

Buglawton Hall Residential Special School

Buglawton Hall School, Buxton Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 3PQ

Inspection dates	16/03/2017 to 20/03/2017	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Pupils' needs and welfare are at the heart of staff practice. Staff are confident in using the regularly reviewed policies and procedures that protect children from harm. Staff foster compatible and caring relationships that minimise bullying and anti-social behaviour, and embrace diversity.
- The senior leadership team, governors and staff are all committed to continuous improvement in pupils' experiences and opportunities during their stay. Effective multidisciplinary training enhances care practice so that staff ably and enthusiastically support pupils' growth and development.
- Testimonies from older pupils highlight the 'extra mile' that staff take, to ensure that pupils have a positive residential experience. They say that they make progress due to the sensitive practical and emotional support that staff provide in helping them to overcome any difficulties they face.
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in a full and varied programme of activities that increase their range of interests, reflect their preferences, and offer them many opportunities to experience success in their endeavours. This builds their confidence and self-esteem, and enhances their independence and future employability.
- Changes in leadership of the residential team have resulted in improvements in monitoring and evaluation of care practice and systems. This has underpinned solid improvement in care planning and recording that enhances young people's lives.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance further an understanding of the differing roles of the independent visitors, through detailed descriptions of their individual responsibilities, so that young people and staff know how to engage effectively with them to improve the quality of care provided.
- Continue to improve and enhance care planning records so that they demonstrate how staff help young people to make progress from their starting points.

Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of the first day by the lead inspector to announce the inspection. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice and activities; formal and informal interaction with residential pupils; meetings and discussions with the headteacher, designated safeguarding lead, residential workers and parents. Feedback was obtained from the local safeguarding authority.

Inspection team

Denise Jolly	Lead social care inspector
Helen Humphreys	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Buglawton Hall School is a residential special school maintained by Manchester City Council children's services. The school is situated within a rural area near Congleton in Cheshire. The school currently offers residential special education to 20 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties, aged between 7 and 16 years. The school offers residential care from Sunday evenings to Friday afternoons each week during term time. The residential accommodation comprises four residential units provided within a purpose-built building within the school's grounds. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2015.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people enjoy staying at school, and are cared for by staff who provide an affectionate, highly competent, multidisciplinary approach to their safety and welfare. All staff operate to the same standard of putting boys first, listening to them, helping them to understand the world, and giving lots of opportunities for them to grow, make mistakes, and recover from life's ups and downs. Their relationships are built on warmth and mutual respect.

Young people continue to learn how to make positive choices; recognise and develop the skills they have; become aspiring for what they can achieve; and confidently ask when they need help. Young people proudly told the inspector about their upcoming college interviews; how they travel on their own; how they pursue activities in their home areas, and are looking forward to positive, independent futures. One young person said, 'I can do all of this now because the staff have been there for me when I needed them, they have stuck with me when I needed it, and have given me the right kind of support to change my life.'

Relationships are excellent. Young people offer their views readily and enthusiastically to staff and senior managers because they expect to have and share ideas and be listened to. Despite differing ages and complex needs, young people demonstrate a high degree of confidence and trust in each other and in the staff. This ensures that young people can safely explore and develop their interests, beliefs, sexuality and unique personalities. Through participation in activities such as wheelchair rugby, young people experience and celebrate the strengths and skills that some people with disabilities have, to overcome stereotypes and promote tolerance.

Leaders and managers have overseen improvements in the management of child protection referrals and allegations made against staff. Whole-school training has been provided in line with governmental guidance, and staff demonstrate that they know and use the systems that the school has developed to record and monitor any concerns regarding young people's safety. Young people continue to be safe, and feel secure in their residential placement.

A change in the leadership of the care team has had a positive impact on staff members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff say that they can see how changes in care planning, organisation of shifts and improved communication have helped them to provide a more consistent approach to young people, which underpins their progress.

The quality of care and support

Good

Strong and trusting relationships are central to the life of the school. Staff care about young people, and help them to achieve their personal goals in partnership with them. From pre-admission assessments, their needs are identified so that staff can plan how

best to support them. Support extends to their home lives because staff understand the importance of helping young people to manage the risks and challenges of society by applying the learning they acquire in school. All parents say that their child is happy at school, and that they are well looked after.

Young people say that they feel well prepared to move on from school, and many have overcome barriers to achievement by gaining confidence and skills in taking exams, gaining college and apprenticeship places, and looking after themselves. Although all of the boys enjoy the excellent range of food provided by the main kitchen at lunchtime, they also like the opportunities they have to practise their own cooking skills, and enjoy meals out as treats. Staff are flexible and warm in the way they support young people to self-cater, offering a family model of, 'You do a bit; I'll do a bit.' This helps young people to overcome reluctance to learn new skills. They are proud of their achievements, and say that staff support has been a key factor in their progress. This creates a positive and sturdy platform to launch them into the next phase of their lives.

Young people benefit from effective healthcare that promotes their emotional and physical well-being. Staff ensure that there are well-coordinated plans that identify a range of needs such as fitness, weight management, attachment trauma and sexuality. Staff act quickly to identify and address any decline in young people's emotional health, and ensure that there are effective strategies in place to minimise potential incidents of self-harm. This means that young people see school as a secure base that provides emotional support when other parts of their lives are stressful. Staff encourage and enable young people to access therapeutic and psychiatric help when necessary, so that professional oversight of medication regimes, coupled with safe and dignified medication administration at school, ensures that they get the medication they need to keep them safe and well.

