

# Bleasdale School

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

<b>Inspection dates</b>	07/03/2017 to 09/03/2017	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Outstanding	1
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- All children and young people receive a comprehensive, bespoke care package. Staff have an excellent understanding of each child or young person's needs and meet these extremely well.
- The school is actively promoting how to overcome barriers to inclusion. Young people are actively involved in and are relishing the opportunities to join in scouts, guides and other community based activities.
- Children and young people have a strong 'voice' in the school and in residence. Staff have an innate understanding of their individual communication needs which ensures each child or young person is heard and their wishes are acted upon.
- Children young people enjoy an extensive range of exciting and fun activities throughout their stay.
- Strong leadership and management means little is missed. A strong supportive governing body actively supports the senior leadership team.
- There are two minor shortfalls within records pertaining to physical interventions and epilepsy care plans.

### 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?**

- Ensure all epilepsy care plans make clear as to when the emergency services are required.
- Enhance further the recording of all physical interventions by ensuring the duration of the intervention is clearly identified.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was formally announced on day one in a telephone call to the school. A full tour of the residential premises was undertaken and a range of records were examined. A number of senior staff including the headteacher, assistant head, governors, and the care manager were spoken to throughout the inspection and informed of the emerging findings. The inspector spent time talking to care staff and the young people. Evening activities were observed over two nights. Feedback was provided on the final day to the headteacher, governors, school improvement officer, and the care manager.

## Inspection team

Chris Scully

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 and young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities with a positive and safe educational experience while boarding at the school. Up to 19 children and young people reside at the school for up to a maximum of 38 weeks of the year. The residential unit is situated across the road from the day school. There are currently nine children accessing the residential provision. The residential provision caters for the diverse needs of the children and young people who stays are designed to meet their individual needs. The last residential inspection took place in January 2016.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Outstanding**

Children and young people relish the opportunities to stay in residence. Parents said, that they would not want their children to be anywhere else. Young people enjoy a seamless transition from school into residence, which begins with their 'talk and share' session. Each child or young person is welcomed individually and asked how their day has been. Children and young people's privacy is highly respected because staff ask their permission before sharing any information about their day with the other young people.

Children and young people succeed, as they live in a highly inclusive setting where their individuality is recognised, supported, and celebrated. As a result of their stays children and young people are making excellent progress in all aspects of their development. This is evident from the analysis of their progress using 'PIVATS' and 'Routes For Learning'. A recent report said, children and young people are making excellent progress and in some cases exceeding expectations. This is because, they are 'beginning to generalise their skills rather than acquire new skills.'

Children and young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff. They trust staff implicitly and feel safe in their care. A highly committed and knowledgeable staff team who understand the children and young people implicitly cares for them. This trust contributes to the excellent progress children and young people are making.

A key strength of the setting is enabling children and young people to become as independent as possible. As a result young people are flourishing. Parents said, staff have 'created learning opportunities that are just for my child, such as washing his hair and shaving'. As a result he is happier and is less anxious when he is getting his hair washed. This is a 'massive achievement for him and us'.

Parents overall expressed their views that staff know how to push their child to achieve their personal goals. One said, 'Staff are very good at appreciating each young person's needs. He does not need to fit in with what they do. They fit in with him'. This is because of the significant number of qualified and highly intuitive staff caring for them. Consequently, young people make excellent progress in relation to their personal goals.

The ability to adapt to the unique communication systems for each child or young person is a key strength of the provision. The introduction of 'switches' mean young people have an even greater say in what they want to do. This includes selecting their meals and choosing who is going to be a part of their team in team games. Young people are becoming increasingly skilled in using these and will tease staff with their answers while providing them with big beaming smiles.

Children and young people thoroughly enjoy staying in residence as they get the opportunities to explore a wide range of activities. Parents said, 'This is an excellent school and I wouldn't want her to be anywhere else. The ability to get children out in the community is wonderful and is something that is difficult for us to do as a family. This means she gets to explore a wider range of activities. Some of our children are life limited and staff pack everything in so that they get to explore as many things as

possible'.

