

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	9 February 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephen Smith
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Random

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	22 September 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This home is part of a special school, which provides education and residential care for children with autism and complex learning and social difficulties. These include challenging behaviours, autism and asperger's syndrome. As an independent school providing over 295 days of residential care per year, the whole school is registered as a children's home.

The school offers residential provision on two sites for up to 30 children. One house at the school offers care for 52 weeks per year to 16 young people. The other house is some distance away and provides care for up to 14 young people from Monday to Friday during school term time.

Each children's home is set within a local community. All have access to transport belonging to the school for the young people as well as public transport, local shops and amenities.

### Summary

This interim unannounced inspection assessed all key standards in the outcome area of staying safe. It did not assess outcomes in the areas of being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being or organisation. The inspection also assessed the home's action taken in response to the recommendations made at the last inspection.

The home treats children respectfully and promotes their privacy in line with their plans of care. Children are protected from bullying and the home has a clear and accessible complaints process that responds to any concerns or complaints that young people may have. The home prevents any unauthorised absence by young people without restricting their liberty. Child protection procedures and arrangements are robust and promote children's safety and the physical aspects of the home's safety are well managed.

Behaviour management is a key strength of the home. Staff work hard to create a positive environment and interact with young people in such a way as to reduce their anxiety. Staff have good relationships with young people and use these to teach and shape positive behaviour. Physical intervention is used minimally; diversionary techniques are only used to prevent children harming themselves or others.

Children live and are cared for in a home that keeps them safe. Recruitment practices are sound with some strong aspects; although, the home is not as good as it could be at exploring applicants' previous employment histories.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### Improvements since the last inspection

There were no requirements made at the last inspection but the Registered Persons were asked to act on five recommendations. These related to records of physical intervention, risk assessments and the need to submit the home's child protection procedures to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for comment. The home has acted on these matters and this has helped ensure that children's safety is promoted.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

## Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's placement plans are stored securely which provides young people with confidentiality and privacy regarding their records. However, they are readily accessible for staff reference. Care is delivered in a way that provides young people with personal privacy and dignity. Staff are sensitive to children's feelings and wishes and follow clear guidelines regarding the delivery of personal care.

Information about complaints is available in the home in pictorial form to help young people understand the procedure. Information is available for parents in a variety of documents. Staff members know how to respond should a complaint be made and a recording and monitoring process is in place. No complaints have been made about the home and its operation.

The home has its own child protection procedures in place. Following a recommendation at the last inspection these have been submitted to the LSCB to ensure they comply with their overarching procedures. These procedures are supported by guidance relating to the provision of personal and intimate care. A rolling programme of mandatory child protection training is in place for the home's staff and all staff complete and update this training regularly. This helps keep young people safe.

The home has a clear policy in place regarding bullying. The needs of the young people accommodated at the home means that their behaviour can impact negatively on others without them intending it to do so and this is reflected within guidance for staff. A risk assessment has been developed, following a recommendation made at the last inspection, to identify the likelihood of bullying behaviour including the times and places where this is most likely. This identifies action to be taken to prevent bullying. Staff members have undertaken training in countering bullying within the child protection training provided to them. The nature and pronounced needs of the young people accommodated and the home's staffing levels means that children do not go missing from the home. A policy and procedure is in place to respond to the emergency situation that would exist if a young person did go missing. Well considered arrangements are in place to keep children safe and monitor their whereabouts without restricting their liberty.

The approach to behaviour management is a key strength of the home. The home manages behaviour well by using positive methods and the relationships between staff and young people are also positive. Emphasis is placed on managing the home's environment and how staff interact with children. This means that any anxiety experienced by children is reduced and this helps them learn appropriate behaviour. Children's behaviour support plans focus on prevention and positive methods of guiding and shaping behaviour. They are well structured and clearly describe children's behaviour, triggers, methods of prevention and how to respond. They also identify what, if any, physical intervention methods can be used. This proactive approach means that young people are helped to develop and progress. Records of physical intervention show that incidents are infrequent and minor in nature with intervention being limited to physical prompts, guidance and diversionary techniques. A suitable behaviour management policy is in place and there are records for sanctions and incidents of physical intervention. Physical

intervention records are maintained in appropriate detail in a bound and tamperproof book following recommendations made at the last inspection.

The home undertakes risk assessments on young people's known and likely activities and behaviour. Following a recommendation at the last inspection these clearly identify the likelihood and severity of potential risks and the action to be taken to minimise these or reduce them to acceptable levels.

Health and safety matters and the maintenance of the home's premises, services and equipment ensure that children live in a safe environment. For example, regular checks and maintenance are carried out on the gas and electrical installation and appliances as well as the fire prevention and fighting equipment. Fire training is provided to staff members and the home undertakes fire evacuation drills that include staff and young people on a monthly basis at varying times of the day and evening.

Recruitment practices are generally sound. The home has a thorough recruitment policy in place and this is generally followed in practice. Commendably, telephone enquiries with referees are made to verify and explore written references received. However, applicants' employment histories are not always established in sufficient detail. This could mean that gaps in employment, and the reasons for these, are not identified and explored. This weakens the home's practice in ensuring that all staff are suitable people to work with children.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is not judged.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is not judged.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is not judged.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure that fully detailed employment histories are received for all new staff members so that any gaps in employment can be identified and explored. (NMS 27)