

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	27/10/2011
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	03/02/2011
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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 home forms part of the services provided by The Children's Trust. The Children's Trust provides holistic services for children with multiple disabilities and complex health needs and those with acquired brain injury who require rehabilitation.

The school provides 52-week placements for learners and is, therefore, registered as a children's home. This is in addition to being registered with the Department for Education as a non-maintained school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties with an age range between five to 25 years.

The school has 44 educational placements. The registered children's home accommodates 33 pupils, in single or twin bedrooms. The boarding accommodation comprises three separate houses.

Overall effectiveness

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

For the purpose of this report children and young people will be referred to as learners, the preferred choice of the setting, staff and parents.

This is an outstanding service throughout. There is a clear focus on developing the service to meet the changing needs of learners being accommodated. Overall the practice is so good that its 24-hour curriculum continues to be shared nationally and internationally. Outcomes for individual learners are excellent demonstrating individualised care and support which reflect a learner's complex needs exceptionally well. The comprehensive understanding of equality and diversity and a varied and holistic approach to implementing it results in outstanding care being provided. This is a setting that continually strives for further improvement through research findings plus evaluative and reflective practice. Achievement across the school is outstanding due to the total education, therapy and care package it offers, plus exceptional management and a committed staff team. Although communication with learners was difficult it was clear they enjoyed their time spent in the company of staff and engaging in activities. Staff are clearly focused on ensuring learners enjoy and achieve to their full potential; in many cases exceeding it. Protection is of the highest standard, taking the enhanced vulnerabilities of learners into account at all times.

Feedback from parents include 'staff are incredibly caring and take the time to get to know my child - they put his welfare as the highest priority' and 'an amazing place, all the staff make the children feel individual, special and cared for' and 'the whole Children's Trust is so special for our children - well done to the Trust, your understanding for the children is second to none.'

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection, any areas identified during the inspection, or highlighted by parents are currently being addressed or already in the setting's development plan. There are no breaches of Regulation.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Learners make excellent progress taking their complex needs into consideration. They participate in a full and vast range of opportunities that are specific to their complex health and communication needs. The learners are not able to self-engage and thus rely on the staff to facilitate their involvement in activities. These are delivered in the environment that will have the greatest impact on their learning and where their disabilities will not hinder them from embracing the experiences on offer. Activities on offer include numerous on-site resources with external activities also brought in. Regular visits to a wide range of community venues, bowling, cinema and libraries are enjoyed by the children, plus holidays. The school recognises that it is part of a far wider community to which it can contribute and actively seeks to ensure that all learners participate in that community.

Learners access the education provision as part of the 24-hour curriculum which offers learners a wide range of learning and social activities. Learners are able to attend the on-site school with staff reinforcing education and learning via a range of activities in pastoral time. The learners are assessed prior to commencement of their placement and from the assessment procedure the school is able to identify areas of development. Many of the learners have conditions that cause regression or periods when they are medically unstable. This has an impact on development. Learners at the school generally function developmentally up to 12 months. In order to meet their learning needs the school's curriculum is extended to cover five core areas: communication, sensory cognitive, social, motor and life skills. They also enjoy a curriculum that covers music, creative arts, leisure activities and religious education. Learners benefit from a curriculum that is delivered in an integrated manner (incorporating learning, therapy and health needs). Overall educational achievement is excellent taking into account the individual progress from their starting point at time of placement.

The setting is focused on providing continuing access to education post 19 years of age. Learners and their families are involved as actively as possible in reviewing and decision making about their adult life. Arrangements for transition take place as part of individual education plans (IEPs). The setting has extended the age range and takes learners up to 25 years old, offering courses that lead to accreditation. The learners receive intense care and support to assist them towards independence. However, due to the profound nature of their disabilities, some are limited in what they can achieve in comparison with more able learners. Nevertheless, the inputs made by staff and the programmes implemented are commendable in that learners

learn basic life skills as far as individually practicable. This may include independence regarding mobility, eating, dressing, toileting and washing and other basic aspects of development.. Learners' transition plans are in place which evidence a range of strategies and target areas for development and achievement. Such plans are monitored and reviewed as appropriate.

