

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC372504                                    |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 10/08/2011                                  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Mark Ryder / Jackie Callaghan               |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full                                        |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Residential special school (>295 days/year) |

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|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 12/01/2011 |
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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 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a service for young people with learning disabilities. It aims to help them acquire the skills to move into adulthood and offers a range of services to help young people socialise with others and develop their self-esteem and positive identity.

The home's accommodation is currently situated on two sites. The main site is set in extensive grounds where there are seven houses. The number of beds in each house varies from one to 16 beds. The off-site satellite provision is one mile away and provides a further 12 beds. Young people are accommodated according to their gender, age and compatibility. Each house has its own lounge, dining room and kitchen.

Young people living at the home receive education at the provision's school. The home is near to a town centre and within commuting distance of a large city centre. The home has its own transport which is used to enable young people to access community facilities.

Each accommodation has its own team of care staff and waking night staff. The home is registered to provide 55 places.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

This is a service that effectively promotes the needs of young people and ensures they are looked after safely and well. There are positive outcomes for young people in terms of health, education and development into adulthood. Staff are well trained and competent in meeting the complex learning and behavioural needs of young people. Staff understand safeguarding very well and this is an outstanding aspect of the care young people receive. The home is managed well. Staff are very motivated to care and nurture young people and provide them with an enjoyable and stimulating placement. Young people, parents and social workers have all commented on the positive way this service is run.

Areas for improvement have, however, been identified during this inspection. A statutory requirement has been made for the provision to ensure the home is conducted with due regard to young people's religious and cultural needs. While it is recognised that staff promote difference and diversity for young people, it is often poorly recorded within placement plans. The equality and diversity policy does not refer to current guidance and legislation. The judgement of satisfactory on the quality of service outcome reflects this area for improvement.

Three recommendations have also been made. The setting has been asked to promote young people's wishes and feelings and record them within their placement plans. Activities within the site are restricted so that many young people are unable to access the soft play area and sensory room. The provider has also been asked to record that information has been passed to young people or adults about complaints they have made.

## Areas for improvementStatutory 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   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 11<br>(2001) | ensure that the home is conducted with due regard to the religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background of children accommodated there. (Regulation 11(2)) | 21/09/2011 |

## Recommendations

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

- ensure all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support (NMS 1.3)
- ensure children and other persons receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress (NMS 1.6)
- promote individual interests and hobbies, including taking part in a range of activities on site, with regard to access to the soft play and sensory rooms out of school hours. (NMS 7.2)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Staff encourage and support young people to develop their experiences of life and be positive about themselves and what they can do. Young people present as relaxed and interested in their surroundings. A young person wrote that, 'everyone is really nice and it is fun and interesting'.

Staff regularly assess the development of the skills required for adulthood. Young people are encouraged to help with cooking and baking as well as keeping their

room tidy. Social workers felt that staff were particularly skilled in enabling and supporting young people through transitional arrangements.

Health needs are well met. Individual dietary requirements for medical or religious purposes are considered and provided for. For example, halal food is available. Young people play an active part in deciding on what they would like to eat during meals. Representatives of young people attend the school council which discusses issues which include diet.

Medical assessments are current and up to date. The medical centre, run and managed by a registered nurse, is on site and enables young people to visit for minor illnesses or accidents. A General Practitioner holds a surgery once per week at the setting.

Staff promote contact, ensuring young people have access to telephones and the internet. Records of contact arrangements for young people to see their families are available within placement plans and are regularly checked and reviewed. Parents are made welcome to visit their children. A parent wrote: 'Staff are honest and approachable.' There is suitable space in all residential provisions for parents to have time with their children in private.

There are many benefits to young people in being cared for within a school environment. Staff promote a 24-hour curriculum which has a number of successes in raising the aspirations of young people at this school. A parent wrote: 'My child has learnt new skills since being at this home.' Young people regularly attend school.

## Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and are able to develop their communication and social skills well. Staff use a range of effective communication resources to assist young people. Positive behaviour is actively promoted. A young person wrote: 'Staff respect me and what I want to do.'

The views, wishes and feelings of young people are taken into account in many aspects of their care, for example, decoration of young people's bedrooms, activity choice as well as meal plans. However, consultation on care plans is not always clear and care plans do not show, for example, whether young people are in agreement with the decisions made. A young person wrote: 'I don't know about my care plan.'

