

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC032838
<b>Inspection date</b>	18/09/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Gillian Walters
<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>	05/02/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned residential special school, which is also registered as a children's home. It provides a service to eight children, between the ages of six and 12 years, who experience emotional or behavioural difficulties.

### 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**.

The quality of care provided in this home is good and effectively supports children achieve good outcomes. Children benefit from highly individual care planning that successfully addresses the range and complexity of their needs. As a result they are making positive progress in education, health and social development. Children benefit from living in a caring and nurturing environment and share trusting relationships with staff. As a result children feel safe and well-cared for.

Children are encouraged to participate and contribute to their care planning. They are provided with regular opportunities to express their views and wishes during one-to-one sessions with staff and regular children's meetings. This provides children with an appropriate opportunity to influence the care and support they receive on a day-to-day basis and to successfully contribute to their future planning.

The Registered Manager and staff team are clearly motivated to provide a highly nurturing environment that is conducive to achieving good outcomes for children. They identify this as one of the home's key strengths. The home is strengthening its internal monitoring and auditing arrangements to improve the quality of information and evaluation of children's behaviours to enhance individual care planning and staff practice.

As a result of this inspection two requirements and two recommendations have been made to promote improvement in the service provided. These relate to revisions of the Statement of Purpose and children's guide; the recording of health checks



following physical interventions; training for staff involved in facilitating and supervising contact and the frequency of staff meetings.

## 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
5 (2001)	update and revise the Statement of Purpose and children's guide. This relates specifically to staff qualifications, children missing from home procedures and the home's complaints procedure (Regulation 5)	28/10/2013
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made that includes a description of any injury to the child concerned or any other person and any medical treatment administered. (Regulation 17B(3)(g))	28/10/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- ensure that staff have access to support and advice. This relates specifically to maintaining arrangements for regular staff group meetings. (NMS 19.4)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Children are mostly very settled in this home and are making good progress in relation to their starting points. They benefit from frequent praise and encouragement provided by staff that successfully promotes their self-image and development of self-esteem. Children speak with pride about their achievements and have a good understanding of the goals they wish to achieve.

Children benefit from living in a warm and nurturing environment that enables them to feel safe and well cared for. They particularly enjoy individual time spent with staff, for example playing games, reading together or chatting. Children take comfort



in their environment and as a result are generally receptive to the support and guidance they are offered.

Children enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities within the home and in their community that often provide new and exciting experiences. They are encouraged to follow their particular interests such as playing musical instruments, dance, cubs and going to the scooter skate park that ensure they have fun and physical exercise. These activities are successful in promoting confidence in their abilities and positive self-esteem.

Children's health care needs are prioritised and well promoted to ensure that they have good access to both routine and specialist services that promote their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Children benefit from the provision of education on site and the close working arrangements between care and education staff. Young people's achievements and talents, as well as difficulties are well understood by staff. This enables staff to deliver a consistent approach that ensures children are fully supported in their education and social development to reach their full potential. One social worker confirmed, 'The young person I have at the school has made significant progress since being in the home.' Another said, 'He has done remarkably well since being at the home and his aggression has dropped and he can be trusted to go into the community on his own. This shows me how far he has come.'

Children benefit from the home's arrangements in supporting family contact; this includes welcoming some families to spend time at the home and for others involves staff travelling some distance with children to see family members. This ensures that children are well supported to enjoy time with their families and maintain those relationships that are most important to them.

## **Quality of care**

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

Children live in a highly nurturing environment that provides them with the warmth and care they require to positively develop both physically and emotionally. Children are encouraged to have empathy for others and to develop successful relationships. Staff show genuine affection for children and have a sound knowledge of their individual personalities and the issues that affect them. Staff have established a good rapport with children that has enabled many to form positive attachments with them. As a result children feel settled, are trusting of the adults that care for them and enjoy spending time with them. One child commented, 'I love my keyworker; everything here is basically brilliant.' Another said, 'It's great, school is good.'

Children are actively encouraged to read and contribute to their planning and to express their views and wishes. Child-friendly documentation has been developed to ensure the content is appropriate to their age and ability and meaningful to the individual child. Children are engaging well with this and understand that their contribution is important and valued. Children are well aware of how they can make



complaints or raise concerns. One child confirmed 'I can talk to lots of people, my social worker and my keyworker.' This means that children feel reassured that there is always someone they can talk to if they are unhappy or have a concern.

Children are encouraged to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They have good access to routine health care services such as general practitioners, dentists and opticians and many of the children engage positively with visiting therapists that offer play therapy and support. Children are guided to understand the benefit of healthy eating and enjoy a good variety of nutritional meals. They are encouraged to participate in a range of activities and outings, such as canoeing and caving that ensure they benefit from outdoor fun and exercise.

