

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC069336
Inspection date	11/03/2013
Inspector	Emeline Evans
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	23/10/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This school provides care and accommodation for up to 76 young people with autistic spectrum disorder and learning disabilities. It operates as an independent co-educational residential special school which also provides accommodation for a number of young people receiving up to 52 weeks placements and is therefore registered as a children's home.

Students are accommodated in nine on-site residential houses and one off-site house in a neighbouring village. The school is set around a restored country house, within acres of parkland.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good progress**.

At the full inspection in October 2012, the overall effectiveness rating for the home was judged as good with three requirements and four recommendations made. This children's home demonstrates continued improvement in the quality of care provided with a clear and focused commitment to service development.

Since the last inspection, there has been a focus on building and developing the individual homes management teams. This has resulted in a strong committed approach to provide a high quality service. Staff understand their roles and expectations placed on them and they are clearly passionate about promoting good outcomes for young people.

At the last inspection, a number of shortfalls were identified in relation to health and safety and fire safety arrangements within the service. There has been an internal audit to ensure adequate precautions are taken against the risk of fire and the suitability of fire doors and means of escape. The fire extinguishers are now visible and appropriately placed and any doors that are not closing adequately are reported to the estates team immediately and action is taken. Checks are completed daily in each house to ensure compliance. The fire escape route, which previously had a large amount of debris, has been cleared and actions from the fire risk assessment have been documented. There has been a review of the health and safety information and clear environmental risk assessments are in place for each of the homes. This ensures possible risks are fully identified for the young people, staff and visitors. There is now a programme in operation for re-decoration of the homes and staff are clear of the procedure in place to report any repairs or replacement of furniture or furnishings.

Since the last inspection, the manager has addressed the recommendation to accelerate the process for reporting notifiable events to the appropriate authorities. The manager has in place clear guidance to enable staff to be aware of the process to follow; this ensures that the appropriate people are notified immediately. There have been a number of notifications since the last full inspection and the management team have continued to work with professionals to ensure the safety of the young people is paramount. The staff team have been involved in additional training in relation to safeguarding and raising a concern. This enabled staff to reflect on their current work practice and be clear on correct procedures to follow.

Each house is comfortable and has been further adapted to meet the young people's individual needs. Artwork and memorabilia are proudly displayed around the home, providing young people with opportunities to reflect on the positive experiences they have had. The home managers have developed the range of sensory equipment in each of the homes. Staff support young people to engage in the use of this equipment to further enhance the young people's sensory development.

Since the last inspection the surveillance cameras located in some of the hallways have been removed. Risk assessments have been undertaken to determine if listening devices are required for the purpose of safeguarding certain young people. At present there are no young people requiring these listening devices therefore they are not in use. The management team were clear that appropriate consent would be sought if the need arose for young people with complex needs.

Young people are supported in imaginative ways to progress across several areas of their lives, particularly in behaviour, communication and independence. There have been continuing improvements in outcomes for young people across these areas. For example, one young person now eats solid food and a number of young people now have less restrictive diets. Other young people have had their staffing levels decreased due to the reduction in challenging behaviour. Staff provide clear boundaries within a caring environment and work together to achieve good outcomes.

The Manager's in each home formally reviews Schedule 6 items on a regular basis. This is resulting in the Registered Manager having a strategic overview. However, the Regulation 34 reports do not indicate how this information is used to fully evaluate the quality of care and any awareness of key issues and patterns or trends. Also if it is not evident if routine consultation with young people takes place during this monitoring, therefore a recommendation has been raised to ensure this information is documented.

Young people continue to receive well-planned care provided by a committed and competent staff team. Young people's welfare is further enhanced by the relationships that exist between staff and young people. This commitment is further reflected in the home's comprehensive development plan, which has been further developed to clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement within the home. The home gains feedback from parents to further develop the service and the quality of care offered to the young people. The staff are clearly very passionate about promoting good outcomes for young people and work as a team to ensure this is achieved.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the manager monitors all records to identify any patterns or trends in order to improve the quality of care provided (NMS 21.2)
- ensure children in the home are regularly consulted and their views taken into account in the monitoring of the home. (NMS 21.1)

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.