



Buglawton Hall School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105604
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 277379
Inspection dates 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Henry Moreton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Buxton Road
School category	Community special		Congleton
Age range of pupils	7 to 16		Cheshire CW12 3PQ
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01260 274492
Number on roll	40	Fax number	01260 288313
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Weinberg
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr Chris Leah

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Buglawton Hall is Manchester city council's residential school for boys with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is situated in its own grounds in a rural area near Congleton in Cheshire. The school offers residential care from Sunday evenings to Friday afternoons. Accommodation is provided within the main hall itself and in a bungalow, a cottage and two semi-detached houses. The main purpose of the school is to provide safe and secure accommodation to enable boys to fulfil their academic potential and improve their behaviour to facilitate a return to a mainstream school.

All boys have a statement of special educational need. The large majority are from a white British background. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2001. It is part of a federation of schools with one governing body.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Buglawton Hall is a good school. The self-evaluation by managers is generally accurate. Boys who attend regularly make good improvement in their behaviour and in their social and emotional well-being because of the support of staff and the good quality of teaching. Relationships are good and boys respond well to the rewards and sanctions. Most make good progress in improving their reading ages and number skills. Some do so beyond expectations. Even so, some boys told the inspector that they 'would like to read even more'. Many boys leave the school having gained general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) passes in English, mathematics and art. Poor attendance is a barrier to greater achievement. The behaviour and academic performance of boys are well monitored. They have their targets with them all the time and assess their progress at the end of every lesson or activity. The newly established school council involves boys in school planning and they are approaching this with maturity. Good attention is given to boys' moral and social development. The governing body has recently elected a link governor but it needs to be more robust in evaluating provision. Resources are harnessed to provide good value for money. Links with mainstream schools and other federation schools are good. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve. Provision for boarding is satisfactory but is inhibited by the state of the living accommodation. Though functional, areas are very tired and worn.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 3

Boarding provision is effective and efficient and makes a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school. The accommodation is in poor condition though, especially in the bungalow. Last year's report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) recognised that many of the National Minimum Standards are met. Since then, the school has given satisfactory attention to implementing the recommendations for improvement. The welfare of boys is closely monitored and their health needs are well met. The lunch arrangements are outstanding with boys enjoying wholesome cooking in a formal yet relaxed setting. Boys take full part in a wide range of activities that are aimed at developing their personal and social skills, and these opportunities are closely allied to the school's well established rewards and sanctions. Integration of boys into mainstream schools makes good use of the knowledge the care staff have about the boys, and regular contact is also maintained with their parents/carers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to make efforts to ensure all boys attend regularly.
- Increase the opportunities for boys to read.
- Develop the role of the governing body.
- Improve the fabric of the boarding accommodation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Taking into account boys' starting points, achievement and standards are better than the school initially assessed them to be. From below average levels of attainment on entry - boys' reading ages are below their chronological ages, usually because of their poor attendance patterns - they make good progress in their academic achievement. The targets set are challenging and, as a result, boys often achieve well in the end of key stage standardised assessment tests (SATs) given their past experience. The ability of boys varies from year to year but in 2003 and 2004, several gained passes in the English, mathematics and art GCSEs, including those with a history of non attendance. Some boys also achieve accreditation in information and communication technology (ICT). After a blip in 2005 (resulting from the domestic circumstances of each of the boys), assessment records show that the pattern of good achievement will repeat this year, and will include science. In lessons, the attention span of boys is good and even though they find much of the work difficult they respond well to their teachers. Some boys do underachieve though, failing to gain the qualifications of which they are capable. This is because they do not attend school regularly enough - often a pattern that was established from a very young age - to complete course requirements. Most boys make good progress in improving their behaviour in lessons and around the school. Some exemplary behaviour was seen during the inspection, for example, during lessons, at the start of morning and afternoon sessions, in assembly and at lunch. Crucially, some boys make a successful part time or full time move back into mainstream school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

