions (NMS 20.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Sensitive care, alongside high levels of support assists residential pupils to prosper, socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. Strong, meaningful relationships are developed, with individual differences accepted and valued by all living and working in the school. This allows pupils to develop trusting relationships with appropriate role models.

Responses received by parents and other external sources are positive regarding the way pupils are looked after and supported. For example, one parent says, 'The school provides great care in what they do and the attention to detail is outstanding.' A residential pupil encapsulated his own feelings and those of others by signing a thumbs up in response to whether he liked staying at the school. Another residential pupil smiled with delight and his eyes sparkled when he heard his key worker talking to him.

Residential care staff are experienced, committed and understand the diverse needs of the residents in their care. For example one parent commented about the care staff 'They know the individual needs of my child.' This knowledge is used effectively for example, the high level of communication observed between staff and residential pupils. Communication with all pupils, no matter what difficulties they may experience, is not a barrier and does not impinge on their ability to make decisions about themselves. This is enhanced with on-going consultation between themselves and staff.

Personal development is promoted in an environment that is inclusive, allowing residential pupils to contribute positively during the time they are in residence. Records and photographs displayed around the school give insight into a whole range of areas where residential pupils contribute significantly to life in the residential unit.

Regular, daily consultation with residential pupils is a particular strength of the school. Staff work to ensure a sense of inclusion, identity and community within the residential provision. Parental views are reflected within the individualised plans and strategies which underpin evening and morning routines. This ensures care is personalised, with working practices put into place to meet the individual needs of pupils as well as those of the group.

The behaviour of residential pupils throughout the inspection was observed as excellent, with pupils being responsive to each other's needs and treating each other with respect, sensitivity and understanding. This relationship between peers leads to a strong sense of community which is apparent throughout the school.

The residential provision contributes significantly towards preparing pupils for life beyond the school. Pupils are encouraged to develop life skills. For example, older pupils are encouraged to make their own lunch's and socialise with their peers on age appropriate activities. As a result, this promotes residential pupils confidence, which in turn provides a sound basis for later life.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and care is outstanding in all aspects. It is designed and organised to meet the specific needs of pupils who make use of the residential provision. Improvements to the fabric and facilities within the residential unit have taken place since the previous inspection. For example, bedrooms have been decorated, bathrooms used by residential pupils have been upgraded and refurbished and corridors have been decorated with good use of colour. Overall, the standard of furnishings, fittings, equipment, décor and general state of repair

is very good.

The health needs of residential pupils are promoted positively. Detailed information gathered from parents and medical sources, help to create individual health plans where the needs of residential pupils are assessed and catered for. The school's NHS nursing team oversee, monitor and co-ordinate the health needs of all pupils. This includes medication. Nurses also provide waking cover when pupils remain on site overnight. This, along with other medical input provided by the school such as physiotherapy, allied to its excellent links with external specialist services, ensure residential pupils' complex health needs are well met.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles in a variety of ways. Residential pupils actively engage in a wide range of group activities, individual interests and leisure pursuits, which aid their general health and fitness levels. They also benefit from eating healthy meals that take account of any special dietary requirements they may have. Pupils are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods, appreciate different cultures and try international cuisine. Festivals and religious events are equally celebrated.

Residential pupils prosper and thrive in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. Residential plans are reviewed and updated regularly to keep them current. Residential pupils benefit from the excellent and outstanding relationships developed with staff and their peers. Pupils were observed to enjoy the company of staff who work openly, transparently and communicate positively with them. One residential pupil constantly sang a merry little tune, while another flapped her squeaky pig in delight. As a result, pupils enjoy living in a stimulating and trusting environment where they are cared for in a supportive atmosphere. This helps them to engage with their peers and adults in a positive way and develop trusting, meaningful relationships.