Children's health and educational needs are appropriately reviewed and clearly documented ensuring staff have a good understanding of their individual needs and how they can be best supported. Staff provide consistent encouragement and praise, motivating children to learn new skills and take pride in their achievements. Staff are trained and competent in administering medication and delivering first aid if and when required. Good arrangements are in place to monitor and audit the administration and handling of children's medication. This effectively supports their safety and well-being.

Children say that they like living in this home and especially enjoy the comfort of their own bedrooms that are personalised with their choice of pictures, toys, bedding and soft furnishings. The home is located in a quiet residential area with good access to the local town and all the amenities children require such as parks, cinemas and other places of interest. The garden surrounding the home provides a safe place for them to play. As a result children experience a homely environment where they feel safe and comfortable and have suitable space to relax and play.

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

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

Children say they feel safe and well cared for in this home. They acknowledge that there are times when they argue and can be unkind to each other, but do not express any concerns of bullying. The home does have positive arrangements in place to monitor any such activity or concerns and staff are vigilant to intervene and resolve any issues swiftly, ensuring children are not made vulnerable by any of their peers. Staff are trained and experienced in child protection practice and regularly refresh their knowledge and skills to ensure that they are up to date with current legislation, procedure and good practice to keep children safe from harm.

Children rarely go missing from this home but when such an event occurs staff respond quickly and appropriately to ensure the child's quick and safe return. Staff are familiar with the home's procedure and locally agreed protocols and are well prepared to act in such a situation to promote the child's safety and well-being.

Children are encouraged to understand their behaviours and to recognise those that



negatively impact on themselves or others. Children are encouraged to feel empathy for others enabling them to have greater insight into their actions. Staff promote positive behaviour using a range of appropriate techniques that include sensitive discussion, the agreement of targets for improved behaviour and praising, rewarding and celebrating with children their achievements.

Sanctions are used on occasions to address specific behaviours; however their use is monitored to check that they are proportionate, fair and effective. Physical intervention is used only in those circumstances where it is necessary to prevent harm to the child or others. Staff receive regular training in the use of appropriate intervention techniques. This promotes the minimum use of physical intervention and ensures that staff have the knowledge and skill to apply it safely when required and in accordance with the legislative framework. The home generally maintains satisfactory records reflecting such events. However, during this inspection it was noted that on a small number of occasions health checks were recorded as having occurred outside of the required 24- hour period. Although young people did not suffer or complain of any injuries on these occasions, delay in carrying out the check was not consistent with safe practice or regulation.

Children benefit from living in a safe and appropriately secure environment. The home has a full range of environmental assessments that are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that potential risks and hazards are identified and addressed. Children are supported to understand the importance of fire safety within the home, they are familiar with the escape routes and regularly practice fire evacuation drills to ensure that they know what to do in the event of a real emergency. The home follows safe recruitment practice and ensures that all visitors to the home have a valid reason for calling and are checked before they are invited in. These measures ensure that young people are not exposed to adults who may do them harm.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home is effectively managed by a permanent Registered Manager who is committed to working closely with her staff team to maintain a warm and caring environment that promotes the children's sense of belonging and enables them to feel safe and well cared for. The manager and her team share a thorough understanding of children's individual needs and are committed to ensuring that children have the quality of care and a range of experiences and opportunities that will maximise their potential.

There were no actions for improvement raised as a result of the interim inspection on 5 February 2013. However, an unannounced visit by Ofsted to the home on 18 July 2013 identified shortfalls in practice that resulted in five requirements being made. These have all been successfully addressed. The home's behaviour management policy has been suitably reviewed and updated to reflect current good practice and provide staff with additional guidance. Sanction records now consistently reflect the effectiveness of the measure imposed. Physical intervention



records consistently detail the duration of each intervention and action has been taken to promote improved recording of children's complaints. Together these promote positive improvement in the practice of using and recording of behaviour management measures. The home has reviewed its arrangements for recording the administration of medication to children, ensuring that medication stock totals are readily available on children's individual medication administration records. This promotes safe practice in maintaining accurate records for the handling and administration of medication.

Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in working with children and receive regular guidance and supervision. This promotes good child care practice and ensures that staff are supported in their roles and able to provide children with a good standard of care that will meet their individual needs. Staff also participate in an annual appraisal process that provides good opportunity to regularly evaluate their competency and identify and developmental needs. The home has good arrangements for providing staff with a range of training suitable to meet their needs. However, it was identified that the home has omitted to plan training for those staff involved in facilitating and supervising contact between children and their families. This means that some staff have not had the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge to develop this aspect of their role.

Staff meetings have generally taken place at regular intervals to provide staff with an additional forum for support and planning. However, some more recent planned meetings have not taken place. This means that staff have recently lost some opportunities to share their views and receive valuable support.

The home continues to meet the aims and objectives as detailed in their Statement of Purpose. However, some minor detail had been omitted and it fell short in describing the home's response in relation to children missