

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372504
Inspection date	26/09/2013
Inspector	Amanda Ellis / Catherine Honey
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	05/03/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is part of a privately owned residential school for children and young people with learning difficulties. The service can accommodate up to 55 children and young people.

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 good quality care provided by an enthusiastic and committed staff team. Care planning is highly individualised and takes account of individual's needs, wishes and preferences. Despite young people's complex needs, they make excellent progress in relation to their starting points.

Effective frameworks support young people's health, education, social and therapeutic needs. As a result, young people grow in self-esteem and confidence.

Sound safeguarding processes minimise the risk of abuse. Young people say that they are safe and feel safe. They have positive relationships with staff that provide consistent boundaries regardless of the behaviours young people present.

Young people's needs are met because there is a strong and committed leadership team. The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes action to make improvement.

Shortfalls identified during the inspection relate to some aspects of reviewing physical interventions, consultation in internal monitoring processes and omissions in the Statement of Purpose. These shortfalls do not affect positive outcomes for young people.

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
4 (2001)	ensure that a copy of the Statement of Purpose is provided to Ofsted which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1, with particular reference to the provision of a current staff list and the age range of young people for whom care is intended (Regulation 4 (1) (2))	04/11/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. This system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	04/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each home regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice. (NMS 3.21)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress in this home. They learn to manage their behaviours because of positive attachments and relationships with skilled carers. Staff provide consistency in care and boundaries, which mean that young people develop an understanding of expectations. This results in improved outcomes in education and social engagement.

Individuality is embraced and diversity is celebrated. Young people benefit from meaningful opportunities to explore their backgrounds and experiences. Consequently, young people learn to develop a positive self-view and confidence.

Young people enjoy good health. Their physical, emotional and psychological health needs are addressed through close partnership work with a range of health professionals. They have detailed health care plans as part of their wider placement plan, which are implemented in their routine care. Young people lead healthy

lifestyles and are supported to learn to make healthy choices. Consequently, health outcomes significantly improve throughout their placement.

Young people enjoy excellent attendance at school and as a result, their attainment from their starting points is impressive. Overall, good progress is achieved in all subjects including English and mathematics, with many young people making outstanding progress in English. Their achievements and efforts are celebrated, which means their confidence, motivation and engagement increases.

Contact with family, friends, and other significant people is actively promoted. The staff team work sensitively to support positive contact both within and outside of the home. Flexible and creative contact arrangements are organised wherever possible, for the benefit of the young people and their families. This means young people's identity needs are met through the promotion of family involvement.

The development of independence is encouraged according to the age and ability of the young people. They learn to take some responsibility for cleaning their bedrooms, cooking, managing their laundry, and help with tidying the home. This helps young people to develop appropriate self-care and independence skills in readiness for moving placements.

Quality of care

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

A competent and well-trained staff team looks after young people. Staff relationships with young people are supportive and respectful. Staff understand how to communicate with and understand young people who may have limited or no verbal skills. Young people develop and learn because of effective relationships with staff.

The views, wishes and feelings of young people are actively sought. This means that they have opportunities to influence both the running of the home and have individual choice. Examples include regular house meetings, schools council meetings and consultation on a range of topics. Consequently, through different methods, the young people can express their views on the quality of their care.

Complaints processes are accessible and are understood by the young people. Wall displays are visible in all the young people's houses. They contain information about what to do if you are unhappy and are in symbol and word form, therefore understandable for most young people. Additionally, the provision of specially adapted telephones, for the sole use of young people, enables contact with children's rights services and Ofsted.

Care planning, risk management procedures and behaviour management plans are a particular strength. Care plans are effective because they provide an excellent assessment of need. Plans are comprehensive, regularly reviewed and detailed. They identify the full range of needs for each young person. This takes into account their age, gender, religion, culture and levels of abilities. Consequently, equality and

diversity are embedded within the care planning process and individual needs are addressed.

The home provides an environment where young people's health needs are understood. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of autism and associated medical and health needs. Young people's health is fully promoted and protected because there are safe and effective procedures for the storage and administration of medication.

Parents say that their children receive excellent support with attending and doing well at school. School and home staff have effective daily communication regarding the education and care routines. Young people benefit from the consistency in care that this provides.

