

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	26/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC372504
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	The Senad Group Limited
Registered provider address	Senad Group Ltd, 1 St Georges House, Vernon Gate, Derby, DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual	Mark Flynn
Registered manager	Lesley Mawbey
Inspectors	Rachel Griffiths and Ros Chapman

Inspection date	26/07/2016
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	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC372504

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people make good progress in a variety of areas, including health, education and emotional and social development. As a consequence, their life chances improve.
- Children and young people are happy. They enjoy positive relationships with a core group of skilled and committed staff who know them well, and who provide them with high levels of praise and encouragement to achieve their targets.
- There is an effective multidisciplinary approach to each child's and young person's care. Cohesive working practices between care staff, school staff and the therapy team ensure that each child and young person receives quality individualised care which meets their specific needs to a good standard.
- Staff implement detailed risk management and behaviour support plans to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people. For some children and young people, the help and support provided results in significant reductions in challenging behaviours.
- The voice of children and young people is very strong. Staff are creative and use a range of methods and tools to ensure that children and young people with learning and communication difficulties are consulted about all aspects of their care.
- Management arrangements are sound. The current manager is about to take up another post but the current deputy manager has already been appointed to take over the role. A well-planned succession is underway to ensure consistency for staff and children/young people. Despite these imminent changes, staff continue to feel valued and well supported by leaders and managers.
- A shortfall and two areas for improvement have been identified during the inspection. These are in relation to one aspect of the home's safeguarding policy, the temperature of the room where medication is kept and in respect of record-keeping. These issues have not had a negative impact on the care and support provided, but have the potential to do so if not rectified.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect, with specific reference to that policy including clear timescales and staff roles and responsibilities in relation to reporting allegations. (Regulation 34(1)(b))	09/09/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that staff comply with the guidance outlined in 'Managing medicines in care homes' (March 2014), specifically in relation to the temperature of the room where medication is stored. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.17)
- Ensure that case records are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is part of a privately owned residential school for children and young people with learning difficulties. The service can accommodate up to 39 children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Good
03/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/07/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and young people make good progress in many aspects of their lives. One parent described their son's progress as 'amazing', and another said: 'I have seen progress in terms of my son's behaviour, his demeanour and his education. He is happy and safe. I cannot praise the staff enough.' Staff support children and young people well to reach their full potential. Children and young people present as very happy and settled. They speak positively about their experiences and relationships with the staff. One young person said: 'This is the best place to live.' Another commented, 'We get to go on lots of trips and the staff do lots of fun things with me. They are very good at looking after me.' Staff also provide high levels of praise and celebrate children's and young people's achievements. These are celebrated in monthly student newsletters and in photos displayed around the houses. The positive relationships that children and young people have with a core group of staff provide them with a sense of stability and security. Although there has been some staff turnover since the last inspection, the commitment of a core group of skilled and experienced staff in minimising the impact of this on children and young people is commendable. They have continued to provide good-quality individualised care. A parent said: 'Staff understand my son's needs extremely well and his care is always tailored to his needs and situation. As he does not cope with change, they ensure that he is only cared for by staff he knows well.' Education is provided on-site and all children and young people engage in full-time individualised packages of education which reflect their needs and learning styles. From their admission, children and young people make good progress. A parent commented: 'Before coming here my child was out of school for two years and now he is in full-time education and is doing really well.' A young person also commented proudly on his educational progress and experiences. He said: 'I am very good at school. I am good at maths and English and I do work experience.' Children and young people acquire new skills and receive accredited awards for them. This gives them a sense of achievement in addition to increased opportunities in adult life. Children and young people have access to a wide range of on-site specialist support. This includes speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, a psychotherapist and a physiotherapist. As a result of cohesive working practices	

between care staff and the on-site experts, children's and young people's needs are met holistically, resulting in improved physical and emotional health and quality of life.

Transitions for children and young people moving into the home are well managed. Thorough pre-admission multidisciplinary assessments include visits to, and observations of, children and young people, and discussions with parents and professionals. This ensures that, at the point of admission, staff already have a detailed insight into how to meet individual needs. Careful planning and preparation for new placements ensure that children and young people have the best opportunity to settle successfully into the home.

Staff help older young people to develop life and independence skills, and the progress they make in this area is good. A young person said: 'I am now trusted to have my own keys. I do my own laundry and I plan, shop and cook.' Improved life skills help to develop young people's confidence and self-belief and will be of great assistance when they move on to the next stage of their life. Planning for transitions takes place well in advance of a proposed move, to ensure that the right placement is identified. A member of staff who is dedicated to transitions ensures that they go smoothly through careful planning and coordination. One young person who is due to move on shortly has been visited by staff from his new home, and is now completing a structured plan of visits in preparation for his move. When he leaves, he will have a memory board to reflect the time spent at this home, and staff will maintain contact for the first year after the move to provide any additional support that he may require.

Despite children and young people having communication difficulties, their views remain central to all aspects of their care. A range of communication methods, such as house meetings and the use of photos, pictorial questionnaires and social stories, are used to ascertain views and help children and young people make choices. All children and young people contribute to their own care plans and some write their own. Such excellent levels of communication and consultation are empowering for children and young people. It helps them feel respected and valued and helps raise their self-esteem.

