

1234990

Registered provider: The Percy Hedley Foundation

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home and its satellite sites are based on the campus of a school for children with complex special needs operated by the Percy Hedley Foundation. The home provides long-term care for students at the school and together with its satellite sites, currently has 12 residents.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The children and young people are offered an exceptionally high standard of care because the registered manager and her staff have built upon the foundations of a previously high-performing school 'residence' effectively, and turned it into a high-performing children's home.
- The children and young people are cared for in a comfortable and warm environment where they are safe and can enjoy their evenings, weekends and holidays feeling at home.
- Staff are allocated tasks in line with their skills to meet children's specified needs and as a result, know them very well. This means that they can deal with and divert any potential distress at a very early stage to keep a child or young person calm and safe.
- The staff team has not physically restrained a child or young person for eight months, and given the complex needs of its residents group, this is a significant achievement.
- The children and young people derive significant advantage from access to the school's high-quality facilities, particularly the therapy team, which works in close partnership with the home and adds exceptional value to resident children and young people's lives.
- The physical environment of the home is well maintained and homely within the limitations of the institutionalised appearance of the campus. The recent addition of a high-quality sensory room has enhanced significantly the resources available to maintain a quiet and calm environment for the children and young people.
- The registered manager provides exceptional management oversight of the home. She inspires the confidence of the staff, parents and local authority social workers, and ensures that a very high standard of care is offered to the children and young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The scoring system used as part of the Percy Hedley Foundation's risk assessment process is flawed and potentially misleading and should be reviewed.
- Percy Hedley Trust's development plan to provide additional infrastructure to quality assure the home as a children's home, not a 'residence', is taking effect, but aspects of it should be accelerated to ensure that leadership and governance keep pace with the home's excellent standards of care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
None		

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

In particular, any assessment of risk must reduce the risk of harm to the children and young people. The home's current risk assessment format should be reviewed, with particular reference to the scoring system, which is not fit for purpose.

- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

In particular, the plans to introduce additional quality assurance processes should be accelerated following the organisational restructuring. The children and young people's records must be kept up to date so that the children's home's placement plans align with the local authority's plans for the welfare of the children and young people.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people who attend the school operated by Percy Hedley Foundation and are looked after on campus receive an exceptionally high standard of care. The service that the children and young people get is fully personalised. For example, the children and young people's bedrooms are decorated with their favourite cartoon characters and their bedspreads are also chosen by them to reflect their individual tastes. Bedroom decor is culturally appropriate where necessary, and one bedroom has just been adapted to provide a safe space for a young person, so that he does not harm himself when enjoying quiet time in his room. Outings, or activities from the school's wide range of leisure options, are entirely chosen by the children and young people themselves. The home provides fully personalised care, where the children and young people are treated respectfully as individuals.

The children and young people receive consistent care from the home's staff. Staff members' skills and experience are well known to the home's managers, who allocate them tasks that correspond with their abilities. For example, four of the young people resident have hearing difficulties, and they are allocated carers who can communicate with them using British Sign Language. For those children and young people who spend time at home with their families, great care is taken to ensure that the approaches and techniques that staff use transition with the child or young person to the family home

environment. Consistent care means that the children and young people can feel settled and enjoy home and family life with a minimum of disruptive incidents.

A dedicated team of therapists who work across the school campus provides outstanding added value to the lives of resident children and young people. Therapists' expertise in dealing with children and young people's assessed special needs is of especially high quality across a range of issues. For instance, therapists were able to suggest a special diet for a young person suffering with dysphagia; another young person who suffers from anxiety was calmed using a specially adapted pressure point vest; a young person who had difficulty in calculating the passage of time was helped by means of using symbols. The children and young people's files evidence the theory underpinning any therapeutic intervention and the therapy team visits the home regularly to work with the staff on applying them. The therapists and staff keep different records of these conversations and in the interests of promoting consistency, it would benefit the child or young person if a shared record was kept of these discussions and placed on their file.

The physical environment of the home is comfortable and well maintained and the children and young people evidently feel at home there. The atmosphere is homely, within the restrictions of the main building being located centrally on the school campus. Corridors are decorated according to a well thought through calming colour scheme that allows the children and young people to recognise that different areas of the building have different functions, such as bedrooms or the dining room. The resources of the home have recently been significantly extended by the addition of a sensory room. This high-quality facility provides an excellent opportunity for the children and young people to enjoy quiet time in relaxed and peaceful surroundings.

