

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC012021
Inspector	Keith Riley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered manager	Joy Audrey Wake
Date of last inspection	13/11/2014

Inspection date	19/02/2015
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Previous inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

Young people continue to make exceptional progress in this school, for example with communication. A placing social worker said, 'The communication progress is unreal'. Likewise, there are improvements in health. Conditions, such as epilepsy are well managed and the number of significant seizures is diminishing. Staff place young people at the centre of practice. They demonstrate a commitment to care for young people who, on occasion, can be extremely challenging and violent. Health and care colleagues stated in a letter to the school, 'You have done exceptional work in highly unfavourable circumstances'.

The Registered Manager ensures that the welfare of young people is constantly monitored. There is close collaborative working with other professionals to ensure there are appropriate responses to emerging needs. All notifications of significant events are made to the appropriate authorities, as recommended at the previous inspection. This includes a system to notify serious concerns about the emotional or mental health of a young person that may require a mental health assessment. Staff keep young people as safe as possible in challenging, and on occasion extremely violent, circumstances. Young people are at the centre of practice with staff acting in their best interest in consultation with others. Detailed behaviour management plans and risk assessments are drawn up. Any interventions are used as a last resort with excellent recording systems in place, for example in the event of a physical restraint.

Young people benefit from an excellent attention to detail to manage their health needs. Staff ensure young people are seen by a health professional, such as a consultant neurologist, for specific needs. Clear protocols guide staff in what to do, for example in the event of an epileptic seizure. This includes clear protocols on when to administer emergency medication and when to involve other health professionals, such as paramedics. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the guidance. Although such protocols are written in partnership with the consultant

paediatrician, written records are not formally signed and dated by a health professional. Young people are not at risk. Staff ensure young people have their routine vaccinations, as well as addressing any immediate health needs. There is a thorough approach to all health care needs, for example staff review soaps and shampoos if a young person develops a rash. Young people benefit from a healthy diet and have their weight monitored regularly to ensure they are within centiles.

The Registered Manager is aware of the shortfalls of the service and has clear development plans in place, some of which have been implemented since the last inspection. For example, one boarding house has been closed and young people are now living in a purpose-built facility which is of a very high standard. Careful consideration has been given to the design and decor to ensure it meets the needs of the young people accommodated, for example the selection of colours in rooms used by young people on the autistic spectrum. Young people speak proudly of their new home and how they have been able to personalise their bedrooms. The Statement of Purpose does not contain details of the new facility, this has no impact on the young people.

Staffing has been an identified issue. Recent changes to staffing leadership structures are robust and strengthen the management team. This has given rise to some vacancies. The Registered Manager has been proactive in ensuring there is continuity of care during this transition time. An example is the use of agency staff on extended contracts. This means that young people are cared for by a consistent staff team with excellent arrangements in place for a prolonged handover as new staff are employed.

There is a robust admissions process. The Registered Manager ensures the necessary documentation and referral information is in place prior to a young person living in the home. The compatibility with other young people is assessed so young people are placed in the right accommodation. Emergency admissions are rare. Although the Registered Manager ensures that correct procedures are followed for emergency admissions, the Statement of Purpose does not contain the policy or procedure.

There are excellent arrangements in place to ensure young people have contact with individuals who are important to them. Staff work with parents to accommodate their requests, for example by providing transport for handover meetings when parents live a considerable distance from the school. Placing social workers said, 'staff go above and beyond the call of duty'. Young people are able to have telephone contact or video conferencing with their parents on a regular basis. Staff ensure parents are notified, for example of significant incidents.

All safeguarding events are notified in line with regulations. Robust procedures are followed diligently by all staff to keep everyone as safe as possible, for example in the event of an allegation.

Information about this children's home

This school provides education and residential care for up to 30 pupils from 8 to 19 years of age who have severe and complex learning difficulties associated with autism. The home operates as a charitable trust and, as it is a school as well, it is approved by the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/11/2014	Full	outstanding
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
11/09/2013	Full	good
16/01/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- revise the Statement of Purpose to include the procedure for emergency admissions and the new building (NMS 13.3)
- ensure guidance for appropriate care for children with complex needs is authorised, this particularly applies to emergency protocols for epilepsy being signed by a health professional. (NMS 6.8)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.