

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10/01/2014
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	14/02/2013
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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 complex communication, learning difficulties and severe challenging behaviours. 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 **outstanding**.

Young people living at this home experience outstanding standards of care delivered by a dedicated, skilled and knowledgeable management and staff team. They benefit from highly individualised and well-planned care, based on comprehensive assessment of their unique needs. Parents and professionals are consistently positive about the impact of the home in improving the outcomes for young people.

Young people benefit from improved outcomes in education, health and skills development. Young people are kept safe by a staff team who have a thorough understanding of safeguarding practices underpinned by robust and proactive policies and procedures. A key strength of this home is highly effective behaviour management. Parents and professionals are unanimous in stating that the care provided enables young people's behaviour to improve significantly.

The Registered Manager is highly motivated, dedicated and enthusiastic. Strong leadership ensures the delivery of consistently excellent standards of care. The management team continually strives to achieve better outcomes for the young people. Rigorous and effective monitoring processes provide meticulous quality assurance. The focus on constant exploration for further improvement is an outstanding strength of this service.

There are no recommendations or requirements because of this inspection.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people thrive and develop within this home. They are nurtured and learn to develop positive attachments and relationships with carers. As a result, young people develop improved emotional resilience and gain a positive self-view. One parent said 'They are fantastic! They are like Aunties and Uncles. They really care! The commitment from staff is amazing.'

Young people benefit from a particularly high standard of health care. The multi-disciplinary expertise available to them on site ensures that their holistic health needs are effectively addressed. Young people are encouraged, in line with their abilities, to develop their awareness of healthy lifestyles. For example, they learn how exercise promotes healthy living. Young people have a nutritious and balanced diet that accounts for their medical dietary needs and their preferences. Consequently, young people's health needs are fully met.

A strength of the home is the inclusion of education on site. Young people prosper from high quality education within their own school. They achieve vastly improved outcomes in their education, with all young people actively involved in education. Excellent attendance promotes good progress. Some young people have progressed to attend the college provision or attend nearby colleges, which further develops their independence and social skills.

Proactive promotion of contact between young people and their families and friends enables young people to develop and sustain positive relationships with those people who are important to them. Staff encourage the families to feel part of the home and to visit regularly. One parent said 'We visit the home when we want to and he is always happy and well cared for when they visit. The accommodation is like a family home.' The staff team work sensitively and flexibly to promote positive contacts. Specifically tailored contact arrangements are organised wherever possible, according to the needs of those involved, for the benefit of the young people.

Young people progress in developing their independence skills in readiness for adulthood. They learn to develop skills including self-care, cleaning, cooking, managing their money and integrating into the community. They benefit from proactive inter-agency work in regards to young people's transition to adult services. They are supported to play an active role in their transition plans. As a result, young people can express choice about their futures. They feel involved, respected and valued.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in a nurturing environment that provides them with an outstanding standard of care. Positive responses received from young people, parents and other professionals support this view. One parent said 'that from the beginning of the placement, to the end, the quality of care has been exceptional.'

Staff have consistently high aspirations for all young people and place the well-being of young people at the centre of their professional practice.

Staff develop highly positive and constructive relationships with young people which help young people progress in every aspect of their lives. A parent said 'I feel the improvements are due to the strength and quality of the relationships which my son has with his carers. They organise care around the needs of the young people and what young people need and how this can be achieved.'

Young people are respected and valued. The home provides an environment where they can express themselves, regardless of communication needs. They are empowered because they have individualised communication strategies that utilise a range of non-verbal communication methods. Young people have a variety of forums to communicate their needs, including regular young person's meetings and their own Youth Council. The home has a commitment to inclusion. This means young people benefit from an approach that values their participation and promotes their views.

Young people are valued as individuals with unique needs. This is reflected in their care planning which is routinely reviewed and updated. Care plans, placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are individualised, comprehensive, detailed and up to date. Placement planning ensures that wherever possible, young people are involved in contributing to their care. Regular reviews of plans ensure young people receive consistent care and the staff team has clarity to ensure that young people's welfare and safeguarding needs are effectively supported.

Young people receive a children's guide in a variety of formats. This contains comprehensive information on their care, advocacy, contacts and the details for Ofsted and the Children's Rights Director. When complaints are made, they are dealt with in line with the homes policy. Staff and parents advocate on behalf of young people to initiate complaints, wherever necessary. Young people benefit from independent advocacy services regularly visiting the home. Consequently, robust procedures ensure transparency in dealing with complaints and concerns.

Young people receive an outstanding service that clearly focuses on their physical and emotional well-being and health needs. Staff are well informed about each young person's health needs because of up to date and comprehensive health records. Strong links with multi-disciplinary health care services effectively support young people's physical, emotional and psychological needs. Detailed procedures, staff training and continuous auditing ensure correct management of all medication and protect young people's safety.

