

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	2 February 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Julian Parker
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Random

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	2 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 setting is a residential special school registered as a children's home. The service offers a comprehensive, integrated, specialised education and care package for children aged between eight and 18 years diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorder that usually includes associated complex needs. The service is provided for both full-time and respite care of students who are not permanently looked after.

Care is provided in a safe, well-staffed, structured environment that has been carefully designed and constructed to an exceptionally high standard.

Children and young people admitted to the school follow their own bespoke programme of care and education in an atmosphere of high expectation whilst being treated as a valued individual. The school has a wide range of on-site facilities and children and young people are provided with access to educational, psychiatric and paediatric consultants for professional care advice and support.

### Summary

This was an interim inspection that looked at key outcome areas and actions arising from the last inspection. Outcomes specifically relating to children and young people's health, how they are kept safe and how the service is staffed and managed were considered.

This residential special school, registered as a children's home, is judged as satisfactory with good features and numerous examples of good practice. The needs of very vulnerable children and young people with learning disabilities continue to be well provided for in a high quality environment where individualised plans are progressed by competent well trained staff. The school and staff team are generally well organised and managed although recent changes to the management structure and staffing deployment have yet to become settled.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered provider was required to ensure that all staff receive regular and recorded supervision within the timescales prescribed by the national minimum standards. Whereas some progress has been made with the detail of this requirement, full compliance has not been achieved because of ongoing changes to staff and the school management.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children and young people receive a thoughtful, varied diet that fully addresses their particular preferences and medical needs. The quality, variety and preparation of children and young people's food at the school is enhanced by ongoing attention being given to ensure that all aspects of preparation and delivery are of the highest standard. Children and young people are able to enjoy fresh, wholesome, locally sourced food. Effective health promotion includes a full dietary assessment of each young person that evaluates medical, nutritional, cultural and religious needs, supporting healthy eating. Individual school houses incorporate their own

practice kitchens where students can learn about aspects of food preparation and keep a selection of their own favourite foods.

The health and wellbeing of children and young people is afforded the highest priority by following the registered provider's policies on health promotion and adjusting these where necessary to more fully recognise and respond to the particular needs of children and young people with autism. Policies include guidance on drugs, alcohol, smoking and healthy eating

Effective medical and health care for children and young people is in place because all their health and disability needs are identified prior to and during admission. Action is taken to ensure appropriate levels of attention are provided by both the care staff and the school's medical team of qualified nurses. The provision includes dedicated sick bays in both accommodation blocks. The school enforces strict infection controls with visitors to the site to reduce the potential for communicable diseases being transmitted to vulnerable children and young people.

The health needs of residents are comprehensively recorded. Health plans relate specifically to the particular medical needs of children and young people, for example, by fully addressing particular medication and allergy related concerns. Inclusive advice is collated through ongoing consultation with their parents, health professionals, key worker and placing authority social workers confirming the school's practice of working collaboratively to ensure the safety of children and young people. The school's medical team can address most health related eventualities but can utilise established links with local health care professionals and disability consultants.

The school looks after the children and young people in a safe and nurturing environment. The reporting and recording of all accidents and incidents is proficient and has been improved by drawing on practical experience. Professional advice from the local primary care trust has informed the school's medication, administration and management procedures and effective security and prescribing practice prevents the maladministration of any medicines. Health records confirm the involvement of parents with the wellbeing of their children because case records include emergency medical treatment consents and written permission to administer or withhold medication.

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

The provision is good.

Children and young people are cared for with respect and in a manner that promotes their dignity. This is demonstrated by care staff communicating and interacting with them in all aspects of their daily living. Individualised care routines confirm the impact of learning difficulties and focused, often dually staffed, supervision ensures the ongoing safety of children and young people. Staff follow guidelines for promoting privacy wherever it is safe to do so. All children and young people have their own rooms that are specially equipped to be compatible with their particular needs. When settled into their personal space and care routines, greater levels of stimuli are gradually introduced to daily life as part of a risk assessed, phased programme. Although many children and young people display poor communication abilities all are actively encouraged to maintain regular contact with their families. High levels of discretion are promoted by recorded observations and information being kept secure. Staff receive training on developing an effective recording style and maintaining confidentiality.

Children and young people's safety and welfare is actively promoted because staff follow sound policies and procedures for safeguarding them from abuse and bullying. The school adopts Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and processes to inform its own practice with vulnerable children and young people. Any matters arising are evaluated to improve how the school effectively keeps children and young people safe.

