

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	06/11/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Sonya Robinson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	26/03/2012
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

All young people considered for placement experience autistic spectrum disorder with associated communication and sensory impairment and possible learning disability. The home is owned by a national organisation. Most young people who access this service access the organisation's school.

Placements in the home are generally provided for school terms only, with accommodation being provided on weekdays and weekends. Periods of short break care are agreed on an individual basis.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

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

Young people are cared for in a warm and nurturing environment. As a result, they have obtained good outcomes and are making very good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare, development and education. For some young people, this progress is extremely good and this view is shared by external professionals.

Staff are aware of the individual needs of the young people and young people are responding positively because of the quality of the care that they receive. This care is enhanced by a strong commitment by staff to principles of equality and diversity.

Professionals report a strong sense of safety in this home. Staff demonstrate a good working knowledge about safeguarding to ensure young people are safe. They also work sensitively with young people to help them to understand and encourage socially acceptable behaviour. This helps to prepare young people for adulthood and in the community.

Management arrangements are good and create an environment where young people are able to make positive changes. Managers effectively tackle weaknesses with a view to securing improvement. However, this inspection has identified several

minor shortfalls. These relate to additional staff completing an appropriate childcare qualification; consistency in training and supervision of bank staff; internet access, currently this is intermittent at times; and the home has lost some of their 'homely touches'. These have not impacted on the good outcomes achieved by the young people in this home.

## 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
27 (2001)	ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and supervision, this is with particular reference to bank staff. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	31/12/2012

### Recommendations

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

- ensure children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which promote learning, such as access to the internet within the home (NMS 8.2)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that all existing care staff, have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. This was previously the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People and from September 2010 is the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. (NMS 18.5)

### Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making good progress in all areas of their lives. They are growing in confidence, becoming more independent and showing greater emotional resilience. They feel settled and emotionally secure, and are becoming more able to build and maintain strong relationships. Parents said 'he has come on leaps and bounds' and my child's 'signing is really improving' and 'seems a lot calmer'. Young

people are making continuous improvements in their behaviour, health, education, quality of contact with their family, independence and confidence in taking part in a wider range of activities in the community. Some young people do at times struggle to manage their feelings and behaviour, but are more able to overcome the issues they are facing.

Disabled young people, including those who do not communicate verbally, participate in the decisions that affect their lives. They make day-to-day choices about what they have to eat, how they want their hair cut and what they do in their spare time. Young people also understand and accept that their wishes cannot always be met. Young people are becoming more independent appropriate to their abilities and level of understanding. Young people are routinely involved in the running of the house; this includes going shopping, preparing a snack, tidying-up and using money. Young people are becoming more confident in their skills, including more complex tasks such as making a drink.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles. For example, improvements in young people's diets have led to improved health outcomes. Their disabilities are not barriers that prevent them from understanding the importance of being healthy. They take more responsibility for their own personal care, enjoy healthier diets and undertake physical activities such as wall climbing and swimming. They have access to a full range of health services such as speech and language therapists to support with any health problems.

Young people enjoy school and the level of attendance is exceptional. They are making good progress in developing their knowledge and skills, including improving their communication skills. From time-to-time some young people struggle in school, but this has not prevented them from attending. Young people also enjoy a full range of enjoyable activities and social experiences, such as horse riding and visits to a farm.

Young people benefit from regular and appropriate contact with their families. This is enabling them to maintain and develop relationships with the people who are important in their lives. They look forward to seeing their family and spending time with them. Staff work really hard to ensure that young people find seeing their families a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. Staff are aware that young people and their families sometimes may find seeing each other stressful and make sure they are suitably and sensitively supported. A social worker said, 'the placement have established good communication with parents', 'concerns are listened to and dealt with', 'excellent placement, work in close co-operation with the local authority'.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people live in a structured and stable environment and they are responding positively to the routine that staff provide. A social worker said 'prior to this placement my young person wasn't attending school at all and now he is attending

full time' and a parent said 'we have an excellent relationship with staff'.

Staff are good at getting to know young people and understanding their personal needs. They are building really positive relationships with young people through effective communication. Staff are aware of individual young people's style of communication, level of understanding and comprehension associated with disability. As a result, they engage with young people appropriately to provide the support and reassurance young people need to reduce their anxieties. Young people like and get on well with staff. One young person's face lit up when a member of staff entered the room. She was obviously pleased to see this person, laughing and smiling at her.

The manager and staff place the well-being of individual young people at the centre of their practice. They are developing a thorough knowledge of young people; ensuring that young people receive individual support and guidance. They work collaboratively with parents, social workers, the organisation's school and other professionals involved in young people's lives to develop effective plans and ensure that young people get the right support.

Young people's placement plans provide a comprehensive picture of all their personal needs and the support young people require. Staff put young people's plans into practice effectively to ensure that young people's specific needs are met on a day-to-day basis. Care planning and the staff's practice recognise young people as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. They ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs, disability, cultural background and identity. For example, staff are currently working with parents and the school to develop a clear and consistent method of enhanced communication suitable for a young person's specific abilities.

