

# Belhaven Hill School

## School Care Accommodation Service

Belhaven Hill  
Dunbar  
EH42 1NN

Telephone: 01368 862 785

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 February 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Belhaven Hill School

**Service provider number:**  
SP2005007927

**Service no:**  
CS2005111873

## About the service

Belhaven Hill School is a school care accommodation service forming part of an independent school for boys and girls. The boys boarding arrangements are set within the school and can accommodate up to 59 boys. The girls board in a house close to the school, which is set in 20 acres of land. All pupils share shower and bathroom facilities, along with a dining area within the school.

The school is located within Dunbar, close to the seaside.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21, 22 and 23 February 2023. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with twenty-eight people using the service and five members of their family
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

## Key messages

- The school was very supportive towards pupils and families.
- Everyone who worked in the school knew all the children extremely well.
- Pupils were well supported with any difficulties, and helped to grow in confidence.
- There was a strong nurturing ethos within the school.
- The school had developed a positive culture of reflection and learning.
- Pupils really enjoyed their time at school, and were making excellent progress.

## From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

|                                                                          |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing? | 6 - Excellent |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was innovative and sector leading.

All the staff and teachers at Belhaven knew each pupil extremely well, and communication played a pivotal role in ensuring pupils were kept safe and well supported. All individual pupils had plans in place to identify the areas where they needed support where appropriate, and everyone was aware of the strategies in place within the plans and confident in their practice. We were impressed to see strategies which were individual to each pupil, and regular discussions to ensure they were making progress and looking at what may be impacting on them emotionally. Within this we saw how there had been times on a weekend the Headmaster would help support the boarding houses to ensure the emotional wellbeing of pupils. This led to pupils having tailored support to meet their needs, helping them grow socially and emotionally.

The school was very responsive to any instances which may lead to bullying. Due to a focus on building relationships, pupils felt confident to approach staff or teachers and let them know if they were unhappy. Equally we found that due to the staff and teachers knowing the pupils so well, they were often able to notice any changes in the pupils and respond to this effectively. The school had a good recording system to ensure any instances of potential bullying were recorded, monitored and if needed strategies introduced to support pupils. This ensured pupils were safe and listened to.

The ethos within the school promoted reflection and learning, which they had adopted within their child protection policies, procedures and training. There had been training sourced externally, and local links made for learning experiences to ensure all staff and teachers were confident in the child protection procedures. We were satisfied with the procedures in place, and reassured at the confidence staff and teachers had at utilising these if needed.

It was pleasing to see the school had a large focus on understanding each young person as an individual, with a focus on love. Parents told us "It's amazing how intuitive they are to their needs." Specific training had been accessed by a key member of staff, who rolled this out to teachers and staff. We saw this had also influenced the language used, where as well as a buddy system, they were called "big brothers or big sisters." Pupils were encouraged to speak about their feelings, and help find solutions to ensure they felt listened to. Where further support was needed the school responded promptly and accessed external agencies to support. We could see how this helped pupils develop and be supported to learn to the best of their ability.

Wellbeing webs were introduced to all pupils, which looked at their thoughts and feelings. Where further support was needed pupils were supported to have their views heard and included in their plans. We were able to see how the school had responded directly to the findings from these, listening to how some pupils felt it difficult to speak about their worries at times. This led to a great drive from those supporting them to help them feel safe to talk about their worries and helping to recognise it is ok to speak to someone. Creativity was used to engage the young people in learning and we saw how this was conducted through drama and art to teach pupils about consent and their rights. The pupils told us "it's great fun." The school had also been creative in introducing programmes for individuals who did not have interest in the sport on offer at the school. This allowed them the opportunity to engage in more extreme sports like skiing or paddle boarding to ensure they still felt included and promoted a healthy lifestyle. This ensured pupils were included, listened to and at the heart of decisions made about their care.

Recently a play therapist has been introduced to the school. Although in the early stages of being embedded this has been well received. There is also an opportunity for pupils to refer themselves through a box in reception, and this has been well received. Staff also are given the opportunity to access support for themselves or to support pupils. This helps to create a healthy culture, where there is good support and reassures pupils it is ok to get extra support if you need.

There was a good variety of food, and a regular food committee which included pupils from all years and parents. Pupils told us "the food is great, I love it." We were able to see how the school catered for individual needs of pupils, and also understood the importance of adapting meals to ensure young people can access something they like to eat. Within the houses there was also a nurturing element where pupils enjoyed sitting round the table chatting with a snack.

Belhaven had impressive elements where it demonstrated a nurturing and homely ethos. Pupils were encouraged to be included in the local community singing to the elderly, piping in supermarket car parks during Covid-19 and planting trees for each pupil ensuring they feel a connection to the school. They also looked more widely at worldwide problems, succeeding in a great competition with their Project Polar Bear supporting the environment, and becoming involved with a charity supporting schools affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. They offered transformational bursaries for some pupils, and supported them by fundraising to fund another year ahead. There was also support to families to help access scholarships and ensure every pupil had equal opportunities. They looked ahead at the wider equalities which mattered to pupils, and supported parents to understand the values in their individual views. From this we could see why pupils told us "I love boarding at Belhaven."

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

|                                                                                 |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?        | 6 - Excellent |
| 7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life | 6 - Excellent |

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