Learners do not engage in employment or training; this is not an option for them due to their diagnosis and disabilities. They do receive a programme for individual life learning skills training; an integral part of the overall care they receive. Learners do reach their full potential at this setting and exceed it in many cases.

Learners benefit from family involvement where possible. Staff positively encourage families to be fully involved in the total care and education packages in place for their children. Family contact and involvement is of an excellent level with staff looking at continuous development for further involvement. Thirteen parents completed questionnaires about their views of the setting and the care their children receive. This included comments that the setting has `very good structure and support for my child - I am actively encouraged to attend the school for planned activities or to just pop in`. Overall feedback from parents and carers supported the outstanding levels of communication between families and the setting.

Learners receive outstanding health provision with easy access to a wealth of health-related professionals including on-site doctors. The high level and complexity of care and support systems in place are a necessity for the learners who live at the setting. Learners receive high quality care delivered by skilled practitioners.

Quality of care

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

Relationships between the learners and staff are highly caring, sensitive and professional. Learners enjoy time with the staff as can be evidenced by the amount of smiling, laughing and singing seen and heard during this inspection.

Due to complex communication needs the learners require specialist communication methods that are unique to each of them. Each learner's method of communication is known to staff and these are accessible for staff via individual communication passports.

Learners are not able to make a complaint but staff are fully knowledgeable of their communication needs to know when they are not happy or are in distress. This deep understanding staff have of individual learner's characters, personality and frustrations enables staff to respond quickly if they are not happy. Learners also have access to a specialist advocacy service whose representatives regularly visit the setting.

The learners receive and enjoy excellent nutrition provision that meets their varying dietary needs. Specialist feeding programmes are professionally delivered, recorded

and reviewed as necessary. The menus offer a varied and balanced diet, with choices from culturally-different foods available. All staff at the home have a good understanding of the dietary needs of each learner and what equipment may be needed to further support their independence. Regular multi-professional clinics are held to review individual eating and drinking regimes. Learners are well nourished and thrive with input from the speech and language therapist and regular visits from the dietician, who liaises directly with the catering department. Staff receive training relating to food hygiene and feeds, and their observed practice was highly professional. Overall feedback from parents and carers regarding the food provision was very good. Any issues raised by parents are discussed with the manager and the catering manager and quickly resolved. A Trust-wide review of the catering provision is due to commence in the next few months.

Learners have comprehensive care plans of a high standard and very regularly reviewed and compiled by a wide range of professionals. The high level and complexity of care and support systems in place are a necessity for the learners who live at the setting. Learners benefit from care and support systems that are organised, highly skilled and comprehensive. All health needs are identified, assessed and planned for and delivered by competent, committed and sensitive staff. Learners have access to a large range of specialist health-related professionals who are involved in the health and education provision, and deliver care of an outstanding standard. Learners with more complex health needs such as tracheotomy care are provided with the same excellent standard of care. Staff have received appropriate training to meet these needs and deliver appropriate care in a competent and highly professional manner. Medical cover is available during the week by the on-site doctor and, in the evenings and at weekends, by the local general practitioner-cover who also visits the houses every Saturday and Sunday and attends clinics during the week. Palliative care is an area that the setting is currently working to improve, with more support for families and staff identified. The setting's development plan highlights this as an area to be developed.

Learners benefit from medication procedures that are robust, very well organised and delivered by competent staff. Safe practices, including robust monitoring and reporting enhances protection for the learners. Consents are in place for each learner which cover all medical procedures. The learners' medication programmes are reviewed weekly, or daily if necessary, by the on-site doctor. A very high number of staff are first aid trained.

Learners do not experience discrimination in any form. Individual cultural background and personal identity are positively addressed; for example a recent birthday enabled a learner to wear her national dress and have cultural food at her party. Evidence of equality and diversity can be seen throughout the provision and is embedded in all policies, procedures, aspects of the care and practices at the setting. All learners are treated as individuals celebrating their diversity enabling them to have a rich and varied quality of life.

