

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	05/10/2011
Inspector	Paula Lahey
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	11/03/2011
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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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This setting is owned by a charity and is registered to accommodate 50 children and young people, male and female, with physical disabilities, complex health needs and learning disabilities. On site is a non-maintained special school catering for children and young people aged three to 19 with complex special needs. A team of nurses, therapists and specialists, funded by the Primary Care Trust are also based on site and provide medical support.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Outcomes for individual young people are excellent and demonstrate that the service provides very individualised care and support. The school and residential provision is totally committed in ensuring that it provides a high quality service. This is underpinned by rigorous monitoring of the services provided demonstrating a strong emphasis on continuous improvement and development.

The service supports children and young people with complex care needs, many of whom are dependant on regular healthcare intervention. Some young people require 24-hour nursing support and there are excellent links between the nursing team, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and all staff at the service. However, regardless of their individual need and based on risk management, young people receive a social model of care and are provided with many opportunities and experiences. Young people are encouraged and fully supported to express their needs, wishes and opinions regardless of their communication needs and staff are skilled in the use of alternative methods of communication.

Staff are provided with excellent training and development opportunities and the organisation is committed in ensuring that it has a well-qualified workforce. Staff were observed to be interacting and performing care tasks with utmost care and consideration. It is evident that young people thoroughly enjoy staying in the residences and Ofsted has received positive feedback from parents and placing authorities of the care and support provided.

Good arrangements continue to keep young people safe. Staff recognise that many are vulnerable and they are diligent in ensuring they are protected. Meeting each young person's needs is an integral part of their care and staff are keen to enable them to achieve their full potential.

This inspection has highlighted the following issues to be addressed to further

improve the existing good provision. These relate to consistently recording all the necessary information following a sanction or restraint and that debriefing for young people and staff, and young people’s views on the intervention, are recorded.

Other areas for improvement include ensuring that agency staff files contain details of recruitment checks and that permanent staff files consistently record written explanations of any gaps in employment.

However, the service demonstrates a good capacity to improve in that requirements and recommendations from previous inspections have been fully addressed and the home has successfully met targets as detailed on its development plan.

Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	revise the volume kept for the purpose of recording any measure of control, restraint or discipline to include all the information listed in Regulation 17B (3) (a - g) and Regulation 17B (4) (a - b)	01/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure all children and staff are given the opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a relevant adult. In particular this relates to keeping records of de-briefing meetings (NMS 3.17)
- ensure that where any sanction, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that all recruitment records consistently demonstrate that statutory requirements are met, in particular ensure that written gaps in employment are recorded (NMS 16)
- ensure that a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on agency staff includes the information described in NMS 16.3 (a-f). (NMS 16.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

The home provides a nurturing environment where young people who live in the home permanently and those who access short breaks are supported to achieve their full potential. There is a cohesive multi-professional approach to assessing and addressing individual needs. Consequently young people receive personalised and consistent care resulting in positive outcomes for their physical and emotional well-being.

Young people receive good support to lead a healthy and active lifestyle. The organisation works in partnership with local health provision, therapists and specialist services in order to assess, address and maintain young people's health.

The service closely monitors young people during their stays and responds promptly to any emerging health concerns. Due to the excellent promotion and maintenance of young people's health they have been successfully supported to continue to access education and activities. Examples of personalised support includes the provision of one to one nursing care, regular rest periods and using specialist equipment such as standing frames.

Young people enjoy good healthy meals while in the home. There is recognition of their individual dietary needs and these, along with preferred likes and dislikes, are incorporated into daily menus. Mealtimes are relaxed and social occasions where young people are offered support in a discrete and sensitive manner whilst ensuring that independence, choice and experimentation of new food is promoted.

Young people receive full-time education and the residential team promote consistent communication between the school and the bungalows. Key workers have a good understanding of young people's educational needs and work in partnership with the school; this ensures that needs are effectively reviewed and that there is a consistent approach to meeting targets. Young people have made excellent progress in relation to their starting point and their individual needs. Examples include: greater understanding of cause and effect, decreased incidents of self injurious behaviour, increased communication skills, and development of independence skills. There are also structured transition arrangements in place to support them through to their adult care period.

The emphasis in the residences is that young people have a positive experience while away from their home. They benefit from having peer contact in a social setting. Young people enjoy opportunities for activities, trips, and outings which all enhance their life experience and awareness. Activities are thoroughly researched and risk assessed but there is a commitment to them being inclusive activities. Young people do not miss out because of any particular factor of their ability or disability. Examples of this include young people being supported to attend Scout camps and a recent residential holiday. Young people are proud of the achievements to sleep under canvas, experience zip wires, archery, canoeing and to socialise with their peers. Young people's cultural understanding is developed and they are enabled to attend

local places of worship and gospel choirs alongside learning about different religious celebrations. It is evident that all these activities enable young people to grow in confidence, understand their environment and the wider world and develop new skills and interests.

