

Bleasdale School

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

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

Up to 19 children live 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 four children accessing the residential provision.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children.

Date of previous inspection: 19 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive high-quality individualised care and support from dedicated staff who know them exceptionally well. This helps children flourish from their individual starting points. They have continued to improve their skills in communication, socialisation and independence.

The experience of staying at the residential provision enhances children's life opportunities. They engage in a variety of activities in the local and wider community. Children mix with their peers in well-organised activities. This maximises their opportunities to grow and develop and helps to prepare them well for their future adult lives.

Children are encouraged to share their views and exercise choice with picture communication systems and switch-enabled devices. They learn how to be independent of their families in a safe, supportive and extremely nurturing environment. One parent said: 'Bleasdale brings out the best of children.'

Parents consistently say that their children look forward to their stays. One parent said: 'He is so excited on a Monday to come back.' Staff are passionate about their work and are child-centred. They believe that children can achieve their full potential and their disabilities are not seen as a barrier to their participation or experiences. One parent said: 'Residential is the best thing that's happened to her, her previous provision couldn't meet her needs. She is so well loved.' Another said: 'She loves being at school, they do far more with her than if she was at home.'

Some children are moving on from the school and residential provision. Comprehensive transition plans ensure their next placement is fully supported to meet their needs. Two children who have been friends for a long time, and have enjoyed their residential stays, are moving into adult accommodation together. A parent summed this up by saying: 'She is moving in with her best mate, this is fantastic for us.'

Residential staff ensure that children have a positive introduction to their residential stays. Children move into the residential provision at a pace that helps them to adjust and settle. This supports families to feel confident and secure in their children accessing the residential provision. One parent commented: 'He is absolutely safe here, well cared for.'

Residential staff work closely with parents and teachers, and effective communication ensures a joined-up approach. Children make excellent progress in line with their education, health and care plans. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the communication residential staff provide in relation to their child's well-being.

The residential provision remains an integral part of the school. The whole site is kept in exceptionally good order. Children's bedrooms are clean and personalised to reflect their own style and tastes. There is a well-equipped sensory library, purpose-built rebound therapy room and hydrotherapy pool that is available to residential pupils outside school hours.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Detailed plans contain specific information about how to safely care for the children. Staff understand the risks for children with complex needs extremely well. Families confirm that their children are safe in school.

Since the last inspection, there have been no safeguarding concerns. Arrangements to safeguard children are highly effective. There is a professional working partnership with the local authority designated officer. Updated training on government guidance ensures that staff are aware of the latest guidance.

Staff clearly understand the individual risks and vulnerabilities of individual children and their role in keeping them safe. They clearly understand the process for notifying incidents or concerns. For example, parents confirmed that staff will seek explanation of any marks or bruises which may be noticed.

Since the last inspection, the school nurse no longer oversees the administration of medication. However, staff have completed comprehensive medication training, which was delivered by the nurse. This ensures that staff are fully competent to administer medication safely.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are effective. The physical environment is safe and secure. Any matters relating to safety and maintenance are promptly addressed by the maintenance team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The strong and effective leadership ensures that the school and residential provision are making a real difference to children's lives. Leaders and managers act as role models who promote an ambitious vision and have high expectations about what children can achieve.

Leaders followed the government guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the school remained open, the residential provision closed during the earlier stages of the pandemic due to the children shielding. Leaders and managers have ensured that the high-quality care has continued once the residential provision reopened.

Leaders and managers have faced significant challenges in recent months trying to recruit a new head of care and residential staff. Leaders are clear that new staff must be 'the right fit' for the residential provision. They have inspired all staff to focus on ensuring the continuity of a much loved and highly effective residential service.

Staff say that they are well managed and they feel valued. The staff team has a shared vision that puts children at the heart of their practice. All staff are experienced, suitably qualified and have access to regular supervision and training. This supports the staff's ongoing professional development.

The school's governing body monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the residential provision. All quality assurance information is routinely considered at the governors' meetings. This ensures that high standards of practice are maintained across the school.

Despite the significant challenges, the school and residential provision continue to provide extraordinarily positive experiences for children. Parents consistently say that they have complete trust in all the staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC058077

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Kairen Dexter

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Michelle Bacon, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Louise Redfern, Social Care Inspector

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