

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 February 2010
Inspector	Vivien Slyfield
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10 November 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This school is situated in a village in a rural location approximately five miles from the nearest town. It provides residential care facilities for up to 23 boarders and several day students from various areas of the United Kingdom. The children and young people who live at the school have varying degrees of learning disability, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, autism and/or autistic spectrum disorder and some with associated attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The ethos of the school is based on individualised support to children and young people. The school works with a multi-disciplinary approach and employs a nurse, occupational therapist and speech and language therapists.

The building is a listed building and the care units are divided between five areas of the school. The children and young people use leisure facilities in the nearby towns.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection in which the key standards in the outcome area of staying safe were considered as well as the standards relating to the recommendations and action made at the last inspection.

The young people are receiving a good level of care and support from staff who work to promote their safety and welfare. Progress has been made in the short time since the last inspection, but some further work is needed on the fabric of the building, arrangements for professional consultation for the nurse and the clarity of the definition of physical intervention in written procedures in relation to holding doors shut in situations of risk to young people. The Registered Manager is committed to the provision of safe and nurturing care for the young people.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The management and staff responded positively to the recommendations and the action made at the previous key inspection. However, this was just under three months ago and so not all the recommendations have been addressed. The action and two of the four recommendations have been met and the details included in the appropriate outcome areas. The two remaining recommendations have continued to be recommendations from this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are well met. A trained and qualified nurse is employed and based at the school. The organisation has arranged for all the nurses they employ to meet four times a year and they have a system through which they audit each others schools and report on their findings. Efforts have been made to provide a senior nurse or doctor for professional guidance and consultation through contact with the local school nurses. This has not yet developed into any arrangements and therefore the need for this consultation remains outstanding.

No other standards were considered during this inspection and therefore the judgement remains the same.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from living in an environment that proactively and effectively safeguards and protects their welfare. Staff have clear guidance that is communicated effectively to promote young people's safety and wellbeing. The Registered Manager provides strong leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety is important.

The recruitment systems for staff are robust and well organised. All aspects of the checks required in Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations are met. All staff receive an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and are not allowed to start work until this has been received.

Young people's privacy is respected and they are supported and encouraged to develop skills to assist them in their daily lives. The behaviour of the young people is well managed. The use of sanctions and physical interventions is consistently recorded. The manager has taken action to clarify occasions when a young person is prevented from leaving a room until they have calmed sufficiently, in order to prevent injury to themselves or others. All placing authorities and parents have been contacted. The current written information does not make it clear whether this restriction of liberty is viewed as a sanction or physical intervention. The manager is clear that it is a physical intervention.

Situations that raise concern, including safeguarding issues, are handled appropriately and notifications made to all those concerned. This has included an incident of referral to the Local Authority's Designated Officer. Issues are dealt with by robust management and any shortfalls addressed through training and disciplinary action. Complaints are responded to with openness and respect and are fully recorded. Complaints are monitored by the Registered Manager who has a clear overview of the issues raised.

The school has a missing persons procedure and a system for recording these incidents. However, there have been no incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection. The secure nature of the environment and the range of young people at the school means that such incidents are rare.

Fire drills are regularly undertaken and take place at different times of the day and night. There are records of the checks of equipment and a fire risk assessment is in place. The records show that the emergency lighting is now tested monthly as identified in the school's risk assessment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The overall accommodation is good and meets the needs of the young people well. There is work currently underway to renovate and improve the facilities to a consistently high standard throughout all the houses. This is not complete and some bathrooms in particular are in need of refurbishment and redecoration.

No other standards were considered during this inspection and therefore the judgement remains the same.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

A daily log book is now in place in each of the houses. Training has been provided for staff about its use and guidance and an example of how to complete the entries is provided in each book. This allows clear recording and communication of issues between staff about the day-to-day care of the young people.

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed to include information about the occasions when a young person is prevented from leaving a room until they have calmed sufficiently in order to prevent injury to themselves or others. This issues is referred to under the outcome area for staying safe.

No other standards were considered during this inspection and therefore the judgement remains the same.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home is maintained in good structural repair, with particular reference to some of the bathrooms (NMS 24.3)
- ensure that the nurse has access to a named senior nurse or doctor for professional guidance and consultation (NMS 13.6)
- ensure that there is a clear written policy, procedures and guidance for staff based on a code of conduct setting out the control, disciplinary and restraint measures permitted, in relation to the need to hold a door shut, which may involve the restriction of liberty for children who are accommodated. (NMS 22.3)