

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	6 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC358046
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	The Senad Group Limited
Registered provider address	Senad Group Limited, 1 St Georges House, Vernon Gate, Derby DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual	Mark Flynn
Registered manager	Karen Tatham
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths and Ros Chapman

Inspection date	6 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC358046

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- From their starting points, children and young people make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives. Of particular note, is the progress that they make in relation to their education, their social and emotional development and in the acquisition of life skills.
- Children and young people present as very happy and settled. They enjoy extremely positive relationships with a caring, skilled and committed staff team that provides them with high levels of certainty, stability and security.
- The extensive range of experiences and activities enjoyed significantly enhance the quality of children's and young people's lives. They have fun and make friends. They develop self-confidence and their self-esteem improves.
- Children and young people are completely at the centre of all work taking place. Staff ensure that children and young people with communication difficulties are able to express their views and make choices in respect of all aspects of their lives.
- The multi-disciplinary approach to each child's and young person's care is highly effective. Working practices between care staff, school staff and in-house therapists are extremely cohesive. Rigorous monitoring by the multi-disciplinary team ensures that children's and young people's care plans remain up to date and relevant. This helps to ensure that children and young people are continually provided with optimum standards of individualised care.
- Comprehensive behaviour and risk management plans underpin safe practice.
- An extremely child-focused, enthusiastic and aspirational manager drives the staff team. They continually strive to make ongoing improvements to the lives of children and young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run service is registered as a children's home which is part of a residential school. It provides care and accommodation for up to 38 children and young people with autism, Asperger's syndrome and communication difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21 January 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
1 June 2015	Full	Good
13 January 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25 June 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Children and young people achieve exceptional outcomes. One parent said, 'Living in the home has maximised my son's potential. His skills have been drawn out and his life chances have significantly improved.' Another parent commented, 'My son has done incredibly well. He is happy and he feels listened to. The placement has been a huge success.' Children and young people are provided with an excellent opportunity to reach their full potential. Children and young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with caring, committed staff who know them very well. A young person said, 'The staff are nice. They know if I am unhappy without me having to say. They understand me and I feel confident in talking to them. They listen.' Such positive relationships, alongside consistent routines, provide children and young people with the stability and security that they need and deserve. All children and young people attend the on-site school and engage in individual packages of education, which reflect their strengths, interests and learning styles. Their attendance is excellent and the progress that they make from their starting points is outstanding. A parent commented, 'After four failed school placements and one and a half years out of school, my son is now getting the right education and he is blossoming. He is really good at algebra and science. He has learnt how to function in a confusing world and he has developed aspirations for the future.' Children and young people are healthy. An on-site health professional promotes healthy lifestyles. A young person said, 'I go to the gym to keep fit. Having just returned to school after the holidays, I am looking forward to getting back in shape.' Additionally, advice and guidance provided to staff by on-site speech and language and occupational therapists and psychotherapists help to ensure that children's and young people's specific and complex health needs are well understood and met to a high standard. Children and young people previously isolated as a result of their disability, make excellent progress socially and emotionally. They participate in an extensive range of activities. They have fun and develop friendships. A young person said, 'My social skills have got better. I now have friends and I now meet them outside of school.' A parent commented, 'My son is a million times happier. He now has friends and does loads of social activities. He goes out on his bike, he goes to laser quest and he has guitar lessons. Living here has made an enormous difference to the quality of his life. He now feels part of a community.' As a result, children and young people enjoy significantly improved self-esteem. A coordinated approach between school staff, care staff and therapists provide	

older young people with the opportunity to develop life skills in preparation for adulthood. A parent commented, 'My son has progressed from being able to do nothing for himself to being a fully functioning teenager. He can now cook and iron and do so much more for himself.' A young person said, 'Before, I did not have the confidence to go out or talk to people. Now I am so much more confident, I can travel on my own and I do lots more things for myself.' Acquiring new skills provides children and young people with a sense of achievement, it raises their confidence and provides them with increased opportunities in adult life.

Children and young people feel fully respected and valued. Their views are continually sought in respect of the day-to-date running of the home through house meetings and through regular individual sessions with staff. A young person said, 'We have a say in what the house looks like. We have chosen colours, the sofa's, lamps and pictures for the home.' Children and young people are also fully involved in the preparation and review of their care plans. Some write their own with the support of staff. As a result, children and young people are more motivated to work towards goals which they have identified and wish to achieve. It provides them with a sense of control over their lives and helps raise confidence and self-esteem.

