

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13/11/2013
Inspector	Michelle Moss
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	29/01/2013
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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. The home also accommodates young people aged over 18. The home forms part of a school campus and the school is inspected separately by Ofsted.

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**.

Children and young people are making remarkable accomplishments since starting their placement in nearly all aspects of their lives. The quality of relationships between children and young people, staff and families is excellent. The caring environment means children and young people feel safe and stay safe.

The Registered Manager is dedicated to ensuring management oversight remains strong and child focused. The creative use of communication means children and young people are afforded opportunities to make choices, have a voice and contribute to decisions that directly affect them. There is a development plan in place and the Registered Manager is clear about the strengths of the service, as well as areas that still need further improvement.

There is one breach in regulation which relates to the recording of restraints. There are also three recommendations, one relating to medication records and two regarding post restraint consultation. None of these shortfalls negatively impact on the welfare or safety of children and 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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume for the purpose of which shall include the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure and the duration of the measure of restraint. (Regulation 17B (3)(f)(4)(A))	13/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure where there has been physical restraint, children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure all children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a relevant adult (NMS 3.17)
- ensure there is a written record of all medication given to children during their placement. (NMS 6.15)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Children and young people are flourishing through the opportunities afforded to them during their time at the home. For example, their educational attainments are described by parents as remarkable from their starting points, especially in their development of communication. This is made possible through the creative and imaginative use of diverse communication aids which mean barriers to learning are reduced or removed.

The level of trust children and young people form with staff means they feel safe, protected and valued. This is visible in the sensitive and caring interaction that takes place from the moment children and young people arrive home from school.

Children and young people are thriving as a result of the daily inspirational and challenging activities on offer. For example, children and young people are enthusiastic in attending after school clubs and their enjoyment in participating in these activities is visible. The support children and young people get from the start of their placement enables them to build up their resilience and self-esteem, which in turn increases confidence to try new things.

Children and young people are excelling as a result of the integrated support. This includes the support they get from the on-site school, nursing services, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy. This wrap around care means children and young people are supported through significant life changes such as puberty and challenges such as transition to adulthood. Equally, these services ensure children and young people's health conditions remain closely monitored and treatment programmes sustained, so that healthy outcomes are maintained.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people are experiencing genuine care from a consistent, stable and trusting care staff team who are committed, well trained and experienced to match individuals' diverse needs.

Children and young people are being afforded excellent opportunities to participate in healthy activities on a nightly basis, which in turn enhances their physical well-being. In addition, they are receiving nutritious meals that are plentiful and take into account individual preferences. Meal times are delightful occasions and offer children and young people an opportunity to engage in wonderful interaction.

Meticulous attention is paid to ensuring medication is administered safely, although there are occasional errors in not sustaining a consistent coding system on medication charts. For instance, different codes can be used when children and young people go on holiday, which is misleading. This slightly hinders keeping a concise record to show children and young people are consistently receiving medication important to their health.

Careful prior consideration of the nature of the child or young person's needs and disabilities, is resulting in a good match process between their needs and the placement. Care plans are also very child centred and regularly reviewed to ensure nothing gets missed, which could impact on the needs of the child or young person.

Opportunities to develop life skills through participating in daily living are integral of everyday life at the home. For example, children and young people are afforded opportunities to assist in preparing and cooking their evening meals. Also, children and young people have access to the wider community which happens on a regular basis. This includes attending external clubs, where networks can be formed beyond the home. Children and young people are particularly fond of a weekly disco held in a local town.

Irrespective of children and young people's culture, age and differences, the warm and caring environment means everyone feels valued. This mutual respect creates a sense of being part of a family. When children's parents visit, they equally find the same sense of warmth and family approach, in which they are made to feel inclusive. Parents describe the care as 'excellent', the staffing to be 'outstanding' and

leadership are viewed as 'terrific'. Social workers report similar positive comments. This includes regarding the child or young person's journey of achievement has a consequence of the fully integrated provision. This has meant children and young people have exceeded expectations in areas of academic achievement, behaviour and in communication. Words such as 'excellent' and 'very good' are common themed words used by professionals describing the service.

The process for dealing with causes of concern up to the level of complaint is fair and transparent. Where parents have used the causes of concern process, they have felt listened to and reassured over the detailed response.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Care staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They have a thorough knowledge of children and young people's vulnerabilities, including risks. Each residential provision is well designed to take into account the privacy, support and sensory needs of children and young people.