Staff practice in relation to the safe storage, administration and auditing of medication is good. However, during the inspection, one of the rooms where medication is stored was at a temperature above recommended levels. Although there is no evidence that this has had an impact on the welfare and safety of children and young people, it has the potential to affect the medication stored in the room.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people feel safe, and the positive relationships they have with staff who they know and trust help to provide them with a good sense of safety and security. One young person said: 'Staff make me feel happy and safe because they know me really well.' Staff work hard to promote positive relationships between children and young people, some of whom, as a result of their disabilities, have historically struggled in social or group situations. Through individual and group work, children and young people are helped to integrate, make friends, and learn to respect and cope with different personality or behavioural traits. They are helped to understand what bullying is and that it is not acceptable in any circumstances. This is high on the agenda at house meetings and helps create a safe and harmonious environment for children and young people to live in. Clear risk management plans and multi-agency packages of help and support not only protect but empower children and young people. For example, a detailed risk assessment was undertaken for one young person who wanted to go horse riding. The young person was then prepared for the activity through the use of a social story. Following this, they were able to participate in and enjoy this new experience, as part of their growth and social development, without their safety being compromised. Although some children and young people have a history of going missing, there have been no incidents of this occurring since before the last interim inspection. On the occasions that children or young people have tried to leave the home, staff have followed them and successfully encouraged them to return. Staff members' understanding of each child's or young person's individualised missing protocols, as well as high levels of supervision and positive relationships, are effective protective and preventative factors which provide children and young people with a high level of protection from going missing and the risks associated with this. Comprehensive behaviour support plans give staff very clear insight into children's and young people's individual behaviours and provide proactive and positive guidance on how to manage them. Staff understand individual triggers and are proactive in trying to prevent significant incidents, but also have clear and effective strategies for when they do occur. As a consequence of this approach, there has been a significant reduction in some children's and young people's challenging behaviours. One parent said: 'My son used to be violent and aggressive all of the time. Now he just has the odd blips. The staff are doing an amazing job.' For some children and young people, physical interventions are required in order to ensure either their own safety or that of others. Records of such incidents are	

detailed, and following each incident staff, children and young people are debriefed to consider the effectiveness and impact of the intervention. The acting deputy manager analyses incidents and seeks to establish any patterns and trends in relation to them. In consultation with the therapy team, he is taking a proactive approach to reduce the level and frequency of physical interventions in the home. This monitoring system is proving successful, with a slight reduction in the number of physical interventions since the last full inspection.

Since the last interim inspection there have been three allegations made about the conduct of staff. On each occasion, as a result of immediate actions taken, the welfare and safety of children and young people were prioritised. However, on occasions there was a delay in reporting the allegations to the appropriate people. Any delay could hinder a thorough independent investigation and ultimately has the potential to have an impact on levels of safety in the home. In response to this, leaders and managers have reflected that the home's safeguarding policy was not specific enough regarding reporting procedures and timescales. Leaders and managers are now in the process of implementing an amended policy and embedding improved reporting practices. This is work in progress.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
There have been recent and significant changes to the senior management team. The registered manager is due to move to manage a different home, operated by the same provider. The deputy manager has been promoted and he is currently in the process of registering with Ofsted. He is suitably qualified and feels well supported by senior leaders. In addition, a new acting deputy manager has been promoted internally. As the new management team has been promoted from within the service, they already know the staff, children and young people living in the home well. This has helped to minimise any impact on them as a result of these imminent changes. The new management team has been quick to identify areas of strength in the home and areas which they intend to develop. Since the last interim inspection, two requirements have been met. Children's and young people's educational targets are now being regularly reviewed jointly by care and education staff, and care staff now have access to school reports. Consequently, staff have improved their knowledge of how they can help children and young people to achieve educationally. All staff who are 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'. In addition to this, there is a comprehensive programme of mandatory and additional training which staff engage in to enhance their knowledge, insight and understanding in relation to the	

specific needs of children and young people living in the home. For example, staff have completed training in respect of autism, communication styles and systems and Prader-Willi syndrome, among a wide range of other issues. This, and good monitoring systems in relation to training, ensures that staff remain up to date with their training and are therefore equipped with the skills and knowledge to meet the specific needs of children and young people living in the home.

Staff members' knowledge and development are also promoted through attending regular team meetings, having regular consultations with on-site therapists and receiving regular formal supervision. These activities give staff member's opportunities to reflect on their practice and on the needs of the children and young people they are caring for. They also ensure that practice in the home is closely monitored, and provide scope for staff development and for further improvements in the delivery of care.

The home's statement of purpose is up to date. This document, and the children's guide, which is in both written and pictorial form, are readily available in the home for anyone who wishes to see them, in order to understand what services are provided. The documents provide an accurate reflection of the home, and the staff and managers are working in line with its stated aims and objectives.

Managers and leaders have good monitoring systems to enable them to fully understand the performance of and progress made by each child or young person. Data collected daily is incorporated into monthly monitoring reports to track patterns and trends and progress in all aspects of children's and young people's lives. Additionally, children's and young people's progress is monitored through the collection of photographs and memorabilia of their experiences and achievements. These provide them with a record of their progress and experiences; things they can treasure and be proud of in the future.

Children's and young people's case files contain comprehensive placement and behaviour support plans which give a coherent picture of the care being provided. In some files, however, there are some minor gaps in recording. For example, on one file a progress plan had not been fully updated and in another file, health appointments which had been attended have not been recorded. While these minor recording issues are not having an impact on children's and young people's welfare, incomplete records have the potential to affect the consistency and quality of care if they remain out of date.

External quality assurance reports are detailed and highlight the strengths of the home as well as areas for improvement. The newly appointed manager is in the process of implementing a new internal quality assurance report format, which will incorporate feedback from children and young people, staff, parents and professionals. This, alongside his enthusiasm and drive to improve children's and young people's lives, is indicative of a service that strives to continually improve.

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 children looked after 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 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 that 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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