

Bendarroch School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	8786028
Unique Reference Number	113602
Inspection number	329693
Inspection dates	12-13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Bendarroch School was established in 1978 and is a non-selective, independent school for boys and girls aged between 5 and 14. It is accommodated in former village school premises in Aylesbeare, Devon. There are currently 38 pupils on roll of whom one is part time. There are currently no children in receipt of nursery education funding. The school changed to new proprietors in July 2007 and they appointed a new headteacher in September 2008. The school was last inspected in June 2005. Many pupils go on to independent schools both locally and further afield, and the majority transfer to neighbourhood schools

The aims of the school are *'to serve the needs of each child individually....every child has the right to be happy and to be safe at school...taking care never to undermine their confidence or their self-esteem.'* The school places a strong emphasis on using its outdoor areas as a way of developing pupil's self-confidence and enhancing their enjoyment.

Evaluation of the school

Bendarroch School provides a satisfactory quality of education and successfully meets its aims. The commitment of staff to the individual needs of all pupils underpins the good quality of care and support. Pupil's personal development and well being are good; they take care of each other in a warm and friendly school setting. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching observed with the younger pupils. The school meets the majority of regulations and, although some of the regulatory failures persist, it has made satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory; it provides a broad range of learning experiences and includes a strong focus on the acquisition of reading, writing and mathematical skills. The planning of the curriculum is variable because there is no overall curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate schemes of work. In Key Stage 1 planning is carefully organised so that repetition is avoided and pupils make good progress. Likewise in science, separate and discrete planning of physics, chemistry and biology in a two year rolling programme ensures that pupils are working at

appropriate levels and build on their learning from year to year. In other subjects across the school pupils do not consistently receive sufficient challenge. The recently appointed headteacher has identified this and has produced plans to formalise curriculum coverage to ensure it offers appropriate challenge for all learners.

Pupils are friendly and outgoing and clearly enjoy the school and all it has to offer. They use a good quality play area each day, rain or shine, where they are able to give vent to their creativity by building dens and shelters. The sight of a muddy, barefoot child at the school gates elicits a warm response in parents who appreciate the opportunities. As one parent wrote, 'We love the days he comes home covered in mud and with tales of adventures.' At few schools would pupils have the opportunity to regularly prepare a lunch of jacket potatoes and toasted marshmallows cooked on an open fire under close supervision. These activities are indicative of the school's approach in encouraging good personal development, raising pupils' self-esteem and ensuring that pupils are confident when facing new challenges. Teaching is satisfactory overall; excellent relationships encourage and help to develop in pupils a positive attitude to learning. In the better teaching there is good use of assessments to match work to pupils' abilities and set appropriately challenging activities, but this is not consistent across the school. A lack of reference to national standards ensures that some teachers are unaware that their expectations of learning are low in comparison.

Parents are unanimous in their support for the school. They comment how well their children are looked after and encouraged to do their best. They recognise the special qualities of the school in treating pupils with courtesy, respect and kindness and in providing a natural environment where they can investigate and play freely. Pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities enjoy and benefit from these aspects of the school and make good progress in their personal and social development and satisfactory academic progress. The school has limited systems in place to measure pupils' progress and no overarching framework by which performance can be compared against national benchmarks. This ensures that the school is unable to accurately compare the progress its pupils are making with those of other similar schools. In addition, this makes it difficult for the school to provide parents with an annual report of their child's academic progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school places a significant emphasis on valuing pupils' efforts and building up their confidence and self-esteem. It achieves this very well. Pupils particularly enjoy the ways in which they are treated with respect and feel these help them to grow up. One pupil expressed the view that '*This is better than my last school because we do lots of interesting things*'.

