

Inspection report for Children's Home

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 forms part of the services provided by The Children's Trust. The Children's Trust provides holistic services for children with multiple disabilities and complex health needs.

The school provides 52 week placements for learners and is, therefore, registered as a children's home. This is in addition to being registered with the Department for Education as a non-maintained school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties with an age range between five to 25 years.

The school has 44 educational placements. The registered children's home accommodates 33 pupils, in single or twin bedrooms. The boarding accommodation comprises of three separate houses.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a very short announced full inspection looking at all the key national minimum standards for children's homes. One recommendation made at the last inspection was revisited and a further two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to tightening up processes relating to records of fire drills and the reviewing of risk assessments to reflect their true status. The head of care expressed full commitment that this would be done.

For the purpose of this report children and young people will be referred to as learners, the preferred choice of the setting, staff and parents.

This is an outstanding service throughout. Overall the practice is so good that its 24 hour curriculum is currently being shared nationally and internationally. Outcomes for individual learners are excellent demonstrating individualised care and support which reflect a learner's needs exceptionally well. The comprehensive understanding of, and a varied and holistic approach to, implementing equality and diversity results in outstanding care being provided. This is a setting that continually strives for further improvement through research findings plus evaluative and reflective practice. Achievement across the school is outstanding due to the total education, therapy and care package it offers, plus exceptional management and a committed staff team.

Feedback from parents and carers, staff and multi disciplinary professionals was without exception excellent. Examples include; `the teaching and care staff are stunning- I couldn't wish for my child to spend his time with a more professional and caring group of people. The doctors are fantastic and I feel they know my child

better than any other medical professional he has ever had. I am completely valued and respected as his mother, and my child's level of needs means that I have to be confident that all involved with her welfare are up to date and aware of her care plan as well as fully aware of any physical issues she may have. I have always felt that those involved with my child are fully capable of this.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was recommended to review the safeguarding policy to ensure a separate document was in place for the different services within the organisation. This has been carried out and, as a result, the school has a separate document that has been overseen by an independent safeguarding expert.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The learners receive and enjoy excellent nutrition provision that meets their varying dietary needs. Specialist feeding programmes are professionally delivered, recorded and reviewed as necessary. The menus offer a varied and balanced diet, with choices from culturally-different foods available. All staff at the home have a good understanding of the dietary needs of each learner and what equipment may be needed to further support their independence. Regular multi-professional clinics are held to review individual eating and drinking regimes. Learners are well nourished and thrive with input from the speech and language therapist and regular visits from the dietician, who liaises directly with the catering department. Staff receive training relating to food hygiene and feeds, and their observed practice was highly professional. Overall feedback from parents and carers regarding the food provision was very good. Any issues raised by parents are discussed with the manager and the catering manager and quickly resolved.

The high level and complexity of care and support systems in place are a necessity for the learners who live at the setting. Care and practice observed throughout this inspection exceeded normal good practice. The care and support systems are organised, highly skilled and comprehensive. All health needs are identified, assessed and planned for and delivered by competent, committed and sensitive staff. A large range of specialist health related professionals are involved in the health and education provision, and deliver care of an outstanding standard. There are excellent records across the board relating to all aspects of individual care needs. Recent and more complex nursing needs have been catered for, such as, tracheotomy care. Staff have received appropriate training to meet these needs and deliver appropriate care in a competent and highly professional manner. Medical cover is available during the week by the on-site doctor and, in the evenings and at weekends, by the local general practitioner cover who visit the houses every Saturday and Sunday.