Young people are continuously supported to make choices with appropriate regard being given to their individual levels of understanding and ability. Young people's opinions are sought, listened to and acted upon both in making every day choices and in the development of the provision. The effective use of an advocacy service has enabled young people to have their own forum where they are enabled to comment on the quality of the provision. Feedback is provided to senior managers who in turn make changes.

The service promotes a culture of young people first, disabilities second. Within this young people using the service have fun times during short breaks and in long-term placements. They are given real choices and their views are sought and listened to.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

The residences are located on the site of the organisation's special school and are within easy access to all local resources and facilities, and close proximately to open countryside and coastal regions. Young people live in accommodation that is homely, nicely decorated and furnished and maintained to a good standard. Campus grounds and play areas are safe and well maintained. Since the last inspection two bungalows have been refurbished and redecorated. This has been done in full consultation with young people. A programme is in place to continue the refurbishment throughout the residences. Specialist aids and adaptations such as hoists, hi/low equipment and mobility tracks help to develop young people's independence. Young people benefit from the freedom of being able to drive their own wheelchairs throughout the campus.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that young people have their needs fully assessed. Care and support plans viewed contain detailed information, assessments, and guidance, from a variety of health care professionals and specialists on how needs are to be met. Staff spoken with demonstrated an excellent knowledge and understanding of the specific individual needs of the young people. Young people and their families are involved in the development and review of care plans. A key worker monitors the care plan and it is very evident that there is a multi-disciplinary approach in meeting individual needs. Families say they value this.

Medication is administered in a person-centred way and with consent. Staff have received training in the safe administration of medication and specialist health intervention and this includes competency assessments of their practice.

Staff understand young people's individual strengths and needs very well. Young people respond positively to staff and interactions were observed to be respectful

and caring, with young people demonstrating warmth and affection toward their carers. Young people who participated in the inspection said they felt listened to and cared for.

Young people are encouraged and fully supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the organisation is run. An excellent feature is the desire and commitment in ensuring that young people's voice is heard, and that they are able to express their views and opinion regardless of their communication needs. The school has a Charter of Children and Young Person's Rights. Speech and language therapists conduct detailed assessments and these are implemented across the organisation. There are many different types of communication systems that are used by young people and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of how these are operated and the support individual children require to express their needs, choices and opinions. Consultation is further enhanced by the use of an independent advocacy service and seeking the views of families and young people through regular surveys. Young people and families are asked to comment on the care received and suggest ways for the service to improve. The manager analyses the results of consultation and it is evident that action is taken to improve the service further. Examples have included: a change of advocacy service, increased community activities and redecoration and refurbishment in the bungalows.

There is a comprehensive framework in place to support families and young people who may wish to raise a complaint. Comments from families' report that any issues raised are dealt with responsibly and that they felt listened to.

The organisation fully promotes the rights and needs of young people who have complex support needs, and facilitates community participation and involvement. There is an abundance of accessible play equipment. Young people particularly enjoy the sensory studio, swimming pool, and trampoline and regularly use keyboards, computers, games consoles, and sensory games. Young people are provided with internet accounts and staff proactively support them to maintain contact with family and friends through the use of social media. Families are encouraged to visit regularly for formal events such as open days and parents' evenings and informally to join young people for birthdays and activities. Families say they feel welcomed into the residences and 'it feels like a big happy family rather than a care home'.

Placing authorities and families confirm that they are very happy with the care that is provided at the home. Comments from them include, 'the care is excellent, young people are looked after very well' and 'no-one is able to care for their child like parents. This provision comes a very close second!' Young people also give the provision a resounding 'thumbs up'.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

The safety of the residential provision has a number of strengths and areas of good practice including effective child protection systems, well managed health and safety

and comprehensive risk assessments. Families and placing authorities report confidence in the service for keeping young people safe. Examples of this include; the staff team supporting young people's complex health needs, responding appropriately when young people are unwell and keeping families fully informed about young people's needs. Staff are vigilant at monitoring young people's physical and emotional well-being and respond promptly and sensitively to early signs of distress, anxiety and discomfort. This means young people's needs are well met and they feel cared for and secure within the home.