Irrespective of disability, all young people are encouraged and supported to explore their skills and abilities. Young people participate in activities with each other and in the community. This means that they widen horizons and develop new interests.

The accommodation provides young people with an environment, which meets their needs, both in terms of their preferences and their disabilities. The standards of maintenance, cleanliness, décor and furnishings are very good. The houses are homely and comfortable and young people choose the arrangements for their rooms. For example, bedrooms are personalised by all young people based on their own preferences. There are good levels of privacy for young people. Some bedrooms have en-suite toilet and shower

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe in the home. Clear policies and procedures are in place to enable staff to take appropriate actions to keep young people safe. Safeguarding concerns or incidents receive a prompt response, with appropriate management oversight. This means that risks are managed and young people are protected from harm.

Bullying is not tolerated within the home and it is regularly discussed in young person's meetings. The potential for bullying is recognised by staff, which means that they are vigilant in their monitoring of young people. These measures lead to young people living in a safe environment.

Incidents of young people who go missing from the home are very low. When young people have been missing from care, the home implements a clear policy and procedure. Strong working relationships and agreements with local police further ensure young people are protected as far as possible. Young people receive a positive response upon their return. They receive support and advice about keeping themselves safe. This means all opportunities are used to educate young people in keeping themselves safe.

Risk assessments and behaviour management plans for young people are detailed and identify triggers of behaviour and detail strategies to minimise risks. This means that young people are allowed to take appropriate risks in line with their age, understanding and current behaviours. Therefore assessments and plans are responsive to young people's changing needs.

Staff encourage positive behaviour for young people at all times. Young people benefit from individualised reward and incentive schemes and learn to take responsibility for their behaviour. Observations and records demonstrate that good behaviour is recognised and rewarded.

The use of physical restraint is variable and dependent on behaviours and risk. It is used as a last resort to prevent injury to young people and staff. Staff are suitably trained and recording of such incidents is in line with the legislative framework. Managers monitor the incidence of physical interventions in a rigorous manner. However, there is insufficient analysis to identify trends and patterns of behaviours. This means that opportunities to inform future practice are not captured.

Staff employed to work in the home experience a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions. Robust recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure the protection of young people from potential harm.

The home is physically safe for the young people. Health and safety systems are underpinned by comprehensive risk assessment. Health and safety checks, including fire equipment and drills are regularly undertaken, thereby ensuring the continuous safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management arrangements for the home have a clear focus on improving the outcomes for young people. The requirement and recommendation made at the previous inspection have been met in full as the home has improved the way it promotes the rights of young people, and ensures coherent practices for record keeping.

Managers are good at responding to complaints. Complaints are investigated and resolved promptly. They are managed in a transparent and robust manner, with subsequent changes in care practice to improve practice and avoid similar issues arising in the future.

External quality assurance processes identify weaknesses and promote improvement. However, the effectiveness of internal monitoring is limited as it fails to consult with young people or stakeholders as part of its process.

The home has development plans in place that reflect proposals for continued improvement to the home, staff development and training. The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes action to tackle weakness and make improvements.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose and children's guide. These inform young people, their families, and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. However, the Statement of Purpose does not include details of the professional experience of managers and staff or the age range of the young people for whom it provides care. This means that prospective placing authorities and parents do not get a complete picture of the home to base decisions to enable the matching of suitable admissions.

Training arrangements provide all staff with comprehensive and good quality training. The training programme is diverse and provides opportunities to study in many areas, pertinent to the needs of the young people. All staff receive training in key issues such as safeguarding, first aid and food hygiene. High quality training means that staff are well prepared to meet the care needs of young people.

Supervision arrangements are consistent. Staff and managers receive good quality supervision at regular intervals. Staff report that they value the support that they receive in supervision and in their working practice.

Young people's records are up to date, detailed and stored securely. Young people are directly involved in developing their care plans and recording significant events in their lives. This means that young people have records, which provide a comprehensive understanding of their life within the home.

The Registered Manager has systems in place to notify relevant agencies, including Ofsted, of significant events to ensure the protection of young people by multi-agency decision-making. Safeguarding professionals and social workers report good safeguarding practice.

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.