The transition from a high-performing 'residence' of a school to a high-performing children's home has been fully achieved. The care team approach means that professionals involved in children's lives, including medical professionals, meet regularly to coordinate their care. Every child's file looked at evidenced significant improvement in their lives; for instance, reduction in the numbers of incidents, or in the use of medication as a calming measure. The home's staff, care teams, including the school's therapists, and physical resources combine to provide a calm and fulfilling home for the children and young people who have complex special needs. One parent said: 'Staff adore my son,' and the evident warmth, affection and regard with which staff treat the children and young people mean that the home is an outstanding place to live.

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

The children and young people living in the home are safe. A key part of the home's partnership with school is membership of the highly successful virtual Behaviour Intervention Team (BIT). Teachers, therapists and staff meet to agree approaches to young people's behaviour that will minimise incidents. Mutual respect for one another's skills and expertise means that solutions are found that are specific to the child or young person's identified needs. In identifying the best solution, the BIT has the benefit of an analytical tool of exceptionally high quality developed by the school's behaviour support adviser. In all cases seen, the home had, in partnership with the school, reduced the

number of distressing incidents involving the child or young person by the consistent use of calming measures or distraction techniques tailored to children and young people's individual needs.

All staff are trained in the Percy Hedley Foundation's preferred method of physical intervention but this is rarely in use and has not been used by the home's staff for the past eight months under any circumstances. Given the behaviours presented by some of the resident children and young people when they are distressed, the success of the home's diversion techniques is a significant achievement. The home's comprehensive admission records show that children and young people transferred to them have previously been administered daily calming medication, or been regularly physically restrained, or both. The children and young people met during the inspection were unrecognisable from these descriptions due to the very high level of personalised care and behaviour management they now receive.

The risk assessment format currently in use by the Percy Hedley Foundation allows staff to identify hazards to the children and young people's safety accurately, together with controls and contingencies. These are used appropriately to assess risk in situations such as 'in my bedroom' or 'in the community'. However, the scoring scheme that accompanies the format is flawed as it is weighted towards quantifying risk as 'medium' and potentially means that staff will not respond appropriately to very 'low' or very 'high' risk circumstances. A recommendation has been made at this inspection to improve the method of assessing risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's talented and highly knowledgeable registered manager is pivotal to the excellent level of care offered by the home. She is currently completing the relevant management qualifications in tandem with the organisation's leadership programme. She has a clear affection for, and in-depth understanding of the needs of resident children and young people. Her high standards permeate throughout the staff team, whose members are regularly supervised and continuously mentored by her. The registered manager is clearly the driving force behind the home's successful transition from 'residence' to children's home.

The senior leadership team of Percy Hedley's Trust has demonstrated foresight in dividing up and registering the former 'residence' of the school as children's homes on the school's campus. A sound recruitment and selection process, and a training offer such as the course delivered by the therapy team on understanding the young people's special needs, means that the home's staff are committed to and schooled in the organisation's ethos. They are also capable of delivering the children and young people's placement plans effectively. However, a plan to improve quality assurance arrangements for Percy Hedley Foundation's children's homes, which includes an extension of an existing contract to provide independent visits under Regulation 44 of the Regulations (England) 2015, the creation of a Residential Board of Trustees and senior leaders, and the appointment of a Registered Services Manager, is not keeping pace with transition of the home. The Percy Hedley Foundation Trust's development plan should be accelerated

to ensure that the home's registered manager and staff are receiving an appropriate level of scrutiny and challenge to their practice.

The home's files are well kept and provide an easily understandable record of the child or young person's 'journey' through care. This is important because residents are looked after at the home under the meaning of the Children Act 1989. The complex needs of the home's resident children and young people mean that there is an intricate and interrelated set of health, education and social care assessments and plans to manage, and this is successfully achieved. One parent described contact arrangements facilitated by the home as showing what a 'fantastic' job the home had done by helping her son to meet her in the community again, and said the difference was 'wonderful' for both of them. The home appropriately keeps simpler records of the children and young people's daily lives, although its placement plans would benefit from being more clearly referenced to plans such as Education and Health Care Plans, and more consistently personalised in line with the home's ethos.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1234990

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Percy Hedley Foundation

Registered provider address: Percy Hedley School, Forest Hall, Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE12 8YY

Responsible individual: Ann-Marie Watts

Registered manager: Claire Webster

Inspector

Ian Young, HMI

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