

Bleasdale House School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

Unique reference number	SC058077
Inspection date	04/04/2011
Inspector	Stephen Trainor
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Bleasdale House School, 27 Emesgate Lane, Silverdale, CARNFORTH, Lancashire, LA5 0RG
Telephone number	01524 701217
Email	h.care@bleasdalehouse.lancs.sch.uk
Registered person	Lancashire County Council
Head/ Principal	
Nominated person	Linda Walker
Date of last inspection	30/11/2009

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Bleasdale House 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.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This key announced inspection had a short lead in time. It assessed every outcome heading covering all the key residential special school national minimum standards (NMS).

This is an excellent service in every respect. The management team are highly motivated, qualified and competent. All staff are recruited properly. Practice is extremely well coordinated and fully embraces the government's Every Child Matters Framework, designed to improve services for children and young people. Team work is extremely effective and a highly efficient key-worker system is operated. There is excellent consultation and communication with parents. Innovative thinking enables ongoing improvements to further enhance the school's practice.

All outcomes are recorded as being outstanding. Many positive comments have been received on services provided and the management and organisation of the school. Individual's moving and handling plans, risk assessments and special education needs statements are comprehensive and each plan is supported by many different professionals. The children gain many positive experiences from an enriched curriculum of care and education allowing them to achieve and develop their full potential. Full time nursing support is provided. All staff clearly go the extra mile in supporting children's specific needs.

This report highlights three recommendations to be considered to improve practice. A few personnel files had some low level information missing. Some of the management records lack finer detail in how staff are being supported to fulfil their role. The system presently being used for external monitoring of children's welfare provides little information to further promote improvement in the provision of care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made at the last inspection have been suitably addressed. Internal and external monitoring of welfare is taking place at the correct frequency. Liquid medicine is administered safely and the exact volume of liquid remaining is known at any point in the school day.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The children receive excellent medical support from qualified and experienced staff and this ensures health and intimate care needs are continuously being promoted. Qualified nursing cover is available 24 hours per day. Staff maintain comprehensive health information and they have a vast depth of knowledge about children's individual and very specific needs. Plans are kept under regular review and high quality care is implemented exceptionally well on a day-to-day basis.

Policy and guidance has been developed over many years with support from many health professionals. Parents confirm full satisfaction with how health and well-being is handled. Medical information is shared and treatments and programmes are followed through. Ongoing medical, optical and dental, hearing, speech and language support and appointments are all supported. Health reviews are regularly undertaken.

A key building block at the school in meeting children's specific health and well-being needs is involvement with many different health professionals. The multi-disciplinary response is coordinated extremely well. There is shared decision making that utilising the knowledge of these professionals. Practice also respects parents wishes for their children. Any change to plans is discussed. Highly effective communication systems ensure all levels of staff receive information updates.

Health support provided by the school is enhanced through the provision of a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist. Care staff are trained in order to support and undertake treatments and programmes provided by these therapists. Several care staff are qualified in aromatherapy and reflexology and provide alternative and complementary therapies with parental consent. The school has its own swimming pool and hydro therapy session support is integral to most programmes.

Suitable controls for administering, recording, storing and disposal of medicines are established. A clear audit trail of the administration medicines, including liquid

medicines is maintained. Nursing staff have overall responsibility for managing medicines at the school and the residential accommodation. The procedures operated are well thought out.

Children eat in pleasant surroundings and are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their assessed dietary needs. Kitchen facilities are modern and no concerns were reported following the last Environmental Health Department visit. During meal times children receive high levels of personal support to ensure that meals are suitably prepared. A nurse is available and supervises staff performing gastronomy feeding of children. In the absence of any verbal communication children's body language can be gauged to consider if they are in any discomfort. It has been possible to recognise some of the signs and symptoms that are precursors to illness or seizures. Children's health and healthy eating programmes are inextricably linked.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

This school provides a very safe environment where children achieve and develop to their full potential. There is a clear behaviour policy and approaches and techniques being used encourage and stimulate children to maintain and develop positive behaviours. Staff are creative and innovative at influencing behaviours and a wide range of positive handling strategies are being used. Parents confirm that the school provides a safe, comfortable and secure environment. There are no concerns linked to behaviour management, bullying or children going missing. All children are highly dependent and receive suitable support and supervision for their assessed needs.

The arrangements for complaints and safeguarding children are handled extremely well. The management team and staff have established robust policy and procedures that are known to all staff. Nominated senior management staff and a school governor have responsibility for child protection/safeguarding. Staff access safeguarding training on a regular basis. More specific common assessment framework training was recently attended for staff to gain a more in depth knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff clearly demonstrate that they know what action to take if they have concerns. Staff are vigilant about identifying and recording concerns. These are brought to the attention of nursing staff and senior managers. Effective communication underpins partnership arrangements with parents. The local Authority Designated Officer confirmed that there are no safeguarding concerns affecting the school.