The learners live in houses that are well resourced, appropriate in design and maintained to a high standard. They have access to communal and private space

that includes well-equipped sensory rooms and specialist equipment such as a hoist tracking system that results in very good manual handling practices. All communal areas are decorated and furnished to a high standard with a range of pictures, photographs, ornaments and art work displayed, which also include positive ethnic images and representations. A multi-faith room is available which learners and their families have access to 24-hours a day. Learners have either single or shared bedrooms which are decorated and furnished to an equally high standard as the communal areas and are personalised to an excellent degree with many large soft toys and other items. Bedrooms have a range of specialist equipment which is also maintained to a high standard. All equipment is regularly checked and is very suitable to meet individual needs. Hygiene standards are outstanding with very regular housekeeping audits taking place in addition to infection control nurses allocated on each of the houses. Future plans to upgrade to walkways will provide a more child friendly and visually and sensory stimulating environment. Long standing issues with storage have been addressed with plans in place to lessen the difficulties.

Comprehensive health and safety procedures, with representatives on each of the houses and in the school, provide high standards of protection for the learners. Recent internal health and safety audit carried out resulted in excellent and improved results. Learners are cared for by staff who know what to do if there is a fire and are fully informed of the learner's individual fire risk assessments.

Learners live in an environment located across three units, where staff have consistently high aspirations for them and they benefit from continual development of practices to meet increasing needs.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Learners are provided with high levels of protection which take into account their very high levels of vulnerability due to their poor communication skills and complex health needs. Staff's knowledge of individual needs and vulnerabilities enable them to recognise when a learner is unhappy or not feeling safe. They are cared for by staff who are trained in child protection and safeguarding and who are supported by on-site social workers and the head teacher who is the dedicated lead for child protection at this setting. Excellent procedures are supported by policies that have been shared with external agencies. Very close liaison with all agencies for advice or referrals enables openness and enhanced protection for learners.

Due to their profound disabilities the learners do not bully intentionally. Any aggressive behaviour that may occur is usually a result of learners' disabilities and frustration rather than malicious or calculated intent. In any event staff are alert to such conduct and deal with behaviours promptly. The home's supervision and support arrangements, and homely and caring atmosphere, help reduce the likelihood of bullying occurring.

Policies and procedures are in place for unauthorised absences although the learners have profound disabilities and very limited mobility. The inclination and likelihood of learners being absent without authority is extremely low.

The learners' behaviour is managed by positive reinforcement, encouragement and praise given verbally or by pictorial and signing methods. The emphasis is placed on ensuring that the overall environment is one likely to foster development through appropriate behaviour rather than to inadvertently encourage negative ones. Sanctions are not used as they are inappropriate due to profound disabilities of learners. There is a clinical holding policy and procedure which clearly outlines the use of skilled minimum pressure and age-appropriate techniques, including splinting and wrapping, if required for specific interventions.

The Trust's recruitment procedures are very robust ensuring maximum protection for learners. All volunteers undergo the same robust recruitment procedures as employed staff. Visitors are closely and suitably supervised.

Leadership and management

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

Learners benefit from highly effective and efficient management. The head teacher/Registered Manager is inspirational, innovative, highly effective, sensitive and totally committed to the needs of the learners and to those of her staff. She is fully supported by a strong senior management team that includes the head of care, deputy head teacher and senior therapists.

The number of staff is very suitable and is continually monitored to ensure changing needs are met. There is an excellent gender and age mix of the current staff team. Staff are happy working at the setting; many say it is the best place they have ever worked. Staff training is structured, of a high standard and delivered by specialists. Qualified nurses are supported by care staff providing high standards of practice. All staff and volunteers receive an excellent induction programme followed by further training opportunities. Training is of a very high quality; specialist training has been undertaken since the last inspection due to increasing complex health requirements. All staff receive regular supervision together with annual appraisals.

The setting has a wealth of information available for parents. The setting's Statement of Purpose is currently being updated. Learners' disabilities are such that a formal children's guide is not appropriate. There is a guide, in pictorial format, that briefly gives information but realistically no learner would be able to benefit from.

Senior managers, across the Trust have the focus and drive to continuously improve. Targets for development are ambitious, challenging and address the changing needs of learners. Managers stimulate and enthuse staff which results in a positive environment where learners needs are always put first. Managers clearly understand the setting's strengths and weaknesses as highlighted in their development plan for 2011-2014.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.