

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	11/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC020193
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered person	The SENAD Group Limited
Registered person address	Senad Group Ltd, 1 St. Georges House, Vernon Gate, DERBY, DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual	Dr Mark Flynn
Registered manager	Mr David Hancox
Inspector	Miss Rachel Griffiths and Ms Cathey Moriarty

Inspection date	11/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC020193

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is providing a good, and in some respects an outstanding, service to children and young people.
- Children and young people present as extremely happy and settled. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff. Staff are very caring and have a genuine attachment to those they care for.
- Children and young people are provided with good quality individualised care from an experienced and committed staff team. The staff skills and knowledge in respect of each child's or young person's complex needs are enhanced by the support of a multidisciplinary team of experts who are based within the home.
- The home's child-centred approach ensures that vulnerable children and young people who have significant communication and learning difficulties are able to express their views in creative ways in respect of all aspects of their care.
- Detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans underpin safe practice.
- Staff are driven by an enthusiastic, motivated and aspirational manager. They feel well supported, and morale within the home is good. Staff share the manager's vision to significantly improve the life experiences of children and young people.
- Managers and leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have clear plans for continuous improvements to the service.
- Some areas are identified for further improvement. These are in relation to keeping parents informed of significant incidents without delay and in relation to some documentary shortfalls. These are matters which are not having a direct impact on the safety and well-being of children and young people.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must: (2)(c) ensure that each child's relevant plans are followed, with particular reference to local authority care plans.	14/08/2015

Recommendations

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

- The registered person is to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons, with particular reference to sharing information with parents without delay. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- All records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry, with particular reference to risk assessments being updated. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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 is owned by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/09/2014	CH - Full	Good
16/07/2014	CH - Full	Inadequate
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Children and young people make very good progress in all areas of their development as a result of the consistent, focused and highly individualised support they receive from a multidisciplinary staff team. One parent said: 'My son has progressed so much. He is really happy, he is interacting more with his peers, he is benefiting from excellent routines and he is learning more independence skills.' Children and young people experience stability. They grow in confidence and they develop life skills. Consequently, their life experiences are enhanced. A key strength of this home is the positive relationship children and young people have with staff, who know them well. Staff are committed, caring, skilled and experienced. A young person described them as 'clever and kind', and a parent commented: 'The staff love our son to bits. No matter which staff members are on shift, they know him well and understand him.' Positive relationships, alongside high levels of emotional warmth, praise and encouragement, provide a solid foundation from where children and young people can progress and develop in all areas of their lives. Children and young people make excellent educational progress. School and care staff work closely together with in-house experts to build on children's and young people's strengths. They encourage children and young people to meet and exceed their targets, whether that is inside or outside the classroom. Staff celebrate their achievements, resulting in raised self-esteem and feeling valued. A high proportion of the children and young people have significant communication difficulties. Staff are good advocates for them. They continually ensure that the views of children and young people are ascertained in respect of the day-to-day running of the home. Staff are creative and use a range of communication tools, such as Makaton, photographs, symbols, pictures, gestures, social stories and the use of an iPad to help children and young people express themselves and understand the world around them. Children and young people have been instrumental in decisions being made regarding renovations and redecoration of the home. Both verbal and non-verbal children and young people have also been part of the interview panel for prospective new employees. The excellent levels and methods of communication have a positive impact as it helps them to feel respected and this raises their self-esteem and confidence. Children and young people benefit physically, emotionally and socially from engaging in individualised leisure pursuits in the local community. However, in	

recent months, there have been occasions when activities have had to be cancelled due to staff absences. Swift actions taken by the Registered Manager to prevent this becoming a regular feature have been effective. As a result, children and young people continue to have fun and have the opportunity to stay fit and healthy. This impacts positively on their physical and emotional health and enables them to feel an integral part of their community.

Although the nature of young people's learning difficulties will prevent them from living totally independently in the future, programmes of work undertaken ensure that their life skills are maximised. A social worker said in respect of a young person: 'He is doing really well in developing his life and independence skills. He has matured into a young adult.' Transitions into and out of the home are very well planned. The planning is undertaken jointly with parents and placing authorities. Social stories used to explain changes and transitions are effective in ensuring that children and young people are involved with and understand their transitions. This gives them the best opportunity to settle and feel more secure when they move to a new environment.

Relationships between children and young people and their families improve as a result of the support provided by members of staff. A parent commented: 'The quality of our family relationships has improved. We visit every week and have quality time together. The staff have helped us through a difficult time. I take my hat off to them.' Children and young people benefit greatly from these improved relationships in terms of their sense of identity. It also provides an opportunity for them to have a solid support network in the longer term.

A programme of refurbishment is well underway, resulting in the home presenting as far more homely and welcoming than it was previously. Children's and young people's bedrooms are personalised to individual needs and tastes. Communal areas are decorated with children's and young people's artwork and photographs of activities undertaken by them. This reminds them of their achievements, helps them to feel valued and further improves their self-esteem.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Children's and young people's sense of safety is promoted by high levels of supervision, consistent routines and the trusting relationships they have with staff. An emotionally and physically safe environment provides children and young	

people with a secure base from where they can develop.

Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding policies. They all receive comprehensive training in this area. Staff understand how disabled children and young people are particularly vulnerable due to their communication difficulties, significant personal care needs and reliance on staff. The Registered Manager and designated safeguarding lead investigate safeguarding allegations thoroughly and communicate effectively with the Local Authority Designated Officer. This reduces the risk of abuse within the home.

Children and young people are helped and protected as a result of staff knowing them well, high staffing ratios and the implementation of comprehensive risk management plans. Staff undertake direct work with children and young people in order to reduce risks faced by them. For example, work is undertaken in respect of road safety, self-injurious behaviour, in respect of understanding risks associated with strangers and in relation to e-safety. Regular multi-agency meetings to monitor and review the progress children and young people are making in relation to their specific vulnerabilities and difficulties ensure that risk management plans remain effective. As a result, children and young people receive the most appropriate support services to meet their specific needs.

Children and young people going missing from the home is a risk that has emerged since the last inspection. As a result of staff having a good understanding of the home's procedures, swift action was taken to locate and safeguard a young person who went missing. The review and implementation of an updated risk management plan and preventative strategies in relation to going missing have been effective in preventing further incidents occurring.

Challenging and complex behaviours are well managed. A parent said: 'My son's behaviour is unpredictable but staff understand and are on hand. His behaviour is improving. He is far more stable.' Strategies used to de-escalate challenging behaviour are effective. Physical intervention is used appropriately and proportionately in order to ensure children's and young people's safety. Incidents are well recorded, and children, young people and staff are debriefed. The effectiveness of interventions is analysed by the Registered Manager and behaviour management manager to ensure that practice in this area remains effective.

Staff are safely recruited to ensure that unsuitable people do not have the opportunity to work with children and young people.

One shortfall in relation to the updating of a young person's risk assessment has been identified during this inspection. This was a recording rather than a safeguarding issue. Information in respect of a new risk had not been transferred from the updated care plan into the young person's essential information. While not impacting on the safety of this young person, this would have the potential to do so should new staff commence work and need quick reference to the major

risks associated with this particular young person.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager has been in post as the manager of this home for the last 10 years. He is suitably experienced and qualified. The home is very well managed by a committed and enthusiastic management team. They lead by example. A member of staff said: 'The managers are awesome across the board. Any problems, they listen, I feel valued as a member of staff.' Despite staff being under pressure due to staff absence at the present time, morale remains high. Staff have been working overtime to cover the shortfall. This ensures that staffing ratios remain high and that children and young people continue to be supported by a consistent and cohesive staff team. This in turn results in children and young people consistently receiving high standards of care. Staff undertake a comprehensive programme of training which ensures that they are competent in meeting the individual needs of children and young people. In addition to mandatory training, staff participate in specific training delivered by the home's psychotherapist which is tailored to the individual needs of the children and young people currently living in the home. A member of staff commented: 'We get to learn about young people's backgrounds and to understand their specific behaviours.' Staff also receive regular formal supervision. As a consequence of the training and support provided to staff, children and young people benefit greatly from the care provided to them by staff who are equipped with skills to meet their needs. The home fulfils its commitment to children and young people as outlined in its Statement of Purpose. It provides clear and accurate information to parents and placing authorities about the care and services the home offers. Children and young people are also provided with good information about the home via individually written young people's guides. These are put together uniquely for each child or young person, taking into account their level of understanding and style of communication. Managers and leaders effectively monitor the progress children and young people make while living in the home. Data in respect of their progress and patterns of behaviour is collected and analysed. This ensures that care plans remain effective	

and that changes are instigated to improve the quality and effectiveness of these plans. The management team is thus able to demonstrate very clearly the impact and value living at the home is having on children's and young people's lives and how their life chances are improving.

Multi-agency working is a strength of this home. Some parents and professionals provide extremely positive feedback in respect of the levels of communication regarding children and young people. However, this is not consistent. Some parents report a delay in significant information being shared with them on occasions. While not impacting on the safety and well-being of children and young people, this has the potential to impact on the effectiveness of partnership working.

Children's and young people's case files hold lots of information and evidence of some excellent work being undertaken. The home's placement plans are comprehensive and provide a coherent picture of the care being provided. However, some case files do not contain local authority care plans as required by regulation. Although the Registered Manager has chased outstanding documents, having no up-to-date local authority care plan prevents care and interventions being informed by each child's or young person's relevant local authority plan.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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