Parents do not have any issues or concerns regarding the quality of care received by their children. One parent stated, 'This is an excellent school with outstanding staff, we feel very fortunate for our child to be attending the school.' Parents support the high aspirations the school has for its pupils. Disability not viewed as a barrier to engaging in a full and active lifestyle. This gives pupils a more positive view of themselves and others and results in a significant improvement in their emotional resilience and knowledge gained.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The school has outstanding arrangements designed to keep residential pupils safe at all times. This is reflected in the range of policies, procedures and risk assessments in place, which are regularly reviewed, updated and put into practice. They underpin working practices developed by the school where safety is given the highest priority. For example, since the last inspection there is further improvement in the robust implementation of policies and procedures that relate to the clearance and recruitment of staff. As a result, only suitably checked people work with or have contact with pupils.

The welfare of residential pupils is safeguarded, with staff having the necessary leadership, knowledge, experience and training to keep pupils safe. The school maintains excellent links with external agencies tasked with keeping children safe.

Bullying in the residential provision is not a live issue and is not a concern to pupils or their parents. Sometimes residential pupils may target another pupil however high staffing levels, coupled with sensible deployment, are effective in minimising the potential for this to occur. Pupils were observed to show that they feel safe when they are in the school. For example, residents were observed giggling and laughing when staff touched or stroked their hand. This gave a sense that residential pupils are happy in the company of staff and this is also replicated by parents and representatives from placing authorities.

Residential pupils are supported to work positively through difficulties and periods of anxiety. Staff look for supportive, practical solutions to behaviour management and do not implement any punitive measures. They work proactively to stop minor incidents and periods of anxiety from turning into more serious incidents. Good monitoring and evaluation of practice ensures each pupils individual strategy is kept under review and adapted. As a result, behaviour management is suitably managed within the school.

Residential pupils are protected with a range of risk assessments that identify hazards both in and away from the school campus. Pupils participate in regular fire drills, with individualised evacuation plans in place to allow for a safe exit if necessary. Checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken. Pupils individual risk assessments, coupled with coping strategies, promote a safer environment for all. Individual strategies are updated as required, based on each pupils identified risk, progress and changing needs.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The present head teacher has been in post since May 2011, the head of care commence her post in January 2014. Since the previous inspection there has been a drive and desire to move the school forward and improve outcomes for pupils. This includes addressing the three areas suggested for improvement at the last inspection. One professional stated about the head teacher ' She has brought considerable improvements to the wellbeing of the pupils.'

Residential pupils benefit from having a practical, child-focused management team that have a clear vision of how the residential provision should continue to move forward and develop. Consultation levels with parents is high and this helps to achieve a fully inclusive environment. Managers are supported by a staff team who are fully committed to the ethos, aims and working practices developed in the residential provision. Many care staff are new to the position however, they demonstrate a team-centred approach and understanding of their role and responsibilities. They work cohesively with parents and other school staff to address pupils' needs.

Residential staff receive good support with a supervision and appraisal programme. Training for staff is on-going and all residential staff have gained, or about to gain, an appropriate professional qualification. This ensures staff possess the competences and skills to effectively meet the diverse needs of each pupil.

The management team has an understanding regarding the strengths of the residential provision and areas in need of improvement. Both the internal and external monitoring of the provision takes place systematically, with monitoring reports now being completed regularly. The monitoring of the residential provision by an independent visitor and the chair of governors is of a good quality. Reports are evaluative but do not clearly show the consultation that takes place with residential care staff at each visit. This has been recognised as an area of development by the head teacher and future plans are in place to have regular sessions with staff. The reports provide feedback to management on how to improve further and this in turn contributes to keeping residential pupils safe.

Residential pupils live in an caring, energetic, lively, supportive and child-centred environment. Staff work cohesively with families and other professionals to address young people's individual needs. Staff work with consistency to resolve issues and anxiety with pupils in a non-punitive way. They work through difficulties and challenges patiently, supportively and positively, recognising the needs of pupils and ensuring those needs are put first, addressed and then met.

What inspection judgements mean

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	119861
Social care unique reference number	SC058077
DfE registration number	888/7007

This inspection 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	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mrs Kairen Dexter
Date of previous boarding inspection	29/11/2013
Telephone number	01524 701217
Email address	head@bleasdaleschool.lancs.sch.uk

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