

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC030367
Inspector	Clare Davies
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered manager	Kelly Ann Lawson
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	18/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	The home has not been subject to any enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good children's home with some outstanding features. Personalised care planning is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team. Young people have access to a range of adults with skills and expertise who place the well-being of young people at the centre of their practice. The staff teams across the organisation work well together to secure improved outcomes for young people. Effective partnership working with external agencies contributes to high quality care.

Young people feel safe and are positive about the warm support that staff provide. They feel the rules are fair and understand that they are there to keep them safe. Young people are fully involved in considering their safety and recognising risks posed to themselves and others.

Routine monitoring of the quality of care is thorough and effectively acted upon. Leaders and manager are ambitious for continued improvement. For example, the responsible individual has introduced a new model of practice across the organisation. There is a three year plan to achieve accreditation to this way of working and become a trauma informed organisation.

Minor shortfalls from this inspection relate to the safety of radiators and the need to improve communication with social workers and parents.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This independent charitable school is also registered as a children's home. The school follows the principles of care and education developed by Rudolf Steiner. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of 42 children and young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties or complex needs. The accommodation for children and young people is provided across seven houses located on or near to the school site.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
05/11/2013	Full	good
26/03/2013	Interim	good progress
10/09/2012	Full	good

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):

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel. In particular, ensure that radiators do not reach a temperature that could cause an injury (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that the registered person works with the responsible authority to ensure effective sharing of information held in the homes' records about the child and information held in responsible authorities' records. In particular, ensure that responsible authorities and parents/carers are informed promptly of significant events that involve their children. (NMS 22.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people who have experienced considerable disruption in their lives make good progress while living at this children's home. They benefit from a motivated and caring staff team who provide support and guidance. The nurturing environment enables young people to form and maintain attachments with adults and their peer group.

Young people are valued and respected as individuals. In the group living arrangements they have their personal needs met well. Young people benefit from access to a range of professionals at this home to provide, care, education, health care and therapeutic intervention.

The health of young people improves through well organised and consistent approaches to their often complex health needs. Young people receive guidance and information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and understanding the dangers of smoking, alcohol and substance misuse. The management of medication, diet and exercise are incorporated into daily routines to promote their well-being. Where young people have missed out on childhood health checks they are supported to attend medical reviews. This provides them with a medical history and current assessment to inform them on how to take responsibility for their own health. This is significant as they become older and competent to make personal decisions. Young people benefit from the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) as well as access to the school's own consultant psychiatrist.

Dental care is an important feature of young people's well-being and many have not routinely visited a dentist prior to this placement. Young people are supported to receive dental treatment through staff being creative and persistent. For example an appointment arranged at 07:30 avoids a young person building up their anxiety throughout the day waiting for a later appointment. Young people are re-assured sufficiently to be able to have extensive dental treatment. This success improves the quality of their teeth, raises their self-esteem and enables them to improve their oral hygiene to prevent further dental problems.

Young people generally enjoy attending the provider's school and attendance is at 90% this term. This level of attendance is good considering many young people were non school attenders prior to this placement. Young people make steady progress with their academic attainment and are provided with broad options to obtain formal qualifications with awarding bodies such as, GCSE, BTEC and NVQ. Opportunities are enhanced through the provision of work experience, particularly at the café that is located on the school site and provides a service to the public. Here young people study food hygiene, hospitality and cooking. Young people are prepared for independent living in the residential accommodation. Smaller houses provide an

opportunity for up to three young people to live together with reduced supervision to enable them to manage daily living tasks themselves. This provides an excellent opportunity to learn new skills and be supported with mistakes in preparation for moving on to independent (or supported) living.

Young people have a voice and are actively encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions. Formal group meetings occur at the beginning and end of each school day, inviting young people to share how they are feeling and any issues they wish to raise. More recently the structure of these community meetings has changed to focus on emotions and the selection of a goal for the day. This inclusive practice with care and education staff promotes working together, a key component of the new model of trauma informed care.

Young people engage in, and try out, lots of different activities. These can be individual, such as horse riding, or in groups to local leisure facilities such as a swimming pool or skate park. Young people benefit from regular outings, holidays and visits to places of interest. These events offer additional learning opportunities and enhance young people's social skills with their peer group and members of the public.

Quality of care

outstanding

A strength of this home is the commitment of all staff, regardless of their role. The range of skills and level of professionalism across the organisation contribute to an outstanding quality of care. Care staff, teaching staff, therapists and support staff understand their individual roles and collective purpose. Leaders and managers provide clear direction in order to promote high standards. Young people recognise that staff want the very best for them and have high aspirations for their personal development.

