

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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.

Young people are accommodated in three houses. Each house has a bathroom, kitchen, dining area and lounge. Young people have individual bedrooms. The school and home are set in several acres of land which provides opportunities for play and other activities. On-site facilities include an adapted swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms and sports facilities. A multi-disciplinary team of health professionals work at the school and home. The team includes speech and language specialists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, audiologists, paediatric and psychiatric services.

The amount of time that the young people are accommodated at the home varies, with some of the young people accommodated for 52 weeks a year, others for one night per week and others at weekends or during term-time only.

There were nine young people present in different houses at the time of this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was a full inspection and was unannounced. All key standards in all outcome areas were assessed.

This is an outstanding service and has substantial strengths in all outcome areas. Young people receive an excellent standard of care from a committed and competent team of staff. The staff team work together very well and are supported very well by their managers. Staff are well-trained and have a thorough understanding of the complex needs of the young people they look after.

Young people are cared for safely because safeguarding is at the forefront of staff practice. Care planning and reviewing arrangements are excellent and ensure that young people receive care that is specifically tailored to meet their needs. Young people's health needs are exceptionally well met and they are fully supported to achieve to their individual potential in education.

Staff develop positive relationships with the young people they look after and they demonstrate a high regard for them. Staff respond positively to challenging behaviour and manage this very well to keep young people safe. Young people are respected and treated as individuals and their privacy and dignity is respected at all times.

The service is managed very effectively. There is very good monitoring to evaluate and sustain the high quality of care that is given to young people. This promotes positive outcomes for young people.

No actions or recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are highly effective arrangements in place to ensure that young people's health needs are identified and fully met by the service. The robust initial assessment process ensures that there is a clear understanding of the health needs of young people. Health action plans are compiled from the information gathered at the young person's assessment. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that information is kept up to date and accurate. There is a qualified nurse on site and the organisation employs the services of professionals from a range of other health agencies such as a speech and language therapist, audiologist and occupational therapist. There are also strong links with the local general practitioner surgery and a doctor holds weekly clinics at the service. These arrangements mean that young people have prompt access to additional services in order to ensure that their health needs are met. Care staff monitor the well-being of young people very closely and support them fully at all health appointments.

Young people are well nourished. They are given meals and snacks that are healthy. Care staff are trained in food hygiene and understand how to prepare food safely. Young people's health plans identify clearly issues that relate to their diet, such as allergies and cultural or religious requirements and staff are very careful to make sure that these needs are met. Staff are trained in specific areas of care such as gastric tube feeding and manage this sensitively. Staff keep food diaries for each young person which means that they can monitor their diet closely and make any adjustments that are necessary in order to promote their good health.

The systems that the service has in place for the delivery of medication are robust and protect young people. Care staff are trained in safe medication procedures. There is a clear recording system and medication is securely stored. Trained nursing staff have oversight of all medication issues. Medication records and stocks of medicines are regularly checked to ensure that they are in order. All care staff are

trained in the administration of first aid so that they know what to do to keep young people safe in an emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are protected in the service because safeguarding is at the forefront of staff practice. The service has robust policies and procedures that are followed in practice and staff show a strong commitment to keeping young people safe.

The privacy of young people is protected. Staff are well trained and they provide personal care to young people in a way that is sensitive to the need to promote personal dignity whilst keeping young people safe. They manage information well so that good levels of confidentiality are maintained.

Staff training in child protection issues is kept up to date. This is done in-house and also through the multi-agency training that is provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff have additional training in safeguarding young people with disabilities. There is a clear safeguarding procedure that staff understand. The service also has an effective system that enables staff to raise any concern about the care or welfare of a young person at an early stage. Staff are confident that any issue they raise is responded to promptly. The organisation has developed its own safeguarding board. This meets at regular intervals throughout the year to consider practice across the service as a whole. The meetings are chaired by a professional who is independent of the school and the board has representatives from agencies outside the organisation. This is excellent practice as it provides additional and independent monitoring of the systems that are in place across the service to protect young people.

The service has a robust complaints procedure that is made known to parents and professionals involved with the care of young people. Records confirm that there are few complaints about care in the service and that complaints are responded to promptly and investigated thoroughly. Staff are skilled in using a variety of ways of communicating with young people who do not use speech and they understand how young people make their views and dissatisfactions known. They take prompt action to resolve any problem that they identify.

Bullying is not an issue in this setting. Due to their profound disabilities, young people generally lack the capacity to bully. However, they can from time to time target one another. Staff manage the risk of this happening very effectively by ensuring that there are support plans in place that identify where there might be specific concerns and also by ensuring that young people are supervised. These arrangements protect young people.

The service has a protocol for responding to incidents of young people going missing. In order to prevent this, staff supervise young people very well and they make sure that they know the whereabouts of young people at all times. This means

that young people cannot leave the service without the knowledge of the staff.

Staff promote positive behaviour and young people behave very well generally. Staff put in place behaviour management and positive handling plans for young people that identify potential triggers and record how staff should support young people to manage and defuse difficult situations. Plans specifically take into account the medical needs of young people and are agreed with parents. Staff are trained to manage challenging behaviour including in the use of physical restraint. Appropriate records are kept and these confirm that any physical intervention that is necessary is carried out at the lowest level that is required to keep young people and staff safe. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff that show a high regard for them.