Equally, religious and cultural needs are not consistently clear within care plans and it is not always evident that staff are considering individual needs during assessment. Therefore, records do not adequately reflect the work that staff do to help young people understand their backgrounds, experiences and heritage.

Young people's education is well supported and encouraged by staff. Educational reviews provide achievable and thoughtful targets which young people and staff

understand. This means that young people's progress is regularly monitored to help them achieve the most from their placements. Complaints are addressed without delay and information for both young people and parents about how to make a complaint is available in suitable formats. Young people say they know how to make a complaint. However, outcome and progress of complaints are not always recorded. This means that evidence that complainants have been updated on their concerns is not clear.

Medication is managed well. Staff have appropriate levels of training to administer this in a safe and controlled way. Storage of medication is suitable. Staff are competent and experienced in administration processes including recording all information. Records are regularly monitored.

Young people enjoy a range of activities which they enjoy and benefit from. There are a number of outings and holidays organised. However, some young people have been frustrated in not being able to access the soft play and sensory rooms located on site, after school hours. Such rooms are locked and many young people feel they would like to use these rooms during weekends and evenings. It is not clear why such activities are restricted to school hours.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Safeguarding is rigorously promoted at this setting. Notifications to agencies, such as Ofsted and placing and local authorities are sent promptly and provide full details of the actions taken to safeguard young people. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and guidance, and demonstrate a good knowledge of procedure. A placing authority social worker commented: 'I receive regular incident reports and the staff show they understand safeguarding practice well.'

Children and young people live in a safe and supportive environment and are cared for by an experienced, resourceful and competent staff team. Effective strategies are very well developed to support young people in managing their behaviour. For example, the use of social stories enables young people to understand the context of their placements and develop positive relationships with others.

Staff work with young people in a creative and nurturing way. Staff understand the needs of young people and how to effectively reduce anxiety and stress. Internal monitoring processes scrutinise how staff interact and work with young people to reduce the potential for physical restraint. Sanctions are proportionate, reasonable and effective. Physical intervention is used only in circumstances which warrant such action. Young people say they feel safe and are cared for well by staff.

Young people rarely go missing from this school due to the high level of supervision. One young person has been reported missing since the last inspection and this was managed well, with the young person safely returned. Staff are clear about their

responsibilities in reporting such incidents and refer to the current protocol for missing from home guidance to inform their practice.

Staff regularly update risk assessments after, for example, any significant incident involving young people. The assessments are comprehensive and cover such areas as bullying, behaviour management and potential risks of going missing. Staff use these assessments to work and care for young people safely. Young people say that staff listen and help them if they have concerns about bullying from other residents.

Recruitment procedures are thorough, maintaining a high level of vetting before staff start to work with young people. References are verified by telephone to confirm the legitimacy of the supporting documents. Equality and diversity are clearly referred to in care staff job descriptions, thus demonstrating the ethos of the service delivering individualised care.

Health and safety checks are regularly carried out and meet statutory guidance. Young people are aware of what to do in the event of a fire through periodic drills and evacuations.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The service is managed effectively to promote good outcomes for young people with complex behavioural and learning needs. Staff receive regular supervision and the management team provides consistent support in their work with young people. Training needs are identified and the professional development of staff is always considered. New staff undertake a comprehensive induction process which is effective and enables them to be more confident with young people on shift.

Internal monitoring of the service is robust and provides staff with a consistent and effective overview of current practice. Such monitoring identifies areas of strength as well as areas for improvement. For example, the detailed current review of the use of restraints is helping to modify how staff approach young people when agitated. The home hopes to reduce the level of restraints over the next 12 months.

There were three recommendations made at the last inspection. All have been suitably addressed. These refer to behaviour management practice, security of the home and development of a maintenance programme. The provider has responded to these areas for improvement in a timely manner.

Policies and procedures are available and understood by staff. However, the policy on equality and diversity does not refer to current legislation or practice guidance. While staff understand the needs of young people from a range of backgrounds, this is not presently embedded in some placement plans.

Placing authority social workers are impressed with how the service supports and



cares for young people. Social workers visit regularly and comment on the professionalism and supportive nature of staff.

The home's Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed and accessible to parents and placing authorities. Young people have a guide that is written in a style suitable for residents to read and understand, for example, by the use of photographs, symbols and signs. A young person indicated that they have seen this and it is kept in their bedroom.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.