

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC020193
Inspection date	01/08/2012
Inspector	Philip Cass
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	28/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide care for up to 25 children and young people with learning difficulties. It is part of a residential special school and owned by a private organisation.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people enjoy a good quality of life while living at the home. The home is good at identifying and meeting their needs. Because a range of creative methods are used to overcome communication difficulties, young people are able to express their views and feelings. Staff are proactive in both seeking these views and acting on them. Young people benefit from a range of stimulating activities which help them to grow in confidence and supports them to prepare for adult life. The home ensures that young people are healthy by promoting regular exercise, providing a range of healthy food choices, and administering medication as required. Safety is promoted by robust safeguarding procedures. Managers strive towards continual improvement. They ensure that staff are well trained and well supported to carry out their roles. The home is required to make improvements in the way it records medication received into the home and the way it records any restraint that takes place.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
21	ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the recording	03/09/2012

(2001)	of any medications received into the children's home (Regulation 21(1))	
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any restraint, a written record is made in a volume kept for that purpose of which shall include details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure. (Regulation 17B(3)(b))	03/09/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people progress well at the home. They develop improved social skills and emotional resilience. Social workers describe improvements in behaviour and interactions as 'brilliant'. Because staff provide high quality care and build warm and affectionate relationships, young people say that they are happy.

Young people make good progress in relation to their health. Many have very complex health needs and dedicated health care staff work hard to co-ordinate health plans. Effective health monitoring means that health plans are quickly adapted where necessary and young people are supported to lead healthy lifestyles. This means that health conditions can be stabilised and improved.

Young people are supported to make a successful move into adult care services. They are prepared effectively for the changes they will face and the differences in care services as they move towards adulthood. Because transitions are smooth, anxieties are reduced and disruption is minimised.

Education outcomes are also good. The home's care and education services are closely linked which means that young people receive constant support to achieve in line with expectations. High support levels mean that disability is not a barrier to education attendance and young people achieve very high levels of school attendance.

Young people are very well supported to participate in decision making forums and make a positive contribution to the home. Young people's meetings are organised in a way that fully promotes participation. The home supports young people to contribute to their reviews so that they can express their views and wishes. This means young people overcome barriers to participation caused by communication difficulties.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with the dedicated and caring staff team. A range of communication techniques are employed by staff. This means that young people are given every opportunity to express their needs and wishes. A range of activities are provided for young people within the home and in the community. Staff work closely with community groups to promote the reasonable adjustments necessary for full participation in stimulating and enjoyable activities.

Care plans are detailed and support staff to provide high quality care. The full range of education, health, and social needs are identified and addressed through the care planning process. Young people make a meaningful contribution to the care planning process by expressing their wishes and feelings. Because staff are positive about diversity and equality issues, care plans reflect the cultural background and personal identity of young people.

Young people are well supported to maintain good health. The health care manager co-ordinates well with therapy, care and catering services to ensure that health needs are met. Catering staff provide healthy and nutritious food that meets a complex range of dietary requirements. Liaison with external health agencies such as doctors and dentist is of a very high standard. As a result of good information sharing, community health care providers are able to tailor their services to meet the needs of young people. Consequently, treatment options are increased and young people benefit from the availability of a greater range of services. Medication is administered in a safe and effective manner. However, guidance given to staff is not always sufficiently clear. This increases the possibility of error when administering medication.

A programme of refurbishment means that the home is generally well decorated and maintained. Because the home is good at supporting young people to personalise their bedrooms, it ensures a nurturing and warm environment for young people to live and grow.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Supervision levels are high and staff are committed to ensuring that young people are kept safe. When young people do engage in risk taking behaviour, staff respond promptly and take action to minimise harm. Close supervision also ensures that young people do not place themselves at risk by going missing from the home. Risk assessment processes are robust, and ensure that hazards are identified and removed. However, young people are particularly vulnerable, and do sustain accidental injury. The home makes a determined effort to learn from these accidents and prevent further injury.

Clear safeguarding processes ensure that investigations into allegations or suspicions

of harm are handled fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children. Parents report that they have great confidence in the home to investigate concerns thoroughly and take robust action to make any required improvements. Staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. The visitors' record evidences safe chaperoning of unchecked adults in the home. This reduces the likelihood of abuse. Young people are further protected from abuse by careful recruitment processes that include Criminal Record Bureau checks and verification of references.

Behaviour management strategies are built on positive engagement and clear communication. Staff emphasise care over control. This means that incidents of restraint are rare and minimal force is used. Although all restraint is appropriate, some records do not accurately describe the behaviour that led to the intervention. Imprecise recording reduces the effectiveness of monitoring and safeguarding processes.

Safety is further promoted because fire safety systems are good. Where young people have difficulty with evacuation the home develops individual evacuation plans that are clearly understood by all staff and reduce the risk of harm to young people. Periodic testing of heating and electrical installations ensures that the risk of injury is minimised.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The home is led by an experienced and competent management team who determined in their efforts to improve standards of care and outcomes for young people. An ambitious refurbishment programme has improved the decoration and cleanliness of residential areas in response to requirements set at the previous inspection. The home has also fully addressed the requirement to ensure that all staff receive appropriate supervision.

As the standard of supervision improves it is becoming more effective in improving standards and challenging poor practice. Consistency of care is improved as a result of more robust time management processes. Good quality practice is enhanced by regular staff meetings which are used to share best practice and ensure that high expectations are communicated to all staff.

Complaints and concerns raised by families are responded to in an open and sensitive manner. The home uses complaints as an opportunity to identify weaknesses and promote improvement. Improvements are further promoted by rigorous quality assurance processes. These processes clearly identify areas of potential improvement and set actions to ensure this improvement takes place. The home's development plan is based on actions identified through quality assurance processes. It has driven improvements in menu planning, dining arrangements, pre-recruitments checks, consistency of care, and information sharing systems.

Staff training is of a high standard. All staff undertake a wide-ranging programme of training which includes restraint, administration of medication, first aid, safeguarding, fire prevention, and food hygiene. New staff undertake a full induction which combines work place mentoring and formal training. Induction is supported through the completion of the Children's Workforce Development Council induction standards. Where training is required to meet the specific needs of young people placed in the home, the organisation is able to source and provide this in a timely manner. The high quality training programme means that staff are given the confidence and skills to meet the needs of the young people living in the home.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.