Young people benefit from the exceptional standard of personalised care they receive from dedicated and competent staff. The staff are skilled at responding to and promoting a diverse range of individual needs amongst group living. The safety and warmth created in the house groups leads to the development of good relationships between young people and staff, built on trust. This is significant given the experiences young people have had of adults letting them down in their earlier childhood. The strength of relationships enables young people to have confidence in raising any matters of concern.

Young people know how to make a complaint and have done so about issues they consider unfair. Leaders and managers are readily approached by young people in person and through email contact. This is supported by a statement from a young person in an Ofsted survey. 'We get a lot of support and staff are always here when we need them even when there is a lot going on. They try to make us feel better and safe, senior managers are also around in school and house groups to discuss

problems.'

Young people are routinely consulted and involved in decision making. This ensures they contribute to their care planning and wider decisions involved with group living. Young people get involved with choosing menus, activities, decoration and developments in the home. Significant events are celebrated for the individual and the whole school. Celebration day marks the end of each summer term where achievements are recognised and rewarded. September 2014 marked a special occasion, the 60th anniversary of the school, and the official opening of some new facilities was undertaken by a member of the royal family. Photographs and a newsletter portray the excitement of this special event for the school community.

Staff demonstrate a high level of emotional warmth in their interactions with young people and consistently seek to uncover the reasons underlying the behaviour rather than focusing on what is presented to them. They effectively address the challenges that young people present and do this through a multi-disciplinary approach involving health professionals, education staff and therapists. A team of therapists offer individual and group sessions, a dedicated building ensures that young people have the emotional space to explore their feelings through therapy. Young people make gradual and sustained progress in understanding and managing their behaviour, increasing their self-regulation.

Effective partnerships with external agencies secure the support young people need to make progress in every aspect of their lives. There are strong links with agencies such as the police, the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB), CAMHS, local authority commissioners and community health services. Positive survey responses from professionals include statements such as, 'the education and therapy available are of the absolute highest quality, this has had a brilliant impact on my allocated young person and I am grateful to the school for their work'.

The seven houses are unique in character. They are decorated and maintained to a good standard, providing homely and welcoming environments. The food provided is of exceptionally good quality. Local produce is sourced where possible and a cook in each of the larger group houses provides nutritious meals. This arrangement means that care staff can maximise their time with young people instead of undertaking domestic tasks such as preparing and cooking meals.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Leaders and managers promote safeguarding to be at the heart of this organisation. A demonstration of this commitment led to inviting the local authority designated officer (LADO) to undertake an audit of safeguarding systems and practices. This visit in September 2014 identified sound policies and procedures and no major shortfalls. Advice given to improve in some areas has been implemented resulting in staff being clearer about when to refer to the allegations management procedure.

The LADO confirms that leaders and managers report appropriately and seek advice regarding any suspicion or concerns they may be aware of. Recruitment procedures were assessed as being very robust and this inspection confirms this. Additional checks of suitability are undertaken when references received are minimal. This approach to safer recruitment is thorough and provides another layer of protection for young people.

Young people report that they feel safe and they are fully aware of measures in place to protect them. 'The rules are there to keep us safe', reported one young person. Young people are actively involved in discussing internet safety and use of mobile telephones. This often leads to completing their own risk assessment for the use of these media. Successful completion of an e-safety course is required before young people are permitted to have mobile telephones. There are many forums to support young people in keeping themselves and others safe. This may be individual support or with others such as the internet safety or relationship groups. Good partnership working with the police involves discussions with young people about the legal consequences of some behaviours. This informs young people of the possible outcomes if inappropriate behaviour continues and enables them to develop a positive and respectful relationship with the police.

The designated lead person for child protection at this school is suitably trained having attended 6 days accredited training with a national children's charity in order to deliver training to the staff. In addition to refresher training, in August 2014 all staff were issued with revised guidance that includes references to a diverse range of issues impacting on the protection of children and young people such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and trafficking. To support staff to act swiftly and appropriately they have a safeguarding information card, a quick guide to the procedures. This is the size of a credit card and therefore easy to carry at all times. The designated lead person is a member of the education and learning sub group of the LSCB. This level of multi-agency working ensures that new developments, locally and nationally are quickly shared and cascaded to all the staff.