Children's and young people's relationships with their families are nurtured. In some instances, the quality of relationships significantly improves. One parent said, 'Now, when my son comes home, we can just enjoy quality family time.' Another parent commented, 'The quality of life has improved for us all. As a family we are so much more settled. We are closer and we can enjoy a more normal family life.' Strong and positive family relationships enhance children's and young people's emotional development. This helps to promote improved quality of life in the longer term.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children's and young people's safety is promoted through good levels of supervision, consistent routines and the positive relationships that they have with staff. One young person explained, 'This is a safe place as the staff make it safe.' The emotionally safe and secure environment created by staff provides children and young people with a good sense of safety. Bullying is not tolerated in the home and although there are sometimes tensions between some children and young people, these are well managed. Individual and group work undertaken with children and young people, in respect of their peer relationships, helps them to develop more tolerance and respect for one another. This, as well as close supervision of children and young people, helps to ensure that all can live together harmoniously in a settled and happy environment. This provides children and young people with an improved sense of safety.	

Children and young people are helped and protected as a result of risk and behaviour management plans being consistently implemented by staff who know them very well. The multi-agency approach to helping and supporting children and young people is also extremely effective. A parent said, 'Because the speech and language and occupational therapists are permanently on-site, they are helping to drive my son's progress. The multi-disciplinary approach works so well.' It helps to ensure that children and young people get the best possible help and support.

Staff manage children's and young people's behaviour very well. Through the use of praise and rewards and as a result of the expert advice of the therapy team, challenging behaviours reduce. A parent commented, 'My son has lots of behavioural issues and the staff are very good at dealing with them. They work with the therapists to help him cope with life. The transformation in him is extraordinary. The number of outbursts he has have declined significantly. He has learned to regulate his emotions more through counting techniques and breathing exercises to control stress.' Recourse to physical intervention is rare. This is a testament to the skills of the staff in de-escalating challenging situations. On the two occasions since the last full inspection where physical intervention has been necessary as a last resort to ensure safety, debriefs with staff and children and young people followed. The manager analyses the effectiveness of all interventions, thus ensuring that the quality of practice in this area remains good.

Although there have been a few occasions when a child or young person has walked off site, there have been no incidents of them going missing. Staff understand children's and young people's individual going missing protocols. On the few occasions when a child or young person has walked off site, staff have followed and successfully negotiated their return. Staff then explored with them the reasons for their actions. This enabled risk assessments to be updated to reflect the triggers and minimise the risk of any future incidents of going missing occurring.

There has been an instance since the last inspection when there was a delay in a safeguarding allegation being reported, first to senior management, and second to external agencies. Leaders and managers promptly identified the shortfall and following a critical evaluation of how it occurred, took proactive action to ensure that such a shortfall could not happen again. Flowcharts in each office now remind all staff of their reporting responsibilities, and additional refresher training in relation to safeguarding has been completed by all staff. The improvements made as a result of lessons learned now need embedding.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is confident, inspirational and ambitious for children and young people. She provides strong	

leadership. She has addressed one requirement and one recommendation set at the last inspection, resulting in improvements in the quality of the service.

A highly motivated and consistent staff team feels valued and very well supported. The manager leads them by example in a supportive and non-blaming manner. Staff receive regular, high-quality supervision. They also attend regular team meetings and consultations with the in-house therapists involved with each child or young person. Such opportunities to reflect on practice enhance their professional development and help to ensure that practice remains of a consistently high standard.

In addition to the above, staff also engage in a comprehensive training package. Those not in their probationary period are either suitably qualified or working towards the required qualifications within the timescales stipulated in the 'Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015'. Leaders and managers analyse staff training needs and use both internal and external providers to facilitate training that equips staff with the skills to meet the complex individual needs of each child or young person living in the home to a high standard. Managers also evaluate the effectiveness of training courses through regular observations of practice and within staff supervisions.

Leaders and managers make extremely child-focused decisions. Before any child or young person is admitted to the home, they undertake comprehensive pre-placement assessments. This assists their decision making as to whether the service has the skills and resources to meet individual needs. Within this assessment, the needs and safety of all children and young people are carefully considered, and in particular, the likely impact a new admission will have on the existing group of children and young people. As a result of such careful and thorough pre-placement assessments, when new children or young people are admitted to the home, staff already have an excellent understanding of how to meet their needs. Staff support them and the existing residents extremely well to adapt to the change in the group dynamic. This helps to maintain a settled and stable home environment.

The implementation of case file audits and a review of recording systems have significantly improved the quality of information held in case files. Children's and young people's care plans and behaviour and risk management plans are clear, concise and up to date. The files now provide a comprehensive reflection of children's and young people's everyday lives, their progress and targets for the future.

The home's statement of purpose is comprehensive and provides parents and placing authorities with clear and accurate information about how children and young people will be helped and supported while living in the home. Parents, children and young people are now also provided with excellent information via a newly introduced house guide which is regularly updated. This enables parents, children and young people to see photographs of which staff will be on shift on what days, what activities are planned and the menu choices in the coming weeks. This provides clarity and certainty for children and young people, and it is helpful

and reassuring for parents.

Quality assurance systems are robust. Internal and external quality assurance reports highlight the home's strengths as well as minor shortfalls. Shortfalls are promptly addressed. This, as well as clear development plans, formulated with the assistance of feedback from children and young people, their parents and staff, is indicative of service committed to improving the lives of children and young people and providing them with an outstanding service.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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