

SC012021

Registered provider: The Loddon Foundation Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides education and care for up to 30 pupils, from eight to 19 years of age, who have autistic spectrum disorder, severe learning disabilities and/or associated complex restrictive behaviours. The school operates as a charitable trust and it is registered with the Department for Education.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2018.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 July 2018

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	outstanding
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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: 13 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
22/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/09/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that each child— has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home. (Regulation (7(2)(b)(i)))	01/09/2018

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Any home using CCTV or other monitoring equipment should have a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24. Homes must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance by the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. The use of CCTV is regulated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Surveillance Camera Code of Conduct (Home Office 2013). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- Children should be supported to express themselves as individuals and should be given an appropriate degree of freedom and choice in relation to day to day arrangements for their care, depending on their individual needs and the setting in which they are cared for. This is in relation to both activities and personal items such as clothing, technology and leisure items. Children's reasonable preferences in relation to day to day arrangements should be met with consideration given to safeguarding, particularly in relation to the use of technology. Where a child's preferences are unreasonable or cannot be met for

safeguarding reasons, staff should discuss this with the child to help them understand why, specifically to explore, review and update restriction risk assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.21)

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Qualification requirements for staff are listed in Annex A. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.6)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

All children make outstanding progress while living at the home. They each experience an individualised, stable and consistent home life. Children benefit from the integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to education and care. They each achieve their full potential and, in many cases, do so beyond previous expectations.

Staff support each child to meet their health needs. Those who have complex needs have clear plans and protocols that ensure children that gain the correct support and medication when needed. Staff follow clearly thought-out plans that reduce and avoid the overuse of medication. Staff encourage all children to lead healthy lifestyles through the varied daily physical activities, balanced diets and activities that promote their emotional well-being. Some children have increased the variety and types of food they eat, others have developed positive strategies that assist them in managing anxiety.

Children are supported through minimal transitions. This impacts positively on children, who can transition seamlessly between education and care. Staff provide children with practical guidance and education throughout each day. This enables children to develop essential life and social skills, which promotes their welfare and benefits them into adulthood.

Children engage in life-enriching activities, which they enjoy. Staff creatively use a child's preferred activities to support them to learn and achieve targets in areas they may otherwise find difficult or challenging. Staff utilise music, water and other preferred media to encourage and promote learning.

Staff utilise a wide variety of communication aids and systems and communicate

effectively with children. Staff offer choice to children at every available opportunity. The child's voice is apparent in all plans and throughout the home. Children make choices about things that are meaningful to them, and through this they develop better communication skills.

Children are supported to develop and improve their relationships with peers. Staff support them through positive interactions with peers. Children have developed their social skills and interactions in both the community and the home.

Staff carefully plan and prepare for all transitions into and out of the home. Children are thoroughly assessed and their needs carefully considered prior to their arrival. Children are prepared through individual plans, visits and social stories, although the home had not ensured the children's guide was in an accessible form for all.

Staff go the extra mile to ensure that children maintain positive contact with their families and friends. Staff plan and prepare children for contact and support, and facilitate these when required to ensure that they are positive experiences for all.

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

Staff are innovative in how they support each child to self-regulate their behaviours. All children benefit from the home's clear routines and structures, and they learn positive strategies that enable them to reduce the frequency and intensity of challenging behaviours. The integrated holistic child-focused approach to care considers the whole child, and their sensory, physical and communication needs. This in-depth knowledge allows staff to be in tune with each child and have clarity about what they need to support them to calm and self-regulate their behaviours and anxieties. Each child develops positive calming strategies that improve while they live in the home. Children have been able to develop strategies that allow them to engage in activities, which many who knew them previously thought they would never be able to achieve.

Staff apply a high level of review and diligence in the evaluation of triggers, behaviour and incidents to ensure that support packages meet need. When children present with high levels of challenge, staff apply the lowest form of support to enable them to calm. For example, a child was excluded from one setting and since living at this home has made outstanding progress and can now engage in many aspects of family life. The staff analyse behaviour and will look at the potential triggers for challenging behaviour – this includes taking account of staff working directly with them and the impact of other young people in the environments. Staff work in hourly slots with children and this keeps staff fresh for their tasks.

Children form positive relationships of trust with staff and seek their reassurance and guidance when needed. Staff provide a nurturing, caring approach to children. They are consistent and calm while following children's individual plans, which minimises children's restrictive behaviours and anxieties.

Leaders responsible for managing safeguarding concerns possess the required knowledge and understanding, and work with the local safeguarding board to maintain their knowledge and understanding. Records evidence concerns with information about referrals and actions. The quality of records has improved, though some require additional evaluation and monitoring to consider if there are lessons to be learned. Leaders and managers have high expectations of staff regarding conduct and professional boundaries and have applied this robustly throughout the home. Leaders' priority is to keep the children safe and so there are clear rules which staff must follow, for example no access to private mobile phones during work hours. Managers complete internal investigations, which have improved in quality.

Staff thoroughly explore risk in support plans. These detail practical advice and guidance to staff that support them in managing and reducing risk. The off-site risk assessments consider every possible risk factor that may affect a child. This helps to ensure that a child's community experience is positive and well managed.

Staff have begun to review the restrictions applied in the home to keep children safe. Further work is planned to ensure that all aspects of restriction are considered, assessed and reviewed as required. Staff have gained general consent for the use of monitoring and surveillance, though this is not explicit and does not consider the use of night time monitors.

The home environment varies in its quality across the large site. Senior leaders are developing a long-term improvement plan to ensure that all the premises are at their required standard. The home is well maintained and damage is swiftly repaired.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is well led and managed by an experienced and knowledgeable manager who knows each child. Senior leaders and managers are child-focused and aspirational. They apply a whole-child, multi-disciplinary approach to the individualised care.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, though the current development plan is spread over two documents and does not provide clear deadlines to achieve tasks. Staff are allocated to home base areas, which are well staffed, though on occasions there is not enough visible management and guidance to support staff at times of high demand and pressure. There are minor areas that have not been robustly reviewed and monitored to ensure that they provide a consistent high quality of care. An example is that Christmas decorations were on display in a house area. Senior leaders work cohesively to achieve the best outcomes for children, with all staff clear about the progress each child makes while living at the home. Some records vary in standard and do not evidence all the progress children make.

Staff are well supported through regular supervision and appraisal of their practice, staff are encouraged to review and reflect on their practice. All staff access a wide variety of training which is pertinent to their role. Staff have achieved the required qualification and

those who have not done so within the required timeframe have clear action plans which are reviewed and monitored. Leaders and managers are robust in their application of their expectations for all staff to develop as professionals. Newly appointed staff are well supported through a thorough induction process, which prepares them for their role. Leaders and managers have a continual recruitment drive in place to address vacancies in the staff team. They use known agency staff to supplement gaps in staffing. Leaders have a clear understanding of the factors that affect staff recruitment and retention, and have explored ways to promote staff stability and consistency.

Leaders, managers and staff have formed exceptional relationships with others outside of the home. This has a positive impact on children, who benefit from the engagement and involvement with community-based activities and the relationships they form with others outside of the home.

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 differences 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: SC012021

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: The Loddon Foundation Ltd

Responsible individual: Marion Cornick

Registered manager: Timothy Clark

Inspectors

Amanda Maxwell, social care inspector

Keith Riley, social care inspector

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

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