

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035518
Inspection date	11/01/2012
Inspector	Robert Curr
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	23/03/2011
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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 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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is owned and managed by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide both short breaks and longer-term care to children and young people with complex disabilities and sensory impairment who are aged from seven years to 17 years. The home forms part of a school campus. The school is inspected separately by Ofsted.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

This service provides high-quality care for young people with autism and associated moderate to severe learning difficulties. Young people benefit and make exceptional progress from personalised and well-planned care based on comprehensive assessment of their individual needs. The young people receive excellent care in a friendly and welcoming home.

The provision of care contributes to significant improvements in the development of social behaviours, independence and personal skills. Young people benefit from improved outcomes in education, health and skills development. They benefit from outstanding relationships with staff and each other. There is a clear and effective focus on the importance of young people's rights, choice, privacy and fulfilment. Young people's views and opinions on their care are actively sought, valued and acted upon.

Young people develop and thrive as they are protected from harm by excellent safeguarding procedures. They are cared for by competent and well-trained staff. All the unit managers are energetic and committed. They implement effective monitoring processes to provide continuous quality assurance.

One recommendation has been raised relating to young people contributing further to the independent monitoring visits.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the young people in the home are regularly involved in contributing to the independent person's visits. (NMS 21.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from a service provision which recognises and values them as young people with diverse individual needs. Placement and transition planning is fully inclusive of their health, social care and education needs. The planning of placements fully includes parents and endeavours to ensure that young people's wishes, feelings and needs are sought and acted upon.

Young people grow in confidence because they and their parents are fully consulted in all aspects of care provision and service delivery. This leads to a transparency of provision which enables young people and their parents to express their views and, if necessary, seek support to make a complaint. Young people participate in reviewing their care through a variety of forums and methods. This gives young people experience in participation and reflects inclusivity in contributing to their own care plans.

Young people develop socially and emotionally as they are encouraged to develop relationships with each other and learn to behave within clear boundaries. Young people have and enjoy excellent relationships with their key workers, other care staff and educational professionals.

Young people benefit from a wide range of educational opportunities. They thrive and develop because there is a seamless approach to social and education provision. All social care and education staff are consistent in daily liaison to communicate and update the needs of the young people. Both social and education staff contribute to planning for the young people. Young people are offered opportunities to learn about the wider community and current issues through play, trips out and activities. Young people benefit from a committed multi-disciplinary team who work in partnership to meet their individual needs. They grow in confidence as they are consistently congratulated on their achievements. All young people keep a 'Wow' book that includes photographs and social stories about the experiences they have enjoyed.

Young people benefit from significant improvements in their health as they receive a service where their health promotion is of paramount importance. The quality of care and outcomes achieved are maximised with the inclusion of doctors, nurses and a social care team who understand the specific medical and physical needs of the young people. Formal processes and procedures are in place to ensure a rigorous approach to the meeting of medical needs. Young people benefit from a proactive approach to including them, as far as possible, in having their health care needs met. Young people's physical and emotional health is excellently promoted and monitored under the supervision of medically-trained practitioners and with an appropriately-trained and skilled social care team.

Young people benefit from an environment which provides space and a diverse range of activities. The buildings provide spaces to meet the needs of the young people

within four separate houses. The young people are able to engage in a range of indoor and outdoor activities. This includes active play and more passive play. The resources are diverse and meet the needs of young people who have learning disabilities and challenging behaviours. As a result, young people are able to experience and develop from a wide range of leisure and learning activities.

Quality of care

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

Young people are cared for by a highly-motivated and committed team of staff. As a result, young people are actively engaged in meaningful daily educational provision within the dedicated on-site school. Young people undertake a wide range of leisure activities which are structured and meet the needs of young people who have autism. Opportunities are available within the provision, including a wide variety of active pursuits and more passive activities. The young people are provided with regular opportunities to experience a range of activities, including trips within the local community, trips in the wider community and holidays. This means that the home is actively developing young people's social skills.

Young people are recognised as individuals with unique needs. This is reflected in the care planning framework which is regularly reviewed and updated. The professional staff team has the skills, knowledge and training to fulfil their roles to a high degree. Each young person is diligently cared for in line with their individual placement plans by their key worker and the wider staff team. Communication between staff and other key agencies is very strong and effective. Staff are proactive in ensuring that pertinent information is sought and used to inform care plans, thereby, ensuring the best outcomes for the young people.

Young people thrive and achieve their potential. This is due to the professional staff team's comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the young people's individual needs. The care, education and behaviour management plans are regularly reviewed and monitored by both management and the staff team.

Young people live within an environment where they can express themselves because of the multi-disciplinary commitment to provide and facilitate communication strategies for all young people.

Young people live in well-maintained houses with an on-site, purpose-built school. The provision is well resourced, secure and safe and maintained to a high standard. The facilities on-site include outside play areas, a wooded area, swimming pool and a well-resourced sports hall. Each house provides a comfortable living environment. The houses are spacious and offer space for communal and private time.

