

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	17/07/2013
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
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 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 young people with autism, Asperger's syndrome, or communication difficulties.

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**.

Young people in this home benefit from highly individualised and comprehensive care planning and delivery of care. They make good progress and develop their education, health, communication and social skills. This is because of the outstanding quality of care they receive.

Relationships between young people and staff are excellent. Young people speak highly of the support, respect and trust which they have with the multi-disciplinary staff team. Young people feel their views are central to their care and that their wishes and feelings are actively sought and acted upon.

Young people's safety is of paramount importance. Robust safeguarding practices ensure young people are kept safe, learn to keep safe and stay safe.

Leadership and management arrangements are strong, with effective monitoring processes and an ethos of striving for continual improvement.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose,

format and content of information to be kept on the registered person's files and information to be kept on the child's files. With specific regard to ensuring children's homes records provide a complete overview and account of actions taken and current situation (NMS 22.1)

- ensure staff support and encourage the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding, and to keep appropriate memorabilia of their time in the placement. Staff record and help children make a record of (subject to age and understanding), significant life events. (NMS 22.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in their overall development as a result of living at the home. This is because of the impact of the specialist multi-disciplinary care team who are able to meet the individual needs of each young person. This means young people develop a positive self-view, confidence and increased self-esteem.

The health needs of young people are promoted by a range of professionals. Their physical, emotional and psychological needs are met because the home provides an environment with integrated social, education and therapeutic professionals. Young people consequently achieve good health outcomes.

Young people make good progress in education in relation to their starting points. They have good school attendance and make significant progress in their academic achievements. This means that some young people progress to the provider's near-by sixth-form college. Consequently, continuation with further education benefits young people with their long-term life chances.

Most young people return to the care of their families during school holidays. Because the home communicates well with families, contact arrangements and transitions between homes are smooth. This means relationships between young people and their families are promoted and anxieties minimised.

Independent living and self-care skills form an integral part of the daily routine of the home. Young people receive support, guidance and encouragement to develop age appropriate skills and to contribute to the routine of the home. The development of such skills provides young people with improved outcomes for when they leave the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care at the home. Staff demonstrate enthusiasm and dedication to their work. Young people flourish and develop because of the quality of care they receive. A parent said, 'You find the right home for the

right kid and they blossom. They get their personality and can express themselves.'

Young people's care is inclusive of the provider's education, care and therapeutic staff. Exceptionally effective partnerships with families and external agencies are also evident. A professional said, 'Staff engage and understand the young people. The young people are proud of the home and the school.'

Young people make a positive contribution to the home through weekly meetings and contributing to decisions about their care. Staff and management look for ways to ensure that young people's views are reflected in the running of the home. Currently young people are contributing to the design and décor of one of the kitchens. Consequently young people's views influence the quality of their care.

Staff are highly skilled in working with young people with autism, Asperger's syndrome and communication difficulties. This means they are exceptionally skilled in enabling young people to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes. Consistent rules and clear expectations are reinforced by the staff team. This means young people learn how to improve behaviours and are able to communicate more effectively.

Care planning, risk assessment and behaviour management plans are comprehensive, detailed and up-to-date. Needs relating to young people's cultural and personal identity are integrated within care planning and are implemented by staff. Regular and consistent reviews of plans, alongside rigorous auditing ensure clarity for staff to provide effective support to young people.

The home provides a healthy environment which enables young people to access a range of health care services. Care staff work in close partnership with the integrated occupational therapists, speech and language therapy and psychologists. Broader health care is provided through healthy eating, active lifestyles and the provision of routine healthcare. Consequently, young people benefit from optimum levels of health care.

The providers have their own on-site school registered with the Department for Education. The home has a strong ethos about young people attending and achieving in school. The home and school have high aspirations for all young people to achieve their potential. Young people are extremely positive about the school and proud of their achievements. They develop skills, knowledge and confidence through participation in education. This provides a firm foundation for transitions to further education and vocational training.

Young people actively engage in a range of stimulating activities which promote good health, social engagement and confidence. Examples include horse-riding, swimming, climbing, cycling, model making and music lessons. Regular day trips and outings are planned, with a recent trip to the Harry Potter World. Some young people have participated in an annual skiing holiday. These opportunities provide young people with a range of ways to explore their talents and skills, thereby building confidence and self-esteem.

The home's environment is undergoing continual improvements, with bathrooms currently being renovated. Young people are integral to choosing the design and layout of communal areas. Following consultation with young people, a cinema and games room have been developed. The home is well decorated, furnished and homely.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say they feel safe. They are kept safe because staff implement policies and follow procedures. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and review working practice to ensure they meet individual young people's needs.

Young people have comprehensive risk assessments which are regularly reviewed and updated. This means young people are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with agreed care plans.

There have been no reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection. In the event of such an incident, clear procedures are in place to notify relevant bodies, with staff being proactive in seeking the young person's whereabouts.

Staff promote positive behaviour for young people at all times. Individualised behaviour management plans encourage young people to take responsibility for their behaviour and reward accordingly. Young people confirm that the rules of the home are fair and records demonstrate that good behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded.

The use of physical intervention is not a characteristic of the home's approach to behaviour management. Consequently, incidents of physical intervention are low and only used as a last resort when a young person is placing themselves or others at risk. Staff are suitably trained to undertake any physical intervention and recording of such incidents is in line with the legislative framework.

Staff employed to work in the home have a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions. The staff team are stable with new staff members undertaking a comprehensive induction programme. Robust recruitment processes and the rigorous monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure the protection of young people from potential harm.

Allegations and complaints which have been made since the last inspection are fully investigated in line with the provider's policy. This ensures suspicions of harm are dealt with effectively and young people protected from potential harm.

Young people do identify that bullying occurs occasionally within the home. They feel

that staff are vigilant and proactive in dealing with issues of bullying. Young people say that they can identify an adult to talk to if they feel unsafe. Moreover, high staffing levels and close supervision ensure young people are effectively monitored.

The home is physically safe for young people. Health and safety requirements, along with fire safety are a priority for the home. Maintenance within the home is of a high standard, with staff implementing consistent monitoring and security to ensure the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home has an experienced Registered Manager who is supported by an established management team.

Young people benefit from a home that has maintained good standards since the last inspection. The recommendation set at the last inspection has been addressed with the children's guide being amended as required. The management of the home demonstrates a commitment for continual improvement. A development plan reflects practical proposals for continued improvement, with plans extending to the home, staff, training and the young people. The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes action to tackle weaknesses and make improvements.

A key strength of the home is the dedication and commitment of the stable staff team. The consistency which this provides, alongside a wide range of skills and knowledge, promotes positive outcomes for young people. Staff receive regular and supportive supervision. They benefit from a wide-ranging training programme which ensures continual reinforcement and development of knowledge and skills.

Young people benefit from effective management and monitoring of the home. Internal and external monitoring systems ensure robust quality assurance. This means shortfalls are identified and rectified, thus promoting improvement.

Young people, families and placing authorities understand how to make a complaint. Complaints are dealt with in line with the home's own policy. The resolution of complaints, both internal and external, is a priority for the management team. Records demonstrate managers respond in a timely and amenable manner to ensure complaints are resolved.

Generally records are up-to-date, comprehensive and stored securely. Some records are dispersed among the management team; therefore do not provide a complete picture of actions taken. Additionally, young people are not being encouraged to participate in work to record their time at the home. Young people would benefit from staff helping complete memory books so they can have a permanent record of their time in the home.

All notifications are made appropriately to relevant agencies and appropriate action taken to follow procedures to protect young people.

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.