

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC038435
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered manager	Mark Brocklebank
Date of last inspection	04/03/2014

Inspection date	26/11/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This provision is a children's home registered by Ofsted and a 52-week independent residential special school, registered and approved by the Department for Education. It is for boys and girls aged 6 to 17 years with severe and complex learning needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
02/05/2013	Full	adequate
19/03/2013	Interim	good progress
13/12/2012	Full	outstanding

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
26 (2001)	ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to staff in respect of each of the matters specified in schedule 2, particularly in relation to checking gaps in work history (Regulation 26(3)(d))	05/01/2015
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the registered person receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	05/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. This specifically relates to blinds in bathrooms, garden screening and heating in bathrooms (NMS 10.3)
- ensure managers and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The level of delegation and responsibility of the managers and staff, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined. (NMS 21.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people receive personalised care in the home that meets their individual needs. Staff use bespoke verbal, non-verbal and picture communication systems to continually encourage and support young people. This gives young people a sense of well-being. Relationships between young people and staff are positive and staff are motivated and enthusiastic in their interactions.

Young people are able to make progress while being at the home. This is due to well trained and experienced staff having an exceptionally high awareness of the differing needs of the young people and how to respond to these. One social worker stated that, 'The progress that he has made is remarkable.'

Young people with complex health needs make good progress in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. There is a dedicated health team including therapists, psychiatrists and skilled nurses. This ensures all aspects of the young person's health needs are continually monitored.

Young people make consistent progress in school. There is a high attendance rate and staff persistently promote young people's involvement in school activities to enhance their achievements. Information is shared daily between care and education, and there are occasions when bespoke education plans are put in place to meet the needs of individuals.

Young people are enabled to raise any concerns and worries through the use of a communication aid called 'purple dragon', which enables staff to support that young person in whatever way they can. The organisation also has the benefit of 'VOICE' who visit individual houses on a monthly basis. This provides young people with an additional monitor of their welfare and someone else to represent their interests should the need arise.

Young people enjoy their leisure time. Activities are highly individualised and good use is made of community resources to allow young people to have as many experiences as possible. Young people's leisure planners are age appropriate and responsive to their likes and dislikes. Within the home environment young people systematically develop their confidence by having access to stimulating resources with staff. As a result, young people experience a range of activities that promote their social skills and interactions or encourage their hobbies and interests.

Young people benefit from contact arrangements that ensure their families are a constant part of their lives despite not living at home. The home has dedicated accommodation that parents can use during times of contact and parents have been particularly impressed with the sibling weekends which enable their children to keep

in touch with all family members.

Young people's needs are of a high priority within transition arrangements both into and from the home. This ensures that changes to their living arrangements are positive experiences and they develop from them.

Quality of care

good

The home pays particular attention to planning and co-ordinating young people's care and support, ensuring their needs are comprehensively met. Detailed plans are devised in conjunction with families and professionals. Risks are assessed regularly and are reflected in written information that staff use to guide the way they work each day. Staff are able to adapt and change their practice quickly to ensure risks are managed effectively. The service is good at tailoring its routines to ensure young people's needs are carefully met and risks are managed safely. One professional said, 'Staff are truly committed to the young people, understand each of their individual needs, show patience, respect their dignity and use their training to deal effectively with their challenging behaviour.'

Staff are proactive, sensitive and skilled in managing the complex health and behavioural needs of young people. The home provides an environment that fully supports the complex health needs of young people. Young people access services routinely such as dentist, GP's and opticians. Health medicals are undertaken annually to ensure they continue to be provided with the best health care support needed. Medication is administered by trained staff and regularly monitored to ensure young people are safeguarded. There is a full team of professionals on site such as the speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, psychiatrists and psychologist to ensure that young people continue to thrive.

Young people's communication is strongly prioritised and effectively promoted because staff are very knowledgeable about how each individual communicates. This includes the interpretation of behaviours, gestures and sounds as well as the use of more established methods of language, signs, symbols and pictures. Young people's communication develops and improves because of the collaborative approaches the school has with families, teachers and supporting professionals.