Young people's health is fully promoted and protected because there are safe and effective procedures for the storage and administration of medication. Staff are well trained and supervised. The provision has its own dedicated nurse and uses consultant paediatricians who have a good oversight of the health needs of the

young people. Healthy eating is actively encouraged and menus are balanced, taking into account individual preferences and promoting a multi-cultural perspective. The young people are encouraged to be healthy through the inclusion of sporting activities and opportunities to be energetic. This is integrated into a predictable schedule which meets the needs of young people with autism.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The provision has a superb track record with regards to safeguarding children and young people. The emphasis on safeguarding practices and strategies is embedded within the functioning of the service. Young people are protected and safe because the robust policies and procedures are effectively implemented by well-trained and competent staff. Safeguarding strategies and practice are supported by incident report procedures, individual behaviour management and young people's risk assessments. These safeguarding policies include strategies to ensure safeguarding is responsive to the needs of disabled children. The staff team is trained in safeguarding, including training on recognised intervention.

The staff team are clear on their role in the safeguarding process, including systems for whistle blowing. Robust recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure young people are protected from significant harm.

Positive behaviour strategies are developed formally in a comprehensive behaviour support plan, which inform school, social care and associated professionals on the strategies used for individual young people. Positive regard and expressions of praise and encouragement are used universally, both verbally and in non-verbal communication. Positive behaviour is also encouraged according to the individual needs of the young person.

The staff group is trained in managing challenging behaviour specific to young people with complex needs and autism. This includes the use of specific language, body gestures and signals, positive reinforcement, and a predictability and structure to daily routines. Young people's behaviour improves significantly through the observation of individual young people, the identification of triggers to behaviours and then solutions to modify and minimise unwanted and challenging behaviour. The use of physical restraint is variable and dependent on behaviours and risk. It is used as a last resort when a young person is placing themselves or others at risk. As a result of the behaviour management practices, young people are observed to learn to improve in their interaction with staff and each other.

The home has a clear no tolerance approach to bullying irrespective of who the victim or perpetrator may be and any bullying is dealt with immediately. Bullying is not evident within this provision. It is more likely that behavioural incidents with young people may cause unintentional harm. For these occurrences, there are

policies and practices which ensure that the communication of relevant information is exchanged; preventative practices are reviewed and pertinent records updated. Every young person would be supported to exercise the right to raise concerns.

The home has a good missing from care procedure and protocol. Excellent levels of supervision ensure young people are kept safe and do not go missing.

Young people live in a home that provides the appropriate level of security to ensure their safety and well-being. Regular fire, maintenance and equipment checks further promote the safety of young people. The home provides a range of activities, equipment and facilities for groups of young people and some specific to individual young people. As a result, young people's individual needs and preferences are met.

Leadership and management

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

The management of the home is robust, transparent and professional. The Registered Manager has a clear vision for the service provision and is highly motivated and committed. Young people's needs are effectively met because the operation of the provision clearly reflects the aims of the Statement of Purpose. The manager demonstrates ambition for the major development of the service and the care provided for the young people. Young people receive outstanding care from a dedicated and stable staff team. The staff team functions efficiently with clear roles and responsibilities. The staff report feeling very well supported in their role. Staff members receive regular and meaningful supervision which enables them to explore their learning needs and goals. Regular team meetings provide a forum for the staff team to communicate information, review and revise young people's placement plans and function as a well-informed team. Managers meet to oversee the practices and development of the operation of the provision.

Management routinely monitors practice and supports staff. There is a range of excellent monitoring processes throughout service provision; this includes practice in physical interventions, strategies to manage behaviours and safeguarding issues. The policies, procedures and operational practices of the homes are clear, consistent and understood by the wider staff team. The Regulation 33 visits further monitor care practices. However, these reports do not consistently capture the views of young people and their relatives. Further reviews of care practice are reinforced by Regulation 34 reports which identify areas for development and target dates.

The staff and management team demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting diversity and equality in the home. The staff members demonstrate a thorough knowledge of each young person, including their ethnic, religious, social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The service provision recognises the young people as individuals and strives to ensure that the young people receive equality of opportunity. The service provision is to meet the needs of young people who have a learning disability and it does this through promoting a positive view of diversity and disability.

The home demonstrates excellence in record keeping. Information is comprehensive, up to date, individualised and transparent. The management team has implemented systems which ensure that records are monitored and reviewed regularly. Records contribute to an understanding of young people's lives and are up to date and stored securely. All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the Registered Manager of the home to the appropriate authorities and any required action is taken following the incident.

Young people receive exceptional care as a result of well-managed staff practice. There is a constant and consistent ethos for service improvement which centres on the positive outcomes and welfare of young people at all times.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.