The manager understands parents' anxieties about their child living away from home. She is always available to speak with parents, provide information about young people's care, progress and experiences, and to offer reassurance. She responds sensitively and positively to any concerns and suggestions that parents have about the care of their child.

Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. They are fully supported to develop healthy lifestyles. Staff understand the importance of a well-balanced diet and ensure young people enjoy healthy and nutritious homemade meals. Staff have a good understanding of young people's specific health needs to ensure young people's needs are met on a daily basis. The arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective, ensuring that young people receive the medication they need.

Staff ensure that the daily routine supports young people's participation in education and school attendance. Young people have easy access to books, art materials and board games. However, the home's internet is linked to the organisation's school and this causes difficulties after school hours and during holiday periods, whereby access is limited.

Young people live in a suitably designed and comfortable house in a quiet residential neighbourhood. It is handy for the shops, parks and community amenities. The house is clean, suitably decorated and adapted to reflect young people's individual needs, personalities and tastes. There is a rolling programme of maintenance in place but due to recent behaviour and particularly tolerances, the communal ground floor areas have become damaged due to the young person removing for example, pictures and curtains.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people's welfare is always the most important consideration in day-to-day care and care plans clearly identify risks and protective factors for individual young people. There are clear procedures and guidance available that help staff to make prompt responses to concerns about a child or young person's safety or welfare. This includes knowing the contact details of the local child protection services.

Staff understand that young people are vulnerable due to age, disability and lack of understanding of danger. The staff are alert to the risks children and young people can face in the community, especially from people who are prepared to exploit their additional vulnerability. These comprehensive strategies are actively reducing risks and keeping children and young people safe from harm.

There are effective measures implemented with regards to the behaviour management of young people which result in a low level of physical intervention being necessary. Due to the complex needs and levels of understanding sanctions are not used in this home. Instead young people are offered 'alternative opportunities' to distract them in order to promote positive behaviour.

Staff work with young people through key working sessions to help young people understand dangers. This includes staff actively accessing information that is in an appropriate format and language to match the age and understanding of the child or young person. This extends to understanding about safe strangers and staying safe. This helps young people to feel safe.

No young person has gone missing from this home and there are security systems in place on the front door to keep young people safe. Young people have free access around the house and garden. There are protocols in place if a young person was to go missing. This includes working closely with the police and other professionals which fully acknowledges levels of vulnerability.

There are procedures that enable young people to make informal as well as formal complaints. Wide ranging work is undertaken to ensure people are protected from bullying and behaviour whereby young people may develop targeting behaviour of one another. This includes redirection and distraction along with undertaking key working sessions to help support young people to gain appropriate levels of understanding.

Young people live in a home that is appropriately maintained with regards to regular health and safety checks of the premises including certification for gas, electrical and fire safety checks.

Young people are aware of the fire evacuation procedures which means they are able leave the premises safely in an emergency. Safe recruitment processes within the organisation ensure all staff are suitably vetted. Safeguarding checks are undertaken prior to any member of staff working with young people. All visitors to the home are required to sign in and are appropriately supervised during their visit.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home is managed by an experienced and suitably qualified, Registered Manager. The home provides a detailed Statement of Purpose and children's guide. These comprehensive documents give a clear overview of what placing social workers, parents and young people can expect from the service.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for further development. The manager can demonstrate the impact and value of young people receiving this service through for example; the recent feedback questionnaires from staff, parents and professionals. These have provided positive feedback and constructive suggestions for continual improvement. There is a clear development plan that sets out how this is to be progressed. The home continues to demonstrate a capacity for further improvement, for example, in the strengthening of the home's documentation. The home also has a positive relationship with neighbours and the local community.

The home is monitored by a representative of the organisation. This provides young people and staff with an opportunity to discuss any issues they may have about living at the home. In addition, the Registered Manager monitors systems at the home to ensure that the needs of young people are met.

At the last inspection in March 2012 four requirements and one recommendation were raised. These related to staff undertaking report writing and safeguarding training, both of which have been completed. The home had a vacancy for a deputy that they were trying to recruit for and a person is now in place who is providing strength to the management team. Young people's records were not consistently signed, dated or legible at times and this is much improved, which means that young people's records are easier to follow and therefore are more meaningful. Staff supervision was also raised and for permanent staff there is a rolling system in place, which is completed in accordance with the needs of the home and staff.

A central record of one-to-one supervision for 'bank' workers who work across the organisation is held in multiple homes and therefore as a result one-to-one supervision for these workers is not consistently undertaken. The Registered



Manager has taken this on board and intends to address this with the organisation.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who have a range of skills and experience. Staff have access to a rolling programme of training and they say that the standard of training is good. Staff say that since the last inspection that they have undertaken a number of training courses, for example, they have attended refresher training in first aid and manual handling. This training programme is also available for the organisations 'bank staff'. However, not all staff, including bank staff, have completed an appropriate qualification in childcare, although there are a number who are currently undertaking the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. The staff team provides both positive male and female role models.

The home's written records provide information about individual young people's needs, development and progress. There are also systems in place to notify Ofsted of any significant issues that may occur within the home or with regards to the young people placed. This ensures that there are good systems in place to promote the welfare of the young people.

## 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.