

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Clare Davies
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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 school provides care and accommodation for up to 53 students with autistic spectrum disorder between the ages of 11 to 19 years. It operates as an independent co-educational residential special school which also provides accommodation for a number of young people receiving up to 44 weeks boarding and is therefore registered as a children's home.

Students are accommodated in six on-site residential houses and one off-site in a neighbouring village. The school is set around a restored country house, within many acres of parkland.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This interim inspection was unannounced. The purpose of this visit was to assess how well the home is working to keep students safe and to consider the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection. All key standards in staying safe were assessed.

Significant improvement since the last inspection has been the appointments of a new principal and a head of care; this strengthens the senior management team in order to develop the service. The commitment to the care and education of the students is evident from the staff. The multi-disciplinary team engage collaboratively ensuring that the students remain at the centre of their work. There is a robust system of safer recruitment practices.

There continues to be some errors in the records of the administration of medication and whilst some efforts have been made to remove personal information on display in the residential houses, some records remain that could compromise students' privacy. The monitoring of complaints and physical interventions is undertaken on an individual level not across the service. Due to the limited nature of this inspection the overall judgement remains unchanged.

Improvements since the last inspection

Five actions were made at the last inspection and three of these have been met. The matters set out in Schedule 6 have been monitored by senior staff and records have been made of any complaint received. The provider has recently appointed a new head of care, they have yet to register as a manager with Ofsted.

Six recommendations were also made and four of these have been satisfactorily

addressed. Risk assessments relating to the grounds and environment have been reviewed and the records of fire drills are collated centrally. Bathroom locks are functioning and 86% of the care staff have completed or are undertaking a national vocational qualification at level 3. The provider has begun to consider how to monitor incidents of physical intervention in more detail and is exploring suitable training for the older more challenging students. However these recommendations have not been met in full and will be carried forward from this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Good staffing levels ensure that students are supervised in a safe environment. There are opportunities for students to have some privacy in their bedrooms and during personal care routines. Staff training covers areas of dignity and respect in relation to caring for children and young people with special needs. Since the last inspection personal information that was on display in communal areas has mostly been removed. However some charts for recording personal details still remain on display. These records could compromise privacy and they detract from a homely environment.

Each residential house has a book to record compliments and complaints. Students are supported in expressing their levels of satisfaction through varied methods of communication. Staff are skilled in recognising any behavioural changes to assist in determining what a problem may be. Very few complaints have been received from parents and/or professionals, records confirm that there have been satisfactory outcomes. Each house keeps a record, in addition to the school having a complaints log, however, there is no central review of these records to cross reference and identify any links. This lack of review has the potential for the provider to respond inconsistently to a dissatisfied parent or social care professional.

There are sound links with the local authority regarding any safeguarding concerns. A strong commitment to training in this area has ensured that senior staff have received a higher level of training with the local authority. This ensures that senior staff who provide on call cover are suitably skilled and aware of safeguarding procedures. To counter any bullying, there are very good staffing levels and such incidents are addressed through behaviour management, risk assessment and pupil support plans.

Residential staff work collaboratively with school staff, therapists and parents to document information on behaviours displayed. This information is collated and analysed by the psychology team to identify patterns and trends and propose

strategies to reduce such behaviours. There are regular review meetings of behaviour support plans to consider progress and any changes required. A custom-built database has recently been implemented to assist with the analysis. The senior managers plan to extract reports from the database to assist with the overall monitoring of behaviour; currently it is limited to the monitoring of individual students.

Staff are trained in the use of positive handling techniques with an emphasis on de-escalation and distraction. The provider has recognised that the accredited method used is not always suitable for older, challenging students and an alternative method to compliment the current training is being sought. There is good communication between the care staff and the psychology team who ensure that they work some evenings to be available to night care staff.

A more rigorous approach has been applied to the health and safety checks undertaken. Previous checks occurred regularly but lacked documentation as evidence. Some risk assessments were found to be outdated at the last inspection and these have all been reviewed, updated and now subject to an annual review system. New staff are given the task of producing a risk assessment during their induction to health and safety matters. This provides an opportunity to get familiar with risk management and recognise how it is the responsibility of every employee. New fire risk assessments have been produced for every residential house with the support of an external consultant. The county fire and rescue service has acknowledged this improvement following a visit to the premises in January this year. A false alarm on the day of inspection provided evidence that the evacuation procedures are known to all and work effectively.

An outstanding commitment is given to safer recruitment procedures. Records are thorough and evidence a series of suitability checks. A series of checks occur each time an agency member of staff arrives on site ensuring their suitability to work with the students. All visitors are accompanied when on site after registration at reception.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
13	ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the recording, handling, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of any medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 21(1))	28/02/2011
9	ensure that the home is conducted in a manner which respects the privacy and dignity of children accommodated there. In particular, remove personal information on display and incorporate into care plans. (Regulation 11 (2)(a))	28/02/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the registered person of the home regularly reviews the records of complaints to check satisfactory operation of the complaints procedure; in particular, to cross reference any complaints received through the school with the residential care setting (NMS 16.7)
- monitor the records of physical intervention to monitor compliance with the home's policy, procedure and guidance and to identify any patterns in incidents leading to disciplinary or restraint action becoming necessary (NMS 22.11)
- ensure that staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the home; in particular, training in an approved method of physical intervention with

older students for whom the current programme is insufficient. (NMS 31.1)