The continuity and consistency between the school and home enables young people to progress and develop in education. Daily communication, homework support and supporting within school ensure young people progress in their educational achievement from their starting points. Educational achievements and progress are celebrated. This promotes increased self-esteem in young people and provides

motivation for continued engagement.

Staff demonstrate exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies and social work professionals. One professional said 'Everything is done by the book! We trust the provider to the extent that we want the providers to continue to care for him as an adult. Their communication skills are excellent.'

Young people benefit from living in a spacious, well-furnished and comfortable home. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their preferences and individuality. Communal areas offer space for young people to socialise or have privacy. The home is in a rural area. It has large grounds, outdoor play areas and play equipment. The home also keeps some animals that the young people help to care for. This means young people thrive in a homely and stimulating environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The safety of young people is outstanding. Young people are safe and feel safe in this home. The safely maintained environment ensures that young people can explore their surroundings, whilst remaining secure. Parents and professionals are confident that the service consistently safeguards and keeps their young people safe.

Young people report no incidents of bullying within the home. A high staff ratio to young people ensures excellent monitoring which reduces the likelihood of bullying. The home provides an environment of care and support where bullying is not tolerated.

The home has excellent policies and procedures for safeguarding practices, which are implemented by a knowledgeable and well-trained staff team. Staff have a clear and detailed understanding on their role in the safeguarding process. The Registered Manager has well-established links with the local safeguarding teams and Local Authority Designated officer who work together for the protection of vulnerable young people.

Young people's safety and well-being is promoted through highly detailed and regularly reviewed risk assessments, which are implemented through stringent, work practices. This ensures that risks and vulnerabilities are identified and managed. Risk assessments are proportionate to enable young people to experience new challenges and develop new skills while remaining safe. Staff are highly knowledgeable about young people and ensure that safety is the paramount consideration.

The complex and challenging behaviours of some young people necessitate creative safeguarding practice to minimise risks. A social worker said 'they tune into levels of ability and make sure structured routines meet complex needs, which means behaviours become more stable.' Consequently, young people develop a strong sense of safety and well-being because of proactive and flexible safeguarding

practice.

Behaviour management is a key strength of the home. Consistent boundaries and clear expectations promote positive behaviour in young people. Staff are trained in the use of physical restraint and training is kept up to date. Management and staff have a thorough understanding of situations that may trigger negative behaviours and have an excellent knowledge of the needs of all of the young people in their care. Consequently, there is minimum use of physical intervention, which is used as a last resort and to safeguard young people. Strong monitoring processes are utilised to identify patterns and trends. This ensures continual evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions. Consequently young people are being safeguarded as practice is safe and under continuous scrutiny.

The organisation's effective recruitment procedures enable the careful selection and recruitment of staff. Robust recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure the protection of young people from potential harm.

The home is safe and well maintained. The home has a continual programme of maintenance, which ensures timely repair and remedial work. Health and safety checks, including fire equipment and drills, are current and environmental risks assessments are in place. External contractors are quality assured, therefore ensuring the highest standards of safety for staff and young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home places a priority in achieving excellent outcomes for the young people. A very experienced Registered Manager provides strong leadership to a committed and knowledgeable management team. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Internal and external quality assurance processes identify weaknesses, promote improvement and guide development. In addition, young people's progress is monitored and analysed using information collated from different disciplines operating within the home such as health, education and care. This ensures that care is flexible to promote the best possible outcomes for each young person.

The management team is reflective about care practice, with a continuous focus on improving the quality and delivery of care. A detailed development plan provides clear targets to enhance what the home has to offer. Strengths and potential shortfalls of the service are clearly understood and addressed within planning.

Staff are very well supported, through regular and reflective supervision and appraisal. They undertake a range of training to support them in their role, including safeguarding, restraint, food hygiene, and first aid. All staff are encouraged to attend training that will broaden their knowledge and enable them to meet the specific

needs of individual young people. All staff are supported to undertake a suitable qualification having completed their induction period. Consequently, a well- trained and appropriately qualified staff team ensure high standards of care to meet the individual needs of the young people.

The Registered Manager has systems in place to notify relevant agencies, including Ofsted, of significant events to ensure the protection of young people by multi-agency decision-making. Notifications are timely, detailed and updates are provided which provide clarity on the outcome of significant events. This enables Ofsted to effectively review how the home is safeguarding young people.

Young people's case files are up to date and provide a comprehensive record of events and progress. The files are safely and securely stored to support young people's privacy and confidentiality.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at this inspection. The staff and management team continues to demonstrate a high commitment to delivering exceptional standards of care to children and young people.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.