

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15/06/2012
Inspector	Helen Walker / Ann-Marie Born
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	22/02/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This non-maintained residential special school which is a registered children's home, can accommodate up to 43 children and young people with learning and physical disabilities and complex health care needs.

Children and young people are accommodated in two units on site

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**.

Overall the home provides good quality of care and the outcomes for young people are excellent. Young people benefit from a holistic approach to their individual, diverse and often complex health and care needs. A consistent, well-qualified and experienced staff team have warm and caring relationships with young people. Staff understand and are familiar with young people's daily routines. This helps to ensure young people have access to a wide range of healthcare and educational support to meet their specific needs.

Young people have many opportunities to develop friendships with their peers. According to young people's individual preferences they participate in a great deal of social inclusion. The home has very positive relationships in the wider community which promote and develop young people's social skills. Young people are significantly enabled to reach their full potential. Young people say they feel safe living at the home. Most of all they say they enjoy the food, contact with their friends and the activities at the home.

The manager provides effective leadership and recognises the strengths and weaknesses in the home. This enables her to identify areas for improvement to ensure good standards are maintained.

Some shortfalls have been found as a result of this inspection. These relate to monitoring, missing information and the quality of record keeping in the home and

young people's files. The views of parents, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers are not regularly sought. The home does not routinely contact placing authorities to ensure social workers visit at the required frequency. The shortfalls do not have a significant impact on the welfare of young people.

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
34 (2001)	ensure that in relation to Regulation 34, a copy of the monitoring report is completed at six monthly intervals, sent to Ofsted within 28 days of its completion and identifies any trends and issues of concern arising from monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 and Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 3.14)	13/07/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure the views of the child's family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer are sought regularly on the child's care (NMS 1.4)
- maintain a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on those working for the children's home, in particular the date and level of Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure and verbal reference verification (NMS 16.3 and 16.4)
- ensure that if a child is not visited by their social worker at the frequency expected by Regulations, or within a reasonable time following a request for a visit originated by a child, this is raised at the child's next review (NMS 25.6)
- ensure records are maintained in a legible and clear way, in particular details of medication taken off site and returned to the home. (NMS 22.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's individual and diverse needs are exceptionally well met by staff who are familiar with their routine and care needs. Extensive links with a wide range of

health professionals enable young people's health needs to be met. The on-site nurses and therapists are dynamic and innovative to involve and support young people to keep good health. For example, young people participate in hydrotherapy, rebound therapy and have excellent assistance to achieve independence and mobility.

An array of participation and consultation methods means young people's views are heard. Their opinions are highly valued and make a difference. Young people have significant input to improve the home and their care. This includes their choice about meals, bedroom decoration, activities and celebrations such as birthdays. Young people's dietary, cultural and religious needs are fully taken account of and involve the young people, parents and social workers.

Young people have excellent school attendance and very effective support to enable them to achieve to their maximum educational potential. The home provides many learning opportunities and actively encourages young people's involvement in a range of interests. A comprehensive enrichment programme offers young people some fantastic, varied and meaningful opportunities. For example, some young people have work experience in a commercial environment and successfully exhibit and sell their art work.

Transition planning is something the home does really well. Staff successfully support young people to move to adult provision. Young people confirm their positive involvement in the transition process. They have continuity of care and maintain friendships with those important to them. Young people also benefit from staff who actively promote contact with their family.

Quality of care

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

Young people significantly gain from a holistic service that meets their individual complex health and care needs. Their health is well promoted through effective access to health professionals. A wide range of health staff are employed at the home. This includes; nurses, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Staff are competent and enjoy their work with young people. Staff said 'I want every day to be their best day for them and that they can learn something, even if it is just choosing which toy and I know that.'

Staff have a thorough understanding of the medication procedures so that this is competently administered. However, record keeping to show when medication is taken off site and returned is unclear. For example, at times when young people have hospital and home stays and their medication goes with them. This means staff do not always have reliable information to confirm medication is properly accounted for.

All young people are in education and most attend the provider's school on-site. Staff are enthusiastic and they effectively support and enable young people to attend

school and reach their potential. Staff approach was seen to be warm and very caring. This supports young people to develop a sense of security and feelings of belonging at the home. A parent said the team are 'absolutely brilliant' and they have 'no worries' about their child's care. Parents and social workers confirm the staff maintain good contact with them and keep them informed about young people's progress. However, parents, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officer's views are not regularly sought to further inform and improve care for young people.