Several young people take great delight in attending scouts and guides in the local community. The excitedly get ready to go with staff and wear their uniforms with pride. Eagerly signing to others that they are going to scouts. This has been a phenomenal achievement for the young people and has successfully broken down the barriers to inclusion. Young people from school and the community have benefited highly from this. Staff report that when they arrive at scouts the other young people take over and make sure everyone is involved in the activities. Parents are delighted that their children get to experience this and take pride in attending their initiation and awards ceremonies.

Plans to help young people move on into adulthood begin when they are 14 years old. This provides extensive opportunities to decide on the way forward for them based upon their individual needs. Care staff are well versed in these plans and are continually working with the young people on developing their independence and skills for life. As a result young people move on successfully into the next stage of their lives.

#### **The quality of care and support**

#### **Outstanding**

Children and young people's needs are met exceptionally well in residence. This is because staff have an innate understanding of each young person. They create bespoke care plans, which allow the uniqueness of each child and young person to shine. In particular the manual handling plans. The highly effective use of photographs of the child or young person using the equipment significantly informs staff practice of how to move them safely. This is something that is worthy of being shared with other schools. All staff are highly committed to enabling each child and young person to enjoy their time here, to be as independent as possible, and to enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences. A parent said, 'the school provides an excellent nurturing and stimulating environment for each child to reach their full potential'.

There is a seamless transition from school into residence. The appointment of the new care manager and the assistant head, who has a dual role of overseeing school and residence, has significantly enhanced this transition. This effective partnership has brought about significant changes, in particular with the activities provided. Staff effectively plan and differentiate each activity to meet each child's specific needs. Each activity is a well-planned, fun, learning opportunity that is carefully evaluated so that the next steps for each child are identified and planned for in the future. Children and young people thoroughly enjoyed the creativity activity around the story of the Wizard of Oz.

This activity took the children on a sensory and creative journey through the poppy scene in the story. They were initially greeted with a scarf over the doorway scented with floral perfume and provide with the opportunities to examine artificial poppies. The watched and listened to the scene and then created their own poppies and scented pot pourri bags. All of which are to be used to create the sensory story at the end of the week. Other activities included travelling to 'Australia' and exploring some of the sounds of the country. Staff make excellent use of objects of reference to help each child and young person understand what was happening. These included a passport, globe, and dancing shoes. The children and young people's laughter reverberates throughout the residence. A school governor wrote, 'Staff should be commended for their outstanding

performance in delivering a special atmosphere and demonstrating such diligent care and attention to everybody.'

Staff are rightly proud of the developments in the activities provided. They are constantly looking at new ways to improve these. Staff explained how they created their own beach with sand and water in the entrance hall to prepare the children and young people for a trip to Blackpool. They recreated the sounds of the beach and had the smells of fish and chips permeating the room. This helped children to understand what was planned and what was going to happen next.

Children and young people's health care needs are exceptionally well supported. Children and young people have access to round the clock nursing support. This means should they become unwell at any time a nurse is available to support them. This is further enhanced by the detailed health care arrangements and plans that are fully understood by staff and is effectively implemented. There is one minor shortfall in some epilepsy care plans. In some plans it does not make explicitly clear as to when to call the emergency services should rescue medication not take the desired effect. The effect of this is minimised as staff have the expertise of the nursing staff to make these decisions.

The chef ensures each child and young person's dietary needs are fully met. He has an excellent understanding of what they like to eat and how they like it to be prepared. Each meal is individually prepared to meet their specific preferences. Consequently, children and young people enjoy nourishing meals that help to sustain them and promote healthy eating.

Children and young people are treated with the utmost privacy and dignity at all times. They are encouraged to knock before entering bathrooms to ensure the privacy of other children and young people. Staff carry out intimate care needs sensitively and respectfully.

Children and young people stay in warm, homely environment where each area has been successfully adapted to meet their needs. This includes hoists, lift, specialist beds, and large doorways to allow freedom of movement for children in wheelchairs. Communal bedrooms are highly personalised to reflect each child or young person's individual tastes, such as a favourite football team or guitars. The building is very well maintained, as is the extensive grounds and outdoor play equipment. As a result children and young people feel safe and are safe here.

#### **How well children and young people are protected**

#### **Outstanding**

Children and young people's safety is of paramount importance to all staff. Staff said, 'we are the children and young people's voice. We need to look out for any suspicious marks or bruising to help keep them safe. We take the safety and wellbeing of all the children seriously, because we care about them'. Staff effectively safeguard young people while enabling them to take safe risk in which to explore new opportunities and environments such as scouts. This helps them to build their confidence and to try new activities.