For many pupils, attendance is good, given their previous track record. Once they settle to living away from home, most boys respond well to the school's routines. However, the attendance of a significant minority is inadequate in spite of the school's efforts, which include good arrangements to collect boys who fail to turn up on Sunday evenings. Boys who attend make good progress in developing the personal attributes and skills that equip them to become gainfully employed on leaving. By Years 10 and 11, many are re-integrated part time into mainstream schools or into the federation's day schools. A few successfully return to mainstream on a full time basis. Relationships are usually good though there are occasional incidents, which are dealt with appropriately. Boys feel safe and well cared for and those in the care of the public authorities trust the staff. There are a high number of fixed term exclusions, reflecting the school's commitment to the care and protection of boys and adults alike. One of the things the School Council seeks is for longer periods of exclusion for boys who are physically aggressive. Well focused action is taken to promote good behaviour by setting challenging targets. These are closely monitored so that boys can achieve clearly identified outcomes. The reward system is used well to celebrate good behaviour. The good range of physical activities, together with excellent catering, ensure boys enjoy a healthy lifestyle during the week. Their moral and social development is good,

living together in the boarding setting and taking part in the many evening activities. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, with boys enjoying the weekly assemblies led by a local vicar and learning about other cultures through a well considered art curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All the lessons observed had some good features and some outstanding learning was seen in art. The lessons meet the needs of very challenging learners. Teachers know the boys well and take care over each one of them. Relationships are good and the classrooms are managed well. Sometimes the work is not pitched at the right level for all boys in the class and there are not enough paired/group activities to encourage team working. Teaching assistants give much valued support in lessons and provide continuity for boys as they move from lesson to lesson. Their skills are as yet underdeveloped, including in support of boys' reading. Regular homework is set which includes current affairs and spellings, but the boys told the inspector that they would like 'even harder homework'.

Assessment of boys' needs takes place quickly on entry and then on a regular basis. Progress in reading and number work is monitored well. This information is used to set challenging targets, which are clearly set out in individual education programmes, and to place boys in the appropriate class. Effective communication between teachers, teaching assistants and care staff ensures that learning and assessment opportunities are taken into the residential setting. At the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, the boys assemble with the staff, and together they review the attitudes, behaviour and achievement of each of them. This leads to consistency of approach by staff and the boys knowing exactly what is expected.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Those boys that do attend regularly benefit from a curriculum which gives them every chance to gain accreditation in the basic skills, although the strategies to encourage reading do not go far enough. The importance of living safe and healthy lives is emphasised, and this is celebrated through work on display. There is a strong focus on physical activity though the boys did not count on having to walk back from Congleton when their transport broke down! Good use is made of the grounds to let the boys 'blow off steam', contributing to their personal development by taking responsibility for looking after the horses, feeding the geese and other tasks. Opportunities for boys to prepare for life after school are extensive. Good use is made of the federation's day schools and many of the older boys are introduced to the world of work through work placements and college links.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The inspection findings show that the quality of care, support and guidance is good rather than outstanding as the school had suggested. Staff are committed to providing high quality care and all pupils are well known to them. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in line with local authority guidance. Staff are sensitive to boys' needs and there is good support for them when they are upset or in trouble. This enables them to make good progress in managing their own behaviour which helps them to focus during their lessons. Good support is given to parents/carers. There is an age appropriate approach to sex and relationship education. Good advice is given about opportunities open to the boys. On her appointment, one of the first things the new cook did was to remove two of the freezers. As a result, the main meal of the day is prepared using fresh ingredients, making an excellent contribution to standards of care. Boys sit, with staff, at properly laid tables and serve the nutritious and wholesome food. However, the boarding settings are in a poor condition in spite of the school's maintenance programme.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation by managers is generally accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses and there is a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve. The procedures for quality assurance are appropriate and include the monitoring of work in the classroom. Effective support is provided by the principal of the federation of schools, assisted by her colleagues, in the key areas where expertise is needed. The school's staff also contribute to the work in the federation's other schools, contributing to their own continuing professional development. Communications are good, with daily briefings for staff. The contribution of the non-teaching staff is considerable and they work well as a team to provide a '24 hour' curriculum. Effective links exist with the local community. Though no parent questionnaires were returned to the inspector, other evidence indicates that parents/carers are supportive of the school.

The headteacher offers commitment to each boy in his care. He has a presence around the school and is supportive of his staff. He and the senior managers effectively challenge each other. Governance is satisfactory. A link governor has a key relationship with the school but as yet managers are not held to account rigorously enough in matters of evaluation.

The school has improved since its last inspection and has systematically tackled the issues that were raised then. Consequently, it is in a good position to make further improvement, although the building is an inhibiting factor.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. I especially enjoyed the pancakes!

What I most like about your school:

- the way that every one of you is well known to staff
- the range of sports and other activities that you do
- the progress that you make while you are here
- the way that your School Council is beginning to work
- the quality of your art work
- the way that you all enjoy a nutritious meal at lunchtime.

What I have asked the school to do now:

- continue to make efforts to ensure you all attend regularly
- increase the opportunities for you to read
- develop the role of the school's governing body
- improve the quality of your bedrooms and living space.

I hope that you continue to enjoy the many opportunities that the school makes available to you.