Young people are cared for in an environment that is kept safe because health and safety matters are managed very effectively. There is a robust risk assessment process. Very regular checks are made on all areas of the homes and grounds and risk assessments are reviewed and kept up to date. Equipment is tested and serviced to ensure that it is kept in good order. Each young person has a personal evacuation plan which enables all staff to understand how they should be supported in the event of a fire or other emergency. Staff are trained in evacuation procedures and there are regular fire drills which involve young people.

The service has a robust system in place for ensuring that all new staff are thoroughly vetted before they start work. This includes a check with the Criminal Records Bureau, three references and a detailed application form. There is also a very thorough process for checking visitors to the school. Visitors are required to wear a personalised badge so that their whereabouts throughout the school campus can be monitored. These arrangements protect young people in the service.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from the excellent level of individual support they are given in the service. The robust assessment process ensures that staff are fully informed about young people's complex needs. Detailed care and support plans promote consistency in the way that staff care for young people. Each young person has an identified key worker who takes responsibility for making sure that plans are implemented, although all staff take equal responsibility for caring for young people. Young people have prompt access to any additional service they need through the established multi-agency systems that are in place in the service.

There are very strong structures in place across the service as a whole to ensure that the education of young people is promoted in the care settings. The service has a 'waking hours' curriculum that promotes the development of young people in all aspects of their education and care. Each young person has an individual education plan that sets achievable targets and staff in care and education work together very well to help young people to reach their goals. Care staff and teaching staff meet

regularly and they provide a good handover to each other about the young person and their progress in both care and education. Care staff contribute fully to annual education reviews so that they know how young people are progressing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The arrangements for care planning are excellent. Detailed information about young people's needs is drawn from the thorough assessment that takes place before they are admitted to the service. Clear and comprehensive risk assessments and support plans are developed from these initial assessments. Plans are drawn up in consultation with parents and a number of professionals from other disciplines who work with the school. These plans ensure that staff know how to look after young people. The progress of young people is regularly monitored within the service and is also formally reviewed. This means that plans are kept up to date and that they reflect the changing needs of young people.

Staff are proactive in helping children and young people to keep in touch with their families and others outside the home who are important to them. There are facilities such as video links and a web camera which enable young people to see their families. Families are encouraged to visit young people out of school time and there is a well-equipped family flat on the campus which parents and other family members can use when they come to visit their child. This is an excellent resource.

All admissions to the home are very carefully planned. Staff work closely with parents and professionals outside the home to ensure that they have detailed information about young people when they are referred. Young people are assessed by a multi-disciplinary team in the service prior to any decision being made about whether or not the home can meet their needs. The manager also considers the needs of young people already in the home as part of the admission process. Detailed records are kept to show how decisions are reached and how young people and their families are supported during transitions.

Staff are committed to the principle of inclusion and there is regular and meaningful consultation with young people. Staff understand the preferred communication methods of all the young people in their care and they work hard to ensure that young people can make their views known about every aspect of their life in the home and school. They communicate regularly with parents so that they are fully involved in their child's care and progress in the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

All young people are actively encouraged to gain personal skills that are beneficial to their future development. The skills they work on vary according to the young person's abilities and assessed needs and there is clear evidence of the steady

progress that young people make during their time in the school and home.

Transition planning is very detailed. Care staff work very closely with teaching staff, families and professionals from other disciplines to ensure that transition plans are in place at an early stage so that young people are as prepared as they can be for a move into adult services.

Young people are provided with accommodation that is functional and that meets their needs. The accommodation across the three houses is different in style, but all of the homes are well maintained. They are clean, comfortably furnished, warm and welcoming. Staff help families to personalise young people's bedrooms so that they reflect their interests. The different houses are accessible in all parts to the young people who live in them. They are suitably equipped to meet the complex needs of young people with disabilities, for example with hoists, lifts and adapted baths. The school has extensive grounds that are well used by young people for walking and cycling and there is outdoor play equipment that young people enjoy and that promotes their physical development.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people, their parents and professionals are given detailed information about how the home works and how young people are cared for. The Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed so that information is kept up to date. The young person's guide is produced in different formats, for example in a booklet and on DVD. These are appropriate to the complex needs of young people.

The service is well managed. There is a very clear management structure with clear lines of accountability. The manager and senior managers are all experienced and suitably qualified. Staffing arrangements are excellent. There is an enthusiastic and competent team of trained and qualified staff. Staff are deployed in accordance with risk assessments and the needs of individual young people so that the service has sufficient staff on duty at all times to ensure that the needs of young people are met.

Care staff feel that they are well supported. There are appropriate cover arrangements for the manager and there is an out-of-hours on-call system which means that there is always a senior person available for staff to consult. Staff say that training opportunities are excellent and that they therefore feel they have the knowledge they need to look after young people properly.

The well-being of young people is central to the running of the service. There are robust management monitoring systems that are centred on the safety and experience of young people. These arrangements include regular staff supervision and routine checking of documents. This is undertaken by the registered manager and other senior staff. In addition, there are monthly visits to all of the three homes, undertaken by individuals who are independent of the service and who report to the management team. These systems provide very effective management oversight of

the measures that are in place to protect young people and promote their welfare.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff attend training in equality and diversity and are committed to promoting the values in the service. There is a multi-agency approach to working with young people and an ethos of inclusion. Young people are valued as individuals. Placement plans and other documents are holistic and clearly identify young people's diverse and complex needs and how these will be met.

Each young person has an individual file which contains detailed information about their needs. Files are in good order and are stored securely.