There is a complaints policy and procedure in place. These describe how complaints may be made about the service by children and young people or any adults advocating on their behalf. All concerns are taken seriously, formally addressed and receive a written response from a manager. The home records a substantial level of compliments and positive comments from its stakeholders and parents of residents.

The whole school staff team receive an induction programme that includes safeguarding training. Training enables all staff to recognise signs of abuse or potential abuse and to respond appropriately to any allegations of poor practice. Training is structured to recognise the particular vulnerabilities of students attributed to their disability. The school has a whistle blowing procedure that includes guidance on responding to allegations about staff members while keeping children and young people safe from any suspected poor practice.

Children and young people are effectively safeguarded against situations where they may go missing. A high staffing ratio, physically secure campus and student's individualised risk assessments effectively prevent the opportunity for children and young people to put themselves at risk.

The school operates a holistic approach to behaviour management that broadly includes aspects of dealing with bullying, relationships between staff and children and young people and the effective management of conduct associated with a learning disability. The school presently adopts an accredited methodology for managing challenging behaviour, promoting the minimal and safest use of physical restraint with children and young people. All care staff are trained or have scheduled training courses equipping them to understand and recognise the generally diverse range of challenging behaviours likely to be exhibited. The school evaluates all behavioural incidents to learn what works with individual children and young people and thereby inform future practice. Ongoing improvements continue to be developed to more fully confirm, through records, compliance with minimum standards.

The school site is equipped with a sophisticated modern fire detection sensor system. Staff and young people regularly practise fire drills and fire equipment is checked in accordance with guidance. Scheduled environmental checks and a responsive on-site maintenance programme confirm that children and young people live in safe surroundings.

The school has an established and effective recruitment policy and procedure that incorporates comprehensive checking of all individuals who may come into contact with the very vulnerable children and young people being looked after. The recruitment process fully meets the prescribed standards in the manner in which staff are interviewed and how background detail is presented on personnel files. The school employs strict controls with all visitors to the site to prevent any unsupervised access to vulnerable children and young people.

## **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 satisfactory.

The Statement of Purpose specifies what care will be provided by the school and how this will be delivered. This key document, although regularly reviewed, does not identify the recent changes to the organisation, environment and staff teams. The document is made available to all parents, placing authorities and other stakeholders.

Care staff receive day-to-day and regular support from the revised management structure within the school. The present manager's post is overseen by the Centre Director until the position is confirmed by registration. Staffing changes have depleted the frequency of staff supervision and the formality of team meetings. The school's multidisciplinary team meetings continue to occur fortnightly and cover a set agenda including the care, health and education needs of the children and young people being looked after.

The school provides a comprehensive induction for all of its staff. All care staff receive statutory and specific training that considers the particular and complex needs of children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders ensuring that they are looked after by knowledgeable carers. The in-house training provided for staff is ongoing and high expectations are made of staff to become qualified. The school's record of training confirms that all statutory training is being accessed and any new unqualified staff are accessing National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 training very quickly, assisted by the registered provider's appointment of in-house assessors. The overall skill levels within teams are well matched to the needs of children and young people. This includes the capacity for supporting and mentoring less experienced staff.

The school's systems for management monitoring are effective in evaluating the day-to-day functioning and care provision. Ongoing adjustments to the delivery and recording format have been introduced to better confirm compliance with the national minimum standards. A school development plan and a workforce development plan are in place identifying both care and education objectives for the next year.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is because the school overtly respects each young person's individual difference and makes exceptional provision to ensure that every young person, irrespective of their disability, origin or any cultural difference is not disadvantaged from accessing any aspect of the service. The service promotes children and young people's right to the best possible service and promotes positive outcomes. Staff are knowledgeable and receive appropriate training to develop their practice in caring for the special needs of the children and young people.

The files of children and young people are confidentially stored and arranged in a manner that makes daily records easily available to care staff. Not all Schedule 3 information is readily

available because of the dispersed format of the files. The quality of recording is however high and file content is relevant for confirming the provision of care.

## 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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
28	ensure that all staff receive regular and recorded supervision within the timescales prescribed by the national minimum standards. Include the duration of the supervision session and the experience level of staff ie probationary or experienced Regulation 27 (national minimum standard 28.10)	2 June 2010
35	ensure that each child's case file contains the necessary information as detailed in schedule 3 Regulation 28(national minimum standard 35.2)	2 June 2010

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that the Statement of Purpose is updated to reflect the significant changes to aspects of the service (national minimum standard 1.1)
- ensure that a permanent care manager is appointed to the school and registered with Ofsted (national minimum standard 34.10)