

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Julian Parker
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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 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. There were 10 young people being looked after at the time of this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to assess key standards under the outcome area of staying safe.

This residential special school, registered as a children's home, is judged as a good service and on this inspection presented many examples of good practice.

The service meets the health, medical and safeguarding needs of young people exceptionally well. Young people are kept safe by knowledgeable, competent and good staffing levels following sound management guidance and company procedures. The needs of very vulnerable children with learning disabilities are very well provided for in a high-quality, functional environment where informed and individualised placement plans can be effectively progressed. The school and staff team are well integrated, organised, managed and supported. The school's management team is innovative and responsive to the needs of young people.

There are no actions or recommendations arising from this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last 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 good.

Children and young people continue to be looked after sensitively and with respect, in a manner that promotes their dignity while maintaining personal safety and that of other children. Despite working with some severe communication difficulties care staff interact effectively with young people about all aspects of their daily lives.

Care staff follow the registered provider's guidelines for promoting privacy wherever it is safe to do so. Individualised care routines recognise levels of learning difficulty ensuring staffing levels are adjusted to meet these potentially challenging needs, unobtrusively in a safe environment. All young people have their own specially equipped rooms decorated to reflect individual interests and capabilities.

Although sometimes possessing limited personal communication skills young people are actively encouraged to maintain regular contact with their families. Staff utilise their training when developing their rapport with families while maintaining professional confidentiality. In this way the rights and dignity of young people are maintained.

The welfare and safety of children and young people is actively promoted by the school by staff following established policies and tested procedures for safeguarding young people from abuse and bullying. The school adheres to Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance to inform its own practice with vulnerable young people in a transparent manner. Any emerging concerns are evaluated through inter-agency consultation to advise how the school keeps young people safe. Safeguarding training is made available to all staff.

The complaints policy and procedure is made accessible by being child-centred, using translations using a range of communication formats. These describe how complaints may be made about the service by young people or adults advocating on their behalf. All concerns are taken seriously, formally addressed and receive a written response from the Registered Manager or head of service. The provider is improving procedures which allow key working staff to present views which they believe children may have difficulty with. Parents and placing authority feedback continues to indicate high levels of satisfaction with the service being provided.

All of the school staff team receive an induction programme that includes safeguarding training informing them how to recognise signs of abuse, or potential abuse and respond appropriately to any allegations of poor practice. Training is structured recognising particular vulnerabilities attributed to disability. A supportive

whistle blowing procedure identifies how allegations about staff members will be addressed while keeping young people safe from any suspected poor practice.

Young people are kept safe within a secure well managed school site. They are effectively safeguarded against situations where they may go missing by a combination of high staffing levels and individualised risk assessments. These strategies prevent young people from being introduced to circumstances where they may be at risk.

The school has a holistic approach to behaviour management that promotes positive relationships between staff and young people and celebrates the recognition of positive achievement. This style counter balances the traditional management of poor conduct associated with a learning disability. The school utilises an accredited national methodology for managing challenging behaviour, promoting the minimal and safest use of physical restraint with young people. All care, education and support staff receive rolling training equipping them to understand and recognise the diverse range of challenging behaviours likely to be encountered. The school evaluates all behavioural incidents to inform its effectiveness and the safety of future practice. This has resulted in a reduction in the frequency and application of physical intervention. These improvements enhance the consistency of practice and help ensure comprehensive 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 from different parts of the establishment. Fire and safety equipment is annually checked in accordance with guidance. Scheduled environmental monitoring and a responsive on-site maintenance programme provide young people and their carers with safe, protected surroundings which take into account adaptations necessary to meet any particular needs of individual children and young people.

The school employs a robust recruitment procedure incorporating the comprehensive checking of all individuals who may come into contact with the very vulnerable young people being looked after. The recruitment process fully meets the prescribed standards in the manner that staff are interviewed and background detail is presented on personnel files. The school employs strict controls on all visitors to the site.

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.