All members of staff and volunteers are trained in child protection at levels that reflect their responsibilities. Furthermore, training and written guidance on safer recruitment practice are implemented, to ensure the recruitment and selection process remains meticulous. This ensures that only suitably vetted people can work with children and young people.

The use of detailed guidance on the appropriate use of information technology, such as email, digital cameras and the internet, means children and young people are not placed in any danger or exposed to abuse or exploitation. There are comprehensive risk assessments to help identify any potential dangers to children and young people during activities. These include action plans to help staff to keep children and young people safe.

Incidents of children and young people going missing from care are exceptionally low. Nevertheless, the leadership and management still ensure policies and risk assessments are regularly reviewed. Links with external partners in safeguarding children are secured and good practice recommendations are implemented. These proactive approaches ensure the safeguarding of children remains a top priority.

Extensive monitoring of behaviour trends and patterns are completed through multi-disciplinary meetings. These include the implementing or reviewing of behavioural support plans. As a consequence of this effective partnership working, overall incidents are reducing both in frequency and intensity.

Care staff are skilful in recognising early triggers of potential changes in behaviour and quickly take action to eliminate any impact on the welfare of the child or young person. Techniques such as de-escalation and redirection are well embedded into staff practice and are deployed effectively. This means physical intervention is always

a last resort. However, when restraint is necessary, a new online recording system does not always capture all key information. For example, sometimes the record fails to show clearly how long the actual restraint takes, or fully reports on its effectiveness. Also, children and young people are not routinely offered the opportunity to see a nurse or doctor within 24-hours of being involved in a restraint. Furthermore, the offer of seeing a doctor is not captured anywhere on the record held. Lastly, although there is evidence of the excellent use of diverse communication to help children and young people express views and feelings, this practice has not been fully utilised in securing children and young people's views about restraint. These missed opportunities hinder the home holding key information and reduces children and young people's opportunities to exercise their rights.

The diverse range of accommodation and facilities provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment to enable children and young people to thrive. Particular attention is taken to ensuring fixtures, fittings and furniture remain functional and safe for children and young people to use. There are very effective arrangements in place to ensure buildings are securely maintained to safeguard children from harm. Health and safety including fire safety is given high priority. This includes children and young people having their own fire evacuation plan in place.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager takes personal responsibility for all the five residential provisions which make up the children's home registration. The Registered Manager demonstrates a high level of professional competence, including undertaking research and implementing best practice guidelines.

The Registered Manager has a sound understanding of the management of finance, to ensure the service remains financially viable. This includes effectively contributing to leadership meetings to ensure consideration is given to the economic climate and that budget decisions do not compromise the welfare or well-being of children and young people.

Care staff are experts in the diverse needs of the children and young people. This is made possible by the strong support received from the leadership. This includes care staff receiving regular supervision.

Many of the care staff hold degrees in addition to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Diplomas in working with children and young people. On-going support also means further opportunities to gain additional qualifications and new skills are offered. For example, some staff have been able to do a post graduate qualification in autism. From induction to on-going training, the focus remains child centred. For instance, considerable time is given to ensuring staff are trained in various methods of communication and also have the necessary competence to understand the diverse medical needs children and young people have.

The deployment of staff is extremely child focused and gives children and young people excellent continuity of care from people they feel comfortable and safe with.

Highly effective systems are well embedded into the life of each of the residential units so that nothing goes unchecked. For instance, there are daily handovers between residential staff and education staff, to ensure a seamless provision of care. In addition, there are regular staff meetings that enable a full review of children and young people's progress and needs.

Excellent self-evaluation is undertaken by the Registered Manager for monitoring the quality of care. Furthermore, each of the units receive a monthly visit from an independent regulation 33 visitor. Each visit generates a report which offers the home a critical friend oversight on the quality of care. Collectively, these provide a systematic log which demonstrates a high level of scrutiny is applied to monitoring the service, in which children's best interests remains the key focus.

A development plan is well established and forms a clear strategic direction for the provision of care. This takes into consideration the views of all stakeholders and sets realistic targets

The Statement of Purpose is well designed to enable families and professionals to be well informed over the services available. Children and young people also have access to well-designed booklet and a DVD that enables them to be informed about what they can expect.

The single recommendation from the previous inspection has been met and the vast majority of outstanding practices have been sustained. As a result of the one recommendation being addressed, there is now better stakeholder consultation.

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.