Reporting systems and actions taken in the past in response to significant incidents have been appropriate.

Practice at the school is transparent in reporting incidents that affect the children. Appropriate arrangements are in place to make referrals and notifications to appropriate authorities. These measures ensure that children's safety and well-being is promoted to a high standard. Three significant events had been reported to Ofsted between inspections. Records are produced on each incident and outcome

statements are provided. Parents comment that they are satisfied with actions taken when events occur. The senior management team monitor and evaluates practice to identify where further developments and improvements can be made.

Staff respect pupils' privacy, as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect children. Staff are sensitive when providing intimate care viewing children's dignity as a priority. Information held about the children is handled safely in line with policy. Staff keep information safe and secure and they are clear on the arrangements for sharing information for safeguarding purposes.

The school has established policy and procedure for handling complaints. Complaints procedures have been publicised widely. Although children are unable to verbalise their concerns, staff are particularly skilled in understanding the non-verbal means of communication used by children. Staff practice responds to gestures and facial expressions to resolve any issues affecting children, thereby ensuring their needs and preferences are met.

The response to health and safety is extremely well coordinated ensuring children are safe in both the school and residential environments. Children's personal safety and hazard identification are regular topics being discussed. Fire and Rescue Services visit the school ensuring fire precautions are safe. Advice, when provided, is followed. A specific premises fire risk assessments and fire evacuation procedure is in place. This has been developed over many years with input from many different professionals. Servicing contracts for electrical, gas and fire safety are established. Personal appliance testing is routinely undertaken ensuring all electrical equipment is safe. The responsible local authority carries out an annual health and safety audit. No concerns were identified at the last visit.

Adults are carefully vetted for suitability to work with the children. A robust checking system is evident throughout the recruitment process. This means that pupils are looked after safely by skilled and experienced staff. Suitable evidence including Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, references, qualifications, applications forms and records of the interview were presented on a random selection of staff. A suitable rationale was demonstrated for staff to be appointed with cautions or convictions. Most care staff have had their CRB checks updated. Personnel files are well maintained and stored securely. A review of files was being undertaken to ensure they contained all relevant information including evidence of reference verification. A file index was also being introduced. A single staff register is maintained in accordance with school regulations and this provides additional information to show that recruitment procedures are safe. Suitable vetting of visitors to the school is also undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted. The staff know that all visitors should be wearing official passes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Educational needs are thoroughly assessed. The whole school ethos is to help children achieve to the best of their ability, both in the academic sense and in terms of their leisure time where they are offered many different experiences and developmental opportunities. Staff have high aspirations for the children and are fully committed to providing the best possible experiences. There is a strong emphasis placed on keeping parents and carers involved, including supporting parents to monitor and support children's individual targets while at home. Communication books are valued by parents. The school enrichment programme ensures children engage at the highest possible level. Information technology is utilised to monitor children's progress and practice celebrates all achievements.

Educational resources are excellent and innovative ways of working with the children are constantly being introduced. The last education inspection recognised many successes in awarding an outstanding overall rating. Staff take pride in their performance and there is excellent continuity of care and learning being delivered by key workers, child care assistants and teachers. Individual targets run across the school and residential setting and this is particularly evident in the delivery of the personal, social and health education curriculum. A seamless 24-hour programme of care and education is provided.

The school benefits from having excellent resources to support learning and activities. All activities are risk assessed. There is ongoing investment in school resources. An exciting music trail was recently created within the school gardens. Children's sensory and motor development is also supported through a well-established sensory garden and tricycle course. There is good access to community based recreation utilising a suitably adapted mini-bus. The activities enjoyed are captured within photographic displays. A new initiative has seen the school grounds, swimming pool and buildings being made better use of by parents, local schools and local residents. All visitors are managed through stringent procedures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff's effective ongoing consultation maintains positive relationships throughout the school placement. There are excellent links between the school, home and the many health professionals and agencies supporting placements. Parents are provided with regular updates on their child's progress. Meetings are convened if there are any concerns.

Children's assessed needs are known and outlined in comprehensive plans. The school has a robust system for care planning and information held on each child exceeds the requirements of residential special school NMS. Statutory reviews take place allowing targets to be continually evaluated.

Parents are kept fully informed about all activities at the school through an effective key-worker system. One parent commented, 'Staff show genuine concern as if part of the family, I have no concerns or worries'. Parents agreed that they can contact the school about concerns and are welcomed when they visit.