Medication administration is robust and extremely well organised. Safe practices and close monitoring enhances protection for the young people. All drugs are stored safely and recorded individually. Monitoring and auditing is excellent with reflective

practices in place to identify any errors that may occur. Consents are in place for each learner which cover all medical procedures. The learners' medication programmes are reviewed weekly, or daily if necessary, by the on-site doctor. A visiting National Health Service pharmacist visits three times a week to monitor medication and stock control. Staff are qualified to deliver all care needs and are supported by highly specialist health-related professionals. A very high number of staff are first aid trained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home has a policy and procedure regarding privacy and confidentiality. The Children's Trust Charter for Children acknowledges all children have a right to privacy, dignity and to individual choice. The setting's mission statement explicitly underlines this ethos. Confidential records and other information are securely held in locked cabinets and drawers within locked offices. Toilet and bathing facilities are of an excellent standard, hold a range of specialist equipment and afford good privacy; however, most learners need close supervision and have their intimate care needs met sensitively and with dignity.

There is a robust complaints procedure in place that parents and others are able to easily access. Parents of learners and staff confirm their awareness of the home's complaints procedure and are clear that they have no concerns regarding the standard of care and support provided. Parents openly praise the home for its commitment and professionalism. The home takes any complaint seriously and allows learners, their parents and others unrestricted access to such procedures. There has been one complaint since the last inspection that was dealt with in a timely manner with a good outcome for all involved. The setting invites regular attendance of a local advocacy service with excellent communication practices for learners to access.

The setting has a comprehensive child protection policy and procedure which also includes vulnerable adults' procedures and a flow chart of the processes to be followed. In addition, the home has access to the Surrey County Council Multi-Agency Safeguarding procedures. The setting employs qualified social workers, with one who sits on the local safeguarding board bringing additional knowledge and expertise to the service. Staff receive child protection training at induction and refresher training in this area is held periodically. Staff supervise learners closely and often provide one-to-one support in order to meet their needs and keep them safe. There are no current or ongoing child protection issues at the home. The home's arrangements in this area actively promote learners' safety, protection and well-being.

Due to their profound disabilities the learners do not bully intentionally. Any aggressive behaviour that may occur is usually a result of learners' disabilities and frustration rather than malicious or calculated intent. In any event staff are alert to such conduct and deal with behaviours promptly. The home's supervision and

support arrangements, and homely and caring atmosphere, help reduce the likelihood of bullying occurring.

Policies and procedures are in place for unauthorised absences although the learners have profound disabilities and very limited mobility. The inclination and likelihood of learners being absent without authority is extremely low.

The learners' behaviour is managed by positive reinforcement, encouragement and praise given verbally or by pictorial and signing methods. The emphasis is placed on ensuring that the overall environment is one likely to foster development through appropriate behaviour rather than to inadvertently encourage negative ones. Sanctions are not used as they are inappropriate due to profound disabilities of learners. There is a clinical holding policy and procedure which clearly outline the use of skilled minimum pressure and age-appropriate techniques, including splinting and wrapping, if required for specific interventions. The aim of clinical holding is to enable the learners undergoing clinical procedures to be held appropriately and safely in order to reduce levels of distress and anxiety in the learner and staff caring for them. Therapeutic restraint is an intervention used which restricts the learner's movements to meet their individual therapeutic safety needs. All restraint and holdings are recorded in individual records and reviewed very regularly. Written parental consent is obtained prior to the use of such restraint techniques. Staff have positive working relationships with the learners and interact and engage them appropriately. Staff communicate with learners via a range of forums including verbal communication, signing and touch. Staff are committed to learners and work with them in a diligent and professional way, showing patience, resilience and sensitivity. Staff speak with knowledge and authority regarding individual learner's backgrounds and medical conditions, and are clear regarding their future plans.

The home has a comprehensive health and safety policy with representatives on each of the houses and in the school. There is a health and safety committee which meets periodically and checks and audits on health and safety areas occur on a regular basis. All staff receive fire awareness and health and safety training, although not all records located on the individual houses evidenced that all staff had experienced fire drills. The head of care confirmed that all staff had in fact experienced fire training and that procedures would be tightened to ensure all records reflect this. Each individual house and learner has a fire risk assessment in place.

