

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC055780
Inspection date	26/03/2014
Inspector	Denise Jolly
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	10/12/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

All young people considered for placement experience autistic spectrum disorder with associated communication and sensory impairment and possible learning disability. The home is owned by a national organisation. Young people who access this service access the organisation's school.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **satisfactory progress**.

At the last full inspection in December 2013 the service was judged as good. The home has made satisfactory progress to address the requirements and most of the recommendations to improve the practice of the home. Young people continue to thrive due to the efforts of staff.

Managers have revised records for the administration of medication in the home and have improved audit systems to ensure young people get the medication they need. Managers have worked with the behaviour support team to revise the systems for records of restraint and other disciplinary measures used in the home. This ensures that staff record all the information necessary for the effective oversight of such measures. When managers monitor the records they follow up any discrepancies in the records with staff and make a record of all debriefing sessions. This enables staff to improve the consistency of their approach towards young people in crisis and ensures actions are in line with the behaviour management policy for the home.

All staff who work in the home have obtained, or are working towards, an approved child care qualification. New staff benefit from a thorough induction programme that helps them to acquire the skills necessary to provide good quality care to vulnerable young people. All staff participate in training to understand the organisation's approach to meeting the specific needs of young people with autism.

The Registered Manager works with deputy managers to monitor the conduct of the home and they have improved the reports arising from such monitoring to include the actions to improve any shortfalls identified. This is evident in the improvements made to records of disciplinary measures used in the home. Further changes are being discussed, particularly in regard to the nature of visits that are conducted on behalf of the provider but this is still a work in progress. Monitoring of some aspects of the records remains inconsistent. Staff have updated health care plans so that young people benefit from comprehensive plans to meet their health needs but they are not consistently available for staff to refer to in the home. This may cause unnecessary delays in young people being able to get the support they need for their immediate health needs.

Though staff are regularly supervised some staff supervision records are not produced in good time. This limits the ability of staff to respond effectively to any support and guidance needs that their supervisors have identified.

Young people are safe and happy in the home. They benefit from a broad range of activity and experience opportunities, such as going to youth club, and visiting local shops and community activities. This enhances their knowledge and understanding of the world and helps them to understand how to interact with it.

A continuing challenge is for managers is to ensure that minor repairs are completed in the home promptly and that décor is made good after damage has been repaired. Although the common areas of the home are pleasantly set out and well maintained but some areas of the home are showing signs of wear and tear caused by the young people. Some bedrooms require attention to ensure that furniture and fittings are maintained in good order and alterations are suitable to meet the specific behavioural needs of young people.

Key workers and the Registered Manager liaise well with other professionals and family members who support each child. Key workers provide regular reports about the progress young people make, and contribute well to professional planning review meetings. They ensure that the views of parents and professionals are captured in any proposed changes to young people's care plans. Minutes from reviews of care plans confirm the progress young people make in areas such as socialisation, independence, and activity participation. Social workers say that young people make 'excellent progress', and that they value the open communication and warm relationships offered by staff because it helps young people's lives to improve. As a result of the efforts of staff young people gradually acquire skills that help them to overcome their anxiety and reduce unwanted behaviour. In turn, this helps them to enjoy improved contact with their friends, families, and other important people in their lives.

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
20 (2001)	ensure that there are up to date health care plans available so that each child is provided with individual support, such as he may require as a result of any particular health needs he may have such as epilepsy. (Regulation 20 (2c))	30/05/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home is well maintained and decorated in particular young people's bedrooms, and maintenance work is carried out swiftly to reduce identified issues (NMS 10.3)
- ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home, in particular that health care plans and staff supervision records are consistently available in good time (NMS 21.1)
- ensure that staff are guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children, by providing records of their supervision in a timely manner. (NMS 19)

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.