

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Anne Bannister
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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 is a secondary aged residential school for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is also registered as a children's home. The school is located in a rural area, on a 24 acre site that has been developed to include an indoor sports facility and six small units where young people can practise their independent living skills. Young people living at the home come from local authorities, covering almost all geographical parts of the United Kingdom. It currently provides full-time, 52 weeks, residential care for 75% of the young people in its care. The school's ethos is to create a centre of excellence for the education, care and personal development of young people with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This unannounced interim inspection was used to follow up an action and two recommendations made at the previous inspection. In addition, the key standards linked to staying safe have also been reviewed. No change has been made to the overall quality rating attained at the previous full inspection, which remains as good.

Young people's individual needs are recognised and appropriate plans and strategies are in place to address them. Unacceptable behaviours are being consistently addressed by the staff team, who also use incentives to promote positive behaviours. Stringent monitoring by senior managers confirms that physical interventions have continued to decrease throughout this inspection year.

Issues raised following the previous inspection have all been addressed. No new areas of concern have been highlighted as a result of this inspection, resulting in no new actions or recommendations being raised.

Improvements since the last inspection

One action and two recommendations were raised following the previous inspection. Fire drills in every living area are now undertaken within the required timescales. The fire risk assessment has been updated to reflect staff practice in relation to the use of door wedges. Records of room searches now include the signatures of all staff involved.

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 are protected by effectively managed procedures and practices for promoting their welfare and safety. The privacy of young people is respected and most young people enjoy their own private space, in individual bedrooms. Young people understand and are protected by the clear written complaints procedures. They also receive additional information in the young people's guide that provides them opportunities to raise issues of concern with someone independent of the home.

There is a thorough and robust recruitment and selection process and all care staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures. Staff are not employed unless they are competent and ascertained as of no potential risk to children and young people. The system in place for establishing staff's suitability to be employed at the home is sufficiently rigorous.

Measures are in place in the event of a young person being missing from the home or absent without permission. Staff are provided with clear written guidance on how to respond to such events in ways that take full account of the young people's vulnerability. This includes a clear protocol for enlisting the assistance of the police and for notifying parents and the relevant authorities. Risk assessment and control measures in respect of all young people are generally successful in preventing young people from leaving the home without permission or going missing while in staff's care.

A clear, detailed behaviour management policy is in place. Staff work effectively within the policy to promote good order in the home and the young people's acceptable conduct. The approach by the staff encourages the young people to behave acceptably and positively reinforces this when they do. Staff are fully aware of the type of sanctions they may and may not apply and these are clearly detailed in the organisation's behaviour management policies. Young people are clear about what happens when their behaviour is not socially acceptable. Records maintained show good accountability for sanctions and when physical intervention are used in the home. These records evidence a continued decrease in the use of physical intervention which can be attributed to staff skills in de-escalation.

There are no current safeguarding concerns or issues about the home. There have been three safeguarding referrals made since the previous inspection. These have all related to disclosures made by young people about previous placements.

The home appropriately notify all relevant agencies and persons of any significant incidents in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

A comprehensive range of health and safety measures is in place. These successfully protect young people from harm. All areas of the premises and activities involved in looking after young people are assessed to identify potential risks. Where risks are identified, measures are taken to remove or control them.

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.