Staff are familiar with and follow young people's positive behaviour management strategies and placement plans. They have a thorough understanding of young people's communication methods and their overall needs. Individual pen pictures of young people enable staff to have up-to-date information about young people's current needs. This helps to ensure young people are cared for properly.

Parents confirm they have input into their child's care and attend their review meetings at the home. This gives them an opportunity to comment on their child's care. Generally, young people have an allocated representative from their placing authority who visits them at the home. However, the home is not always proactive to promote regular visits from social workers to young people. This means young people's welfare is not routinely monitored in accordance with regulations. Professionals involved with the service say young people are well looked after and their individual differences are recognised. Parents say there are many opportunities for their child to interact with their peers both in and outside of the home. For example, trips to the theatre and tenpin bowling are organised. The home has strong and significant links in the wider community and staff positively develop young people's social inclusion.

Young people's views are actively sought through a range of communication aids. They have support to express their feelings about safety and personal choices. This includes choices about activities, clothes and personalisation of their bedroom. A social worker said staff had made 'a huge difference' to a child's ability to communicate.

Young people live in homely accommodation which is pleasant, comfortable and very well maintained. Social workers said the many facilities such as the specialist equipment and hydrotherapy pool are very good and recent refurbishment greatly improves the home environment. Extensive grounds provide young people with suitable areas for safe play and leisure activities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are looked after by staff who receive child protection training specific to vulnerable young people with disabilities. Staff are confident to raise any issue of concern and understand the provider's whistleblowing procedure. This supports staff to protect young people from harm.

A number of young people engaged in a very informative 'talking mats' communication session during the inspection. This was facilitated by a speech and language therapist and enabled young people to express their views about care and safety. Young people clearly indicate they feel safe and happy living in the home. Parents and professionals say they feel staff keep young people safe. Young people have individual risk assessments specific to their needs which staff follow to promote their well-being and lessen or eliminate risk of harm. For example, trips out in the community.

Young people benefit from living in premises that are maintained in a safe condition. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken of the premises. Equipment used in the home and by young people is routinely serviced to promote a safe home environment. Staff are familiar with fire evacuation procedures and know the action to take in the event of a fire in the home.

Young people have not been missing from the home. Staff know the safeguarding procedures to follow should this occur. Bullying is not an issue in the home at this time. Staff are vigilant to maintain a high level of supervision and understand to implement the home's comprehensive anti-bullying procedures.

Staff actively promote the well-being of young people and physical restraint is not used in the home. A range of risk assessments help staff to manage young people's behaviour safely and effectively. This includes training to support young people by using de-escalation and redirection techniques as needed.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe. However, checks such as verbal confirmation of written references and the level of Criminal Records Bureau disclosure are not always noted on file to show they have been verified.

Leadership and management

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

The manager is effective in her work and supports staff to provide a stable home environment with outstanding outcomes for young people. Young people's case records and those of the home are generally in good order but are not routinely checked to ensure all paperwork is up-to-date and complete. The manager's carries out a six monthly review of the quality of care in the home. However, this does not show monitoring of records kept at the home to ensure compliance with the homes policies.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent and very enthusiastic staff team. There is minimal staff turnover which enables continuity of care for young people from staff they know. Staff understand young people's individual personalities and needs. They recognise their times of upset and when reassurance is needed. Staff shift handovers are comprehensive and very informative for the next staff team on duty. This means staff have current information about the welfare of young

people. Young people were seen to respond very positively to staff. This includes young people smiling and laughing in the company of staff.

Staff are appropriately qualified or working towards a relevant qualification to support them in their work with young people. Staff receive formal supervision from management which covers the care of young people and their professional development. Staff have access to a wide range of training to equip them with skills to care for young people's more specific needs. This includes training relating to young people's dignity, bereavement, communication skills and moving and handling.

Various improvements have occurred as a result of the requirement and recommendations made at the last inspection. The provider has now formally notified Ofsted of the changes to premises in accordance with regulations. Staff have a better understanding about what constitutes a complaint so that they know how to support and advocate on behalf of young people. Additionally, staff are trained to recognise and deal with indications or incidents of bullying to eliminate this type of behaviour. Risk assessments of the home environment are regularly carried out so that risks are minimised or eliminated. For example, the call system leads are shorter so that they are no longer a hazard to young people.

The home has a relevant Statement of Purpose which describes the different aspects of the home and how it operates on a day-to-day basis.

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.