There is a wide range of generic and individual risk assessments that are comprehensive in content and in the main reviewed regularly. A small number of risk assessment viewed were out of date. However, the head of care confirmed they had been updated and again the processes to ensure all up-to-date assessments are stored on files would be tightened.

The trusts recruitment procedures are very robust ensuring maximum protection for learners. All volunteers undergo the same robust recruitment procedures as employed staff. Visitors are closely and suitably supervised.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The learners receive individual support of a high standard; being well planned and highly sensitive in its delivery. Staff are committed to the learners and work with them in a diligent and professional way. Comprehensive care plans detail and outline the support learners need in all areas of their lives. Access to specialist advice and guidance is on site or from specialists working in the community. The setting ensures that the learners have the individual support they need through the use of staff meetings, cause for concern meetings, comprehensive and informative daily staff handovers, and multidisciplinary working. Each learner has a key and a co-worker matched to them who provide them with individual support and liaise between the school, their families and other professionals. Feedback from parents and carers supported the outstanding levels of communication between families and the setting. Each learner's method of communication is known to staff and these are accessible for staff via individual communication passports. The learners observed appeared to be at ease in the company of all the staff on duty and social interaction was both spontaneous and warm. Excellent relationships were observed during the inspection with each learner treated as an individual.

Education provision is part of the 24 hour curriculum and offers learners a wide range of learning and social activities. The learners attend the on-site school with staff reinforcing education and learning via a range of activities in pastoral time. The learners are assessed prior to commencement of their placement and from the assessment procedure the school is able to identify areas of development. Many of the learners have conditions that cause regression or periods when they are medically unstable. This has an impact on development. Learners at the school generally function developmentally up to 12 months. In order to meet their learning needs the school's curriculum is extended to cover five core areas: communication, sensory cognitive, social, motor and life skills. The extended curriculum covers music, creative arts, leisure activities and religious education. Due to the curriculum being delivered in an integrated manner (incorporating learning, therapy and health needs) learners are given the opportunity to practise and achieve their learning goals in a wide range of settings. Factors, such as the time of day, the presence of different members of staff, the intrinsic motivational attraction of the activity or positioning, may affect a learner's ability to concentrate and learn. Religious Education is non-denominational and offers the learner experiences which will contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school that children attend on site holds weekly assemblies and at other times religious worship in classrooms. Individual religious or culture wishes of families are embraced.

The setting has extended its education provision and now provides appropriate provision for learners over the age of 16 years in the further education department. The setting also strives to facilitate continuing education for learners over the age of 19 and up to the age of 25 years. Transitions into adult placements are extremely well organised and delivered to ensure appropriate placements within a sustainable community.

The setting's outstanding curriculum is now being used at other provisions nationally and internationally.

Leisure and recreation provision is excellent, with a huge range of activities and visits on offer fully supported by staff and volunteers. The learners are not able to self-engage and thus rely on the staff to facilitate their involvement in activities. The school views inclusion as a process which maximises the entitlement of all pupils to a relevant and stimulating curriculum. This is delivered in the environment that will have the greatest impact on their learning and where their disabilities will not hinder them from embracing the experience. Regular visits to a wide range of community venues, bowling, cinema and libraries are enjoyed by the children. The school recognises that it is part of a far wider community to which it can contribute and actively seeks to ensure that all learners participate in that community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The admission and assessment process is extremely detailed and thorough in covering all aspects of a learner's needs and life. Comprehensive assessments are carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of specialist professionals. Individual communication methods are established prior to admission and developed further whilst at the setting. All young people have placement plans of a commendable high standard. Individual reviews are regular and of a high standard, involving all multi professionals involved in the learners life. Care plans are reviewed regularly and updated as and when; all recording is of a very high standard. Contact arrangements are recorded and detailed. One of the many outstanding features of the setting is the open door policy and contact with families and friends.