Young people enjoy sound relationships and interact positively with staff and others. There is a positive culture for managing behaviour with a focus on encouragement, praise, and de-escalation. Where there is an identified risk of young people harming themselves or others staff liaise with the behaviour nurse and clinical team and produce comprehensive behaviour support plans. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to recognise potential triggers, reasons why young people may behave in challenging ways and detailed de-escalation techniques. Restraint and sanctions are used occasionally and only by suitably trained staff. Young people have worked with an advocacy service and staff to draw up their own personalised 'keeping safe' guidelines. This is an excellent initiative and ensures young people are fully involved in decisions about how they will be supported to manage behaviour. Records are maintained following the use of sanctions and restraint. However, they do not consistently evidence the effectiveness of the measure, state that it was used as a last resort, confirm that opportunities for de-briefing after an incident occur, or that the views of young people about the intervention are sought. Policies are in place to support staff to effectively manage any incidents of bullying or young people missing from the home, however in practice these areas do not present as issues for the young people.

Staff receive regular training in safeguarding which provides them with the skills and knowledge to protect young people from harm and abuse. A number of senior managers have designated responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns and provide a good source of knowledge and support. All staff are aware of reporting their concerns to a senior member of staff in response to an allegation or suspicion of abuse and have been provided with direct links to Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures to ensure staff are able to report issues externally should this be required.

There are clear systems in place to recruit new staff and they do not start work until appropriate checks have been carried out. Telephone enquiries are made to verify references and suitably trained staff are present throughout the recruitment process. A full employment history is required but application forms do not evidence written explanations of gaps in employment and although staff report these are explored during interview, files do not consistently record this.

The organisation has engaged the use of agency staff and confirmation has been sought that staff provided have a current enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. However, profiles provided by the agency did not fully clarify that agency workers have been subject to all the same checks as those required for permanent staff. The

organisation took immediate action to address this matter.

Young people are closely supported by the care team and staff recognise particular vulnerabilities related to diverse needs of young people with disabilities and take steps to address these. Potential hazards for individual young people and activities are appropriately identified and professionally managed, meaning that young people can enjoy many experiences with a balanced approach to risk taking. Care is provided in a respectful way and staff are sensitive to young people's right to privacy and dignity.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to take into account the needs of young people. Detailed risk assessments and fire safety checks are undertaken to promote safety and well-being. Young people have personal fire evacuation plans in place and opportunities to practice the process through regular drills. Induction training now includes fire drills for all staff and this is updated throughout each term.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **outstanding**.

There is a strong and effective senior leadership team in place who strive to improve the quality of service provided for young people. The organisation is committed to continuous improvement and this is demonstrated through its record of accomplishment and performance since the last inspection. Requirements and recommendations have been fully addressed and the organisation has successfully embedded aims from an internal development plan. This has included: developments in medication administration systems, improved activities through the appointment of an activities co-ordinator and an increased number of staff trained in specific communication methods. These have been embedded within the provision and result in improved outcomes for young people.

Young people are cared for in line with the home's current Statement of Purpose. This comprehensive document has child focused aims and objectives and clearly details how young people's educational, health and social needs will be met. The Statement of Purpose is produced in alternative formats for young people who have communication needs and this includes audio and pictorial versions. A parental guide also helps families to understand the organisations aims and objectives and what to expect from the service.

The staff team speak positively about the support they receive from each other and managers and it is evident that staff moral is good and this positively benefits young people. High quality supervision is provided alongside regularly scheduled team meetings and handovers which enable staff to reflect on their practice and relationships with young people. Personal development appraisals are carried out annually and include targets for staff based on the aims and objectives recorded on the residential development plan. This ensures that there is shared understanding of the direction of the organisation and an ownership for development and improvements.

Staff receive excellent training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the young people and the purpose of the organisation. This is a major strength of the service. There is a commitment to developing staff and supporting them to achieve recognised qualifications. The school provides staff with a comprehensive induction for all newly appointed staff and this includes mandatory training and a coaching and mentoring system. Staff spoken with stated that the training and mentoring scheme provided them with the skills, knowledge and support to effectively care for the young people.

Young people are looked after by staff who clearly understand their needs. The organisation ensures that there are adequate staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of the young people. Young people with specific support needs are cared for by a small team of specially trained staff. This ensures a consistent approach and continuity of care. There is always a member of the nursing team on duty to provide assistance and support if required.

Quality assurance systems are threaded throughout the service and there is good use of a range of monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided. This includes Regulation 33 visits, Regulation 34 audits, and weekly monitoring of all residences and care provision. Information gathered is analysed in order to identify trends, patterns, and areas for improvement. Detailed action plans are drawn up and any areas of shortfall are addressed promptly.

Young people and young people's records are clear and stored securely. Records are up to date and contribute to an understanding of the child's life.

The rapport between staff, managers and young people is warm, friendly and respectful. Managers have the welfare of young people and staff at heart and encourage them each to high achievement. Staff are enthusiastic about their care of young people and enduring in their own commitment to positive outcomes for them.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.