Young people's good health is fully promoted by improved catering arrangements. Meals are balanced and cooked from scratch in order to meet diverse dietary needs and requirements. The support from a nutritionist has enabled more effective healthy eating plans to be put in place.

The residential accommodation is clean, tidy and comfortable. Areas throughout the residential accommodation have been personalised to promote a more homely atmosphere. There are a few areas which need attention relating to one particular cold bathroom, blinds in bathrooms and screening in one particular garden.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are protected by robust and effectively implemented safeguarding arrangements. Their well-being is promoted at all times because safeguarding is at the heart of the service. Through discussions, professionals have expressed they are confident that the service keeps their young people safe.

All staff are aware of their own roles and responsibilities, and those of other agencies involved in keeping young people safe. The managers are proactive in establishing effective links and working partnerships with the police and the local safeguarding children's board. This liaison results in safeguarding concerns being robustly investigated and addressed. All staff are up to date with their safeguarding training.

Care managers regularly review their environmental risk assessments to identify health and safety hazards and ensure measures are in place to reduce known risks. Fire risk assessments are in place and the home completes regular fire safety checks. Young people participate in these fire drills and tests and have individual evacuation plans. This means that in the event of a fire, young people know how to respond and staff are able to predict the reactions of young people and ascertain if additional support is required to effectively evacuate the home.

The staff teams are calm, skilled and confident in defusing any potentially difficult and challenging situations swiftly and without issue. They are aware of the known triggers and the primary intervention to follow. Staff receive regular training and updates regarding behaviour management. All staff have a good understanding of individual plans relating specifically to differing behaviours and the strategies in place for responding to these. Young people experience high quality nurturing, warm and positive relationships with staff. This in turn creates effective routines and boundaries and these are well established. Physical intervention is used as a last resort. In the event of a physical intervention taking place appropriate records are maintained. A social worker commented, 'The frequency and intensity of his behaviours have decreased and his mother now finds him more manageable when he visits home.' Extensive management information is collected and evaluated around the management of behaviour and related events. Managers and leaders are very well informed about the effectiveness of the school's approaches to behaviour management by the web based system 'BehaviourWatch' which enables staff to quickly pick-up on any concerning patterns or trends.

The recruitment procedures are not as robust as they could be. Gaps in employment history are not being followed through. All other areas of the recruitment procedures are in line with regulation. All visitors are checked, vetted and monitored. This further ensures young people are safe.

Leadership and management

good

There is a Registered Manager who has a wealth of experience and is well qualified. He has worked in this organisation for over 20 years. Young people, their families and the placing authorities are clear about the support the home provides, and the home meets the aims and objectives detailed in the statement of purpose. Professionals and parents have said; 'We are always made very welcome.' 'The team around the child approach is highly effective.' 'Transition planning is excellent.'

The two recommendations from the last inspection in March 2014 have both been met.

The Registered Manager offers clear leadership to his large staff team. The standard of management monitoring is high, so the manager is well aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and it is evident he challenges practice when required. Individual houses are regularly monitored with a central monitoring system which can identify those houses which need support. There is a clear development plan in place and the locality risk assessment is currently being undertaken.

Due to the restructuring taking place, some of the houses and their staff are unsure of the accountability they have as team leaders and not entirely clear about their roles and responsibilities. The Registered Manager is aware of this and is providing extra support and guidance.

A strength of this service is the competent and committed staff support team. They provide the young people with a high level of consistency and a very good quality of care. They are enthusiastic, caring and work well together to promote young people's welfare. The skills within the staff team match young people's needs very well. The numbers of staff on duty ensures that the young people's needs are effectively met. Staff are suitably qualified and receive training to develop their individual skills and knowledge relevant to the complex young people they are caring for. Currently not all of the houses are receiving regular supervision. This shortfall is being addressed by the Registered Manager.

A variety of team meetings take place regularly, which allows the whole staff team to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them. It also enables all the staff to discuss the running of the houses and to look at ways to improve the service they offer.

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.