There are clear systems in place relating to pupils being admitted to and leaving the school. All introductions are planned meticulously. Home visits are made by members of the multi-disciplinary team to gather information which contributes towards extremely detailed assessments of children's needs and planning arrangements for admission. Accommodation is available within residence for parents to stay overnight and this can help children to settle. The overnight accommodation also provide parents with reassurances that care staff have a clear understanding of their children's needs, preferences and routines from the onset of the placement. A team of four care staff are identified to look after each child. Nursing staff are also available during the 24-hour cycle of each day. Parents confirm that the residential experience provided at the school makes a positive contribution to the children's personal development.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Transition planning for the time that the young people move from the school to adult services is managed well. There is a strong commitment to shaping and improving the transition process. There is good emphasis from staff members regarding this aspect of their work. Transition plans are being developed through statutory procedures. Those young people eligible had comprehensive plans and arrangements for their future are clear. Programmes operated, routines followed and placement planning are clearly being linked to skills development.

The school and its residential accommodation is safe, being decorated and furnished to a high standard. There is good space and resources to meet the needs of the children. The design and layout manages to retain a warm and comfortable feel. The use of the space and the different rooms is well thought out. Each room is suitably adapted and equipped. Hazard identification ensures all electrical equipment is tested. The school receives regular updates from the Medical Devices Agency and this helps to keep specialist equipment safe. Anything identified as a potential hazards to children's safety is removed or replaced.

Clear efforts are made to personalise bedrooms and children often bring cherished items with them. Photographs reflecting children's interests are prominently displayed. Bathrooms and toilet facilities comply with national minimum standards. Specialist equipment is fitted to support bathing routines. Suitable levels of privacy is afforded. The school's maintenance response is efficient. Water temperatures are being regulated, to prevent any possibility of scalding. A rolling programme of refurbishment maintains high standards within the school and its gardens.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

A new senior management team was established between inspections following the appointment of a new headteacher and head of care. Some aspects of the school's operation and practice is under review. Many new ideas are being introduced and a clear culture of continuous improvement is established. Any identified weakness is tackled to bring about improvements. There are high expectations and challenging targets for staff, children and parents. Tailoring different learning opportunities for the children remains central to the schools ethos. Staff practice fully meets with the requirements of residential special schools NMS. A parent commented that he had, 'Full confidence in the schools senior management team'.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Children's rights are respected and fairness is reflected within all aspects of work at the school and this enriches their lives. Reflective practice and critical analysis on performance further enhances the high standards. Consistency and continuity with practice is evident in all sections of Every Child Matters and this enriches children's lives. The views and opinions of parents and children are valued and this has led to many developments.

Management records, including a detailed pre-inspection questionnaire and an accurate self assessment was provided ahead of the inspection. These provide good detail on future proposals. There is a clear commitment to maintain the overall judgement of outstanding awarded at past inspections. A school development plan provides much of the focus to achieve this. The headteacher provided a detailed report showing many school successes between inspections. There is good planning for the introduction of the new inspection frameworks and new national minimum standards. Inspection reports over the years provide comprehensive comment on the school's management, operation and practice in maintaining an outstanding overall judgement.

Staff morale is excellent and their enthusiasm and skills make the whole school environment an extremely stimulating place for children. Staff are always willing to learn new skills and techniques. The key-worker role is particularly effective in tailoring high quality support. The quality of support is commended by parents and other professionals. The senior management team provide excellent support in maintaining a competent well-qualified workforce. There is a strong commitment to staff training with virtually all staff holding National Vocational Qualifications at level 3 or 4. Induction and foundation training is provided. Supervision records are linked to staff's personal development and appraisal. Not all records are kept centrally and not all contain comprehensive detail.

There is a detailed development plan outlining how the school's operation will be maintained. A senior management forum, School Improvement Group, supports consistency across all disciplines. Change is being managed extremely well. There is good evaluation of the quality of care and any identified weakness is tackled to bring about improvements. Project work is introduced frequently. There are many strands

of inclusion work being undertaken. School governors monitor the welfare of the children and reports are produced. Some external monitoring reports do not evaluate all the areas specified within NMS 33. Finances are effectively managed. The school achieved the Financial Management Standards in Schools award. Policies and procedures are detailed and subject to regular review. Policies are clearly understood by all and impact on the daily work of the school.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure every personnel file contains full and satisfactory information on the recruitment process being followed at the school (NMS 27.2)
- ensure better clarity within the management records with particular reference to supervision, personal development and appraisal (NMS 30.4, 30.6)
- improve the level of detail and evaluation in the external monitoring system in order to further promote improvement in the provision of care. (NMS 33.3)