Staff encourage and help young people to find opportunities to make new friendships and leisure opportunities in their home area. They learn to use the skills and interests they have practised at school, such as sport, to integrate better into their home lives. This builds their life experience and positive outlook, which underpins sustained success. One young person spoke enthusiastically about his love of football, and how he stays at home to access his football club, and as a special treat, to watch big matches on television. Photographs and artwork liberally displayed throughout the residence and school, printed tea towels and mugs that capture self-portraits of staff and young people, and the ease with which they occupy themselves in their free time demonstrate how relaxed and happy young people are to spend time in the company of staff.

Since the last inspection, the quality of care planning has improved. Information is more carefully organised and reviewed to enable young people and staff to access and understand the plans in place to support and promote young people's growth and development. The temporary care manager has introduced a formal system for identifying and measuring the progress that young people make against their goals and aspirations. Key workers help young people to understand what they need to do by setting out small steps to measure their achievement, and together they revise the plans regularly to ensure that they remain relevant and important. The system is relatively new, and is not yet fully integrated into young people's development pathways and care plans. This means that it is not clear how staff have supported young people to make

the progress they have achieved.

Home contact is very good and staff are skilled at working in partnership with families. Parent questionnaires demonstrate that parents are confident in the support offered, and are not afraid to make calls to school, invite staff into their home, and work with staff to improve their child's life. This is particularly important when new young people need additional support because they are finding transition from home to school hard. Staff persistence and flexibility over time help them to overcome their difficulties.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Young people's safety, comfort and welfare are of paramount importance. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding that young people need to be safe and secure in order to make progress in other aspects of their lives, and work hard to identify and address any emerging or known concerns. Equally, young people are encouraged to experiment and take age-appropriate risks, so that they can learn from mistakes in a safe and supported way, to enhance their independence. Some young people see school as a safe haven, and return to school even though they have been missing while at home. Young people do not go missing from school. This enables staff to work with them and other professionals to improve circumstances outside of school, so that young people's safety improves.

Managers have reviewed and developed procedures in place for identifying, recording and managing allegations against staff, and reporting child protection concerns. Staff say that being held to account for their behaviour management techniques and decisions helps them to develop consistent and safe practice that protects young people from harm. Staff use restraint only to ensure the safety and welfare of all. Records are carefully monitored and evaluated by senior managers. They show that young people are restrained less as their placement progresses. This is because staff work tirelessly within positive relationships to help them to identify safe ways in which they can express anger or frustration, or ask for help. Staff are also highly skilled at prevention, redirection, and use of positive alternatives to defuse potentially harmful situations. One young person said, 'I really like it here, you know. Staff have helped me to sort my behaviour; I am a different and better person because of staff.'

The designated safeguarding role is ably undertaken by a member of care staff whose main duties relate to the responsibilities of this role. She is appropriately trained, and uses her knowledge and proactive approach to support young people when they are in crisis, as well as work tirelessly to promote and develop young people's skills in keeping themselves safe. Young people are supported to address the impact of trauma and past abuse on their behaviour and experiences, so that they adopt safe strategies, such as talking to staff, and building resilience and positive relationships. All members of staff demonstrate good knowledge of the importance of working in partnership with social care, health and other protection professionals. Staff know each young person's needs and vulnerabilities well, and use clearly written plans to ensure that they actively support them.

Young people know how to complain, but rarely feel the need to do so because they say that staff listen to them, and respond to any concerns they have. The independent

visitor produces clear and detailed reports about her visit, but does not always capture her communication with young people. Young people also have access to two other welfare visitors, who spend time with young people and staff in the residence. Information provided to young people about these visitors does not fully reflect their roles and responsibilities. Managers agreed to improve this when it was pointed out to them during the inspection, so that young people could be more aware of the purpose of their visits.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

Senior leaders are highly ambitious for young people. The residential service is an integrated, valued and respected element of the school. Through regular multidisciplinary senior meetings, governing body liaison and young people's meetings, a positive cycle of review and communication is sustained that has young people's views, needs and development at its heart. This holistic approach ensures that all staff participate in planning, receive regular updates, and remain committed to continuous improvement in the experiences, opportunities and social integration of young people.

Young people are supported and motivated to make significant progress in key areas of their lives, such as emotional well-being and life skills. There is improved focus and recording on how staff complete baseline assessments for young people, and use these to set targets that help them to make progress. Senior managers use this information to ensure that they are up to date with any significant changes so that they can direct professional planning to address the areas that matter most. This ensures that young people's needs are at the centre of any planning for them.

A new care manager has been appointed through an agency, and plans are under way to transfer this appointment to a temporary position within the school. Together with the head of school, she has reviewed and monitored the development plan for residential provision, taking into account the views of governors, parents and professionals, as well as young people. All actions from the last inspection have been addressed. Monitoring reports and feedback from the independent visitor and from the executive head have made significant contribution to the considerable progress made in the quality of residential provision.

The care manager has implemented a challenging programme of change and improvement, underpinned by training and effective professional supervision that staff have fully engaged with. Staff acknowledge that this has enhanced the quality of care that they provide through increased understanding of their role and the emotional impact of their work.

The local authority has established a consultation period about the future of the school. While this is of significant concern to both staff and young people, it has not impaired the stability of the provision or the quality of care provided.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact that the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	105604
Social care unique reference number	SC041918
DfE registration number	352/7014

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	11
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	7 to 16
Headteacher	Jonathan Gillie, Head of Centre and Alan Braven, Executive Head, Manchester Federation of EBSD Schools
Date of previous boarding inspection	30/06/2015
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