

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 residential special school which is also registered as a children's home. It is situated on the edge of a small market town. The home is registered for eight children, of either sex, aged 6 to 12 years. The school and home provide a care and education programme for children with severe educational, and emotional and behavioural difficulties, whose vulnerability requires an extremely nurturing environment. There are currently six pupils on roll, most of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils have experienced a disrupted education and often attain well below expected levels for their age when they arrive at the school. The school and home aim to 'support young children, whose lives have been severely disrupted to grow socially, emotionally and learn to cope with school' and 'to return to families and day schools before they reach their teenage years.'

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 look the key national minimum standards in outcomes for staying safe. There were no actions or recommendations to follow up from the previous inspection.

This home is good at keeping children safe. Staff are good at engaging children to look at ways to think about staying safe. The home's safeguarding procedures are robust and staff are skilled at responding quickly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns. Positive inter-agency working ensures all measures are taken to keep vulnerable children safe.

Children are positive about living in the home. They are aware of the home's expectations and are given consistent boundaries to teach them about what is socially acceptable behaviour. Children are encouraged to take responsibilities for their behaviours. This encourages them to grow in confidence and develop their self esteem.

There are no actions and no recommendations arising from this visit, therefore the outcome judgements from this inspection remain as at the key inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made following the previous 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.

This home is good at keeping children safe. Children's privacy is respected. Each child has their own bedroom that provides them with personal, private space. Staff are sensitive to gender issues and all toilets and bathrooms have appropriate locks fitted. Children know that staff will only enter their rooms without invitation if they are worried about their well-being. The home accommodates young children and room searches are rarely necessary.

Complaints are taken seriously by the staff team, who ensure that they give the children they care for a voice. The children spoken to know how to complain and feel comfortable, and confident about talking to staff if they are worried about anything. They have great confidence in the Registered Manager and the children responded that they 'know how to complain but Stacy always sorts things out if we tell her'. Documentation viewed, and discussion with the group of children living in the home, indicates that most issues are dealt with informally. The children are not concerned about bullying and enjoy mostly good relationships with each other. Staff work hard to try to ensure all children feel safe and comfortable with their peers.

Staff have a clear understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures and how to implement them where there are any suspicions of abuse. There are safeguarding protocols in place to ensure all agencies work together to protect vulnerable children. Detailed chronological records continue to be maintained for any referral made. Records confirm that all notifications are made to the appropriate authorities. Staff actively engage children to help them learn how to identify risky situations and how to keep themselves safe. When spoken to individually all children indicated they felt the home was a safe place to live in. These practices evidence staff commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in their care

There are systems in place to protect young children who are absent from the home without authority. There have been no incidents of absence since the last inspection. Individual procedures are in place should this occur and there is overall policy guidance for staff to follow. Risk assessments ascertain the likelihood of a child trying to leave without permission. These ensure adequate supervision by staff to ensure children do not place themselves at such risk.

Staff are consistent in giving children clear boundaries to help them understand the home's expectations about what is acceptable behaviour. Children know what sanctions can be given and why sanctions are used. Records show that lots of rewards, and praise, is given to promote positive behaviour. All staff know under

what circumstances restraint can be used and are skilled at de-escalating difficult, or challenging, behaviour. However, documentation relating to some incidents are worded in a way that could lead to misinterpretation. Documentation confirms a continued decrease in physical interventions. This is to the credit of the approach taken by staff in managing the challenging behaviour the children present. All behaviour management records are regularly monitored by the Registered Manager to ensure children are treated fairly and appropriately. The processes in place to do this are currently being reviewed to ensure documentation evidences that all staff involved in any physical intervention routinely reflect back on the incident.

Safety checks undertaken within the home protect children and staff who work there. Appropriate risk assessments of the premises, as well as activities, are undertaken. Fire drills are taken seriously and all children take part in evacuations. Individual needs are part of assessments to ensure safe responses in emergencies. Visitors are suitably vetted, sign into the home and have valid reasons for visiting. Staff are checked and vetted in line with national minimum standards including obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau check before they start work. Overall the home's actions show that there is a strong commitment to ensuring children live in a safe and secure environment.

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.