It is a notable feature of the school that pupils engage easily in dialogue and feel very confident to express their views. In lessons pupils are encouraged to reflect on

their own values, for example in compiling a list of objects that will be treasured as they grow older. The day often starts with discussions on topical issues where pupils voice their opinions on a range of subjects. This session promotes their understanding and appreciation of other cultures and faiths and gives them a broad knowledge of public services and institutions. Older pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school by chairing a regular pupil meeting and representatives from each class are elected to this forum. The school links with the local community through local charities and festivities such as the summer fete. Pupils form positive relationships with each other and in lessons they work effectively together. Their attitudes to learning are good and from the youngest ages they are taught to become independent learners, something that will prepare them well for their futures. Pupils have an understanding of right and wrong and can fully recognise the impact of their behaviour on others; they feel that bullying is not an issue and they say they feel safe at all times. Behaviour throughout the school is good; pupils are unfailingly courteous and considerate of one another.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Risk assessments are completed for trips and for the various activities that occur on the school site although inspectors identified some concerns where pupils are allowed to climb trees contrary to best practice. Policies relating to health and safety and safeguarding children are in place. Staff have attended appropriate first aid training however the first aid policy has not been reviewed and updated this term to reflect the responsibilities of new members of staff. Pupils are taught to keep safe and healthy as part of their personal, social and health education. They are encouraged to eat healthy food such as fruit for snacks at their break times and are keen to do so. There are no reports of bullying, and no cause for the school to invoke sanctions for serious breaches of discipline. Minor matters are dealt with sensibly. Pupils report that there are good systems in place to ensure that they feel safe in school. The excellent relationships they have built up with their teachers' means they always have someone to confide in if required. The school's admission register and attendance registers are in the process of being updated to comply with the regulations. The school does not complete an annual check of the safety of its portable electrical appliances. The school has made modifications to the entrance area to make access easier for pupils with disabilities and has in place the appropriate plans to ensure that provision for those pupils with additional needs are taken into account in future improvements to the buildings.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Checks with the Criminal Records Bureau have been completed for all staff and proprietors and the single central record is in place. Checks made on the suitability of staff, their identity, medical fitness and right to work are completed. Whilst these checks are currently part of the school's contract agreements, the dates that these

checks have been completed and the name of the person completing the checks have not yet been formally recorded on the single central record.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are conducive to safe and effective learning and plans are in place to develop and improve the school further. The classrooms comfortably accommodate the small numbers in each class. Specialist areas for music, art and dance provide space and help pupils to produce their work. The school provides appropriate furniture and equipment for all ages and these are well maintained and kept clean. This small school has few places for pupils who are ill other than the school staff room where they are looked after by the school's administration staff. However, this does not comply with regulations to provide separate facilities with a washbasin.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents receive regular updates of their children's progress through daily contact with the school. The open door approach and welcoming environment encourage parents to raise any questions and concerns immediately. The school has not previously provided parents with an annual written report on individual pupils' progress and attainment; plans are in place to address this.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which complies with all of the requirements. Any informal complaints that are made are dealt with effectively and there have been no instances of formal written complaints in the previous academic year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of those listed below:

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work and implement it effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- have in place a framework by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms (paragraph 1(4))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- update the first aid policy to reflect staff changes in appointed first aider and in emergency procedures (paragraph 3(6)).
- maintain an admission register and an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9))

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- in relation to each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007, ensure the register shows checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB was obtained, or where appropriate, that he/she is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (List 99); the right to work in the UK and, where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school; and ensure the register includes the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2&3))
- in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on or after 1 August 2007, ensure the register shows whether a check was made of: his/her identity; right to work in the United Kingdom; and whether an enhanced CRB check was carried out and certificate obtained, or where appropriate, confirmation that he/she is not barred from working in school under section 142 of the Education Act 2002; and ensure the register also shows the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(6 & 7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(1)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6(5)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Continue to review and revise curriculum planning to ensure that there is sufficient focus on helping pupils to improve their skills.
- Continue to develop assessment procedures to help track pupils' progress against national standards and ensure greater challenge to them.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

Name of school	Bendarroch School		
DCSF number	8786028		
Unique reference number	113602		
Type of school	Primary and Secondary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1978		
Age range of pupils	5-13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 24	Girls: 13	Total: 37
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 3	Girls: 0	Total: 3
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,965 – £5,445		
Address of school	Aylesbeare Exeter Devon EX5 2BY		
Telephone number	01395 233553		
Email address	home@bendarroch.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr N Smith		
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs P Slade		
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI		
Dates of inspection	12-13 November 2008		