A comprehensive range of risk assessment further supports this. Staff are well versed in

the schools child protection procedures and have annual refreshers in safeguarding and child protection. This is customised so that it is relevant to the children they care for. Safeguarding is enshrined in everything the staff do. Ultimately, this means young people are safe and effectively protected from harm.

Governors with a responsibility for safeguarding have received a range of training in child protection and safeguarding. They have a secure understanding of their role and are not afraid to challenge the headteacher or senior management team on any safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding remains a key element of all governors meetings.

Children and young people do not go missing. This is because of the level of their disabilities and the high staffing levels. However, staff are very aware of the action they would take should this occur.

Sanctions are not use in the school due to the needs of the children and young people. Physical interventions are extremely rare and are used as a last resort. These are usually well recorded. However, the last two, which where some time ago and took place in school, do not make clear as to the length of the intervention. The record states this was in place until the young person stood up. This is not reflective of the usual high standard of recording.

Staff effectively encourage children and young people to be aware of their own safety. Staff talk to them about crossing the road safely. They explain to each child and young person what they are doing, for example, telling them about what is happening next when moving them from their chair into a hoist. Consequently, all children and young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being.

Positive behaviour is effectively and consistently promoted. Staff are highly skilled in de-escalation techniques, which they implemented extremely well in practice. This means young people are given the support they need to reduce their anxieties and to re-join the activities. This is supported further because staff clearly understand each child or young person's vulnerabilities, and how this affects their behaviour. Therefore staff are able to respond quickly and effectively to their ever-changing needs.

A comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks protects children and young people. Regular fire drills ensure staff know what to do in an emergency. Staff undertake regular training in fire evacuation and the use of evacuation chairs. This keeps children and young people safe.

Robust systems are in place for the safe recruitment of staff, which assesses their suitability to work with young people. Visitors are monitored and effectively chaperoned. Children and young people are provided with excellent level of supervision based on their age, understanding and ability, to make sure they are safe in school and in the community

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

### **Outstanding**

The residential provision is an intrinsic part of the school. It is highly valued and is fully encompassed into everything the school does. Highly insightful and inspirational



management by the headteacher, care manager and senior managers actively promotes a culture that ensures children and young people are always listened to and respected as individuals. This is enhanced by the appointment of a new care manager and assistant head to help support and develop the residential provision. This is an excellent partnership, which has permeated throughout the staff team and has resulted in the positive outcomes at this inspection.

Both the care manager and assistant head are highly committed to the ongoing development of the residential provision. They are leading by example, they enable staff to consider the best ways of working that enables them to deliver the highest possible care to all children and young people. They have created an inclusive culture which enables staff, carers, and parents to be fully involved in the decision-making. Thus, they all have a very strong ownership of the provision. A parent said, 'this is the first time in a decade that we have felt like, we are part of a team'.

Staff are pleased with the changes that have taken place over the last year. They are confident to make suggestions about current practice and how this can be improved further, which is evident in the activities. Staff said the training provided has enabled them to develop new skills, such as becoming the manual handling trainer or a lifeguard. These opportunities to extend their current skills has successfully empowered staff and has increased their confidence and self-esteem.

Everyone in school works in a highly effective, collaborative manner to support the children and young people. This is exemplified by the sharing of staff skills and expertise across the school and residence. All staff have benefited from working in both settings and from gaining additional insight into to what works well in both settings. This has resulted in the cross-fertilisation of skills to further enhance the learning opportunities, care and support provided.

The governing body has undergone a number of changes in the last year. The governors value highly the residential provision and have a secure understanding of the work staff do and the opportunities afforded to the children and young people. Monitoring by the governors has vastly improved. This is because governors have taken responsibility for specific areas, such as safeguarding and health and safety. The governors are committed to their roles and are not afraid to challenge the senior leadership team. This has strengthened the overall management of the school and has brought about significant change to the residential provision.

## 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 exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact 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**

**Social care unique reference number**

SC058077

**DfE registration number**

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**

9

**Gender of boarders**

Mixed

**Age range of boarders**

2 to 19

**Headteacher**

Kairen Dexter

**Date of previous boarding inspection**

19/01/2016

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