The learners are encouraged to influence the care they receive and the staff have developed effective communication systems to ensure their views are heard. The learners are never assumed to be unable to communicate their views. The staff team know the learners very well and can help them to make choices. They have a communication passport that informs new staff of likes and dislikes and their means of communication. The overwhelming majority of learners can demonstrate their happiness to be in the school by positive body language and gesture, for example, by smiling. For others it is the fact that they are still for a moment. Staff pool their knowledge of the learners experiences and responses to form a consensus of whether they feel the learners enjoyed a specific situation. This forms the basis of providing future experiences.

The admission and leaving process is both extremely well planned and sensitive in its manner. There is a large amount of information provided to parents and carers about both processes.

Staff relationships with learners are exemplary, sensitive, caring and professional. Throughout the home and school there are relaxed and friendly staff teams

committed to the care of the learners. Highly commendable practice was observed throughout the inspection.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The learners receive intense care and support to assist them towards independence. However, due to the profound nature of their disabilities, some are limited in what they can achieve in comparison with more able learners. Nevertheless, the inputs made by staff and the programmes implemented are commendable in that learners learn basic life skills as far as individually practicable. This may include independence regarding mobility, eating, dressing, toileting and washing and other basic areas. Learners' transition plans are in place which evidence a range of strategies and target areas for development and achievement. Such plans are monitored and reviewed as appropriate.

The learners live in accommodation that is of a high standard throughout. Communal and private space areas in all of the house units afford ample space. All communal areas are decorated and furnished to a high standard and are extremely well maintained. There is a range of pictures, photographs, ornaments and art work displayed, which also include positive ethnic images and representations. There are well-equipped sensory rooms and a multi faith room is available which learners have access to 24 hours a day. There are single and shared bedrooms which are decorated and furnished to an equally high standard as the communal areas and are personalised to an excellent degree with many large soft toys and other items. Bedrooms have a range of specialist equipment which is also maintained to a high standard. All equipment is regularly checked and is very suitable to meet individual needs. Since the last inspection the grounds have been developed with the installation of interactive fountains; clearly enjoyed by the learners.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Evidence can be seen throughout the provision and is embedded in all policies, procedures, aspects of the care and practices at the setting. All learners are treated as individuals celebrating their diversity. All learners have a rich and varied quality of life.

The setting has a wealth of information available for parents. The setting's Statement of Purpose is updated regularly. Learners' disabilities are such that a formal children's guide is not appropriate. There is a guide, in pictorial format, that briefly gives information but realistically no learner would be able to benefit from it.

The organisation of staffing is to be commended. The number of staff is very suitable and has been increased in line with changing needs. There is an excellent gender and age mix of the current staff team. Staff are happy working at the setting; many

say it is the best place they have ever worked. Staff training is structured, of a high standard and delivered by specialists. Qualified nurses are supported by care staff. All staff and volunteers receive an excellent induction programme followed by further training opportunities. Staff are suitably trained to carry out complex health tasks, some very intimate. All staff receive regular supervision together with annual appraisals.

The management of the setting is commendable. The headteacher/ Registered Manager is inspirational, innovative, highly effective, sensitive and totally committed to the needs of the learners and to those of her staff. She is fully supported by a strong senior management team that includes the deputy headteacher, head of care and senior therapists.

The care and practices are continually being developed in light of the robust monitoring. The manager of the school and head of care are very visible throughout the school and accommodation units. The head of care liaises closely with the manager and they lead a fully committed team of staff. Heads of houses carry out internal audits that the head of care views and acts on. The governors make termly visits, record their visits, and report back to the Board of Governors meetings. The school and Trust has a Quality Standards Manual with a time-framed audit process. The results are reported to the Trust Board. The Multi-Professional Quality Standard Team meets monthly. Regulation 33 visits are carried out monthly, are unannounced and submitted to Ofsted without fail.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure fire records accurately evidence that all staff have experienced fire evacuations (NMS 26.8)
- ensure all risk assessments are up to date. (NMS 26.2)