There have been incidents of young people going missing. When this occurs staff actively look for them as they recognise their vulnerabilities alone within the community and the wider risks. Action has been taken to reduce such incidents through liaison with the police and holding multi-agency meetings for those young people who go missing several times. These interventions have been effective and the number of incidents has reduced. Comprehensive records provide details when young people go missing from home or school. The manager has a clear picture of frequency, the triggers to going missing and the length of time. This information is used to form strategies to prevent young people placing themselves at risk.

Records relating to behaviour across both the education and care provision are captured on a web-based behaviour management system. For monitoring and analysis this system is capable of providing in-depth reports and graphs to illustrate

patterns and trends. Key senior staff monitor this system to ensure the quality of information being entered and to review the management of the presenting behaviour. At times the number of incidents where physical intervention is used appears high for certain individuals. The quality of the web-based system is such that it can be interrogated to explain why physical intervention was required and effectively used to employ strategies to reduce its use. Leaders and managers are actively looking at restraint reduction. One method used is to share the data in a chart form with young people to explore alternative ways of managing their behaviour.

Young people were asked to comment on the use of physical intervention in a survey for Ofsted and no concerns were raised. In fact young people report with a very clear understanding: 'I have only been restrained once and that is because I was putting myself and others at risk, staff don't just restrain for no reason.' 'Restraints are done to keep me safe and not smash windows or self-harm.' Generally behaviour management is through praise, reward and positive role modelling by the staff. Consequences for negative behaviour may involve missing out on an activity or making a contribution to the house such as tidying up or doing a household chore. Letters of apology encourage young people to consider how their actions may have affected others. A social care professional reported that they were, 'very impressed overall with the way staff managed some challenging situations, very calmly and without fuss'.

Regular health and safety checks occur through the monitoring systems and from a designated health and safety officer who routinely visits each house. Staff and young people are aware of what action to take on hearing the fire alarm; this is practiced throughout the year. During the inspection one house had two radiators that were extremely hot causing a potential risk of burning if touched.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager is experienced in management with adults and young people. She has been in this post for 18 months. The manager is suitably qualified in social work and maintains her professional development. To reflect this large service, the management structure has a senior team with delegated areas of responsibility. Each large house group has a care supervisor to manage the young people and staff team within that house and report to the Registered Manager. This provision is effectively managed by the Registered Manager who is ably supported by a senior management team including the head teacher and the chief executive.

The two requirements identified at the last inspection relating to safeguarding procedures and the review of placement plans with incorporated risk assessments have now been addressed. There have been significant developments in safeguarding practice at this home as it strives for continual improvement. The leaders and managers keep up to date with new legislation and practice

developments in the care and education of young people. The new model of trauma informed care is a prime example of this forward thinking.

This a reflective organisation that seeks to resolve any concerns or complaints and consider where changes may be required. For example, as a result of a requirement from the last inspection, the school invited the LADO to review the safeguarding systems and procedures. There are strong monitoring systems to review the quality of care for young people. The manager provides quarterly reports to Ofsted that demonstrate very good analysis and evaluation of information. This level of reporting contributes to a development plan, identifying strengths and areas for development. Additional monitoring is undertaken by the independent person reporting under Regulation 33 and visits by social workers and commissioning teams from many different local authorities. Consequently, leaders and managers are used to high levels of scrutiny from external visitors.

Local authorities report positively on this provision. Parents and social workers are generally very satisfied, with comments such as, 'easily one of the best provisions for children I have ever worked with', and 'I am extremely satisfied with the care and education that my child is receiving'. One consistent theme for an area to improve upon is communication. Comments from parents and social workers indicate that they have not always been informed promptly about significant events.

Young people's records are well ordered and up to date. Information is readily available and contributes to understanding the background, progress and needs of the young people. Young people are encouraged to be involved with record keeping and more recently to produce their own safety plan as they are introduced to the new model of sharing feelings through community meetings and identifying who they can ask for help to meet their daily goal. Documents are produced with good use of colour print, photographs and graphics. This ensures they are attractive and engaging for young people in a child-friendly way.

A dedicated training department ensures that staff develop their skills and knowledge. New staff are supported with a structured induction programme and a mentor. All staff receive regular supervision and a range of training delivered through group sessions and e-learning modules. Staff benefit from training and advice from trained people within the organisation. Senior staff are suitably qualified and accredited to deliver training on behaviour management and safeguarding. The nurse and therapists are knowledgeable in their field of expertise and accessible to staff. Having such a multi-disciplinary team employed by the school enables easy access to advice and information to improve outcomes for young people. Care staff are working towards the formal level three qualification: at the time of the inspection 54% had achieved this. The training department is monitoring this progress to ensure that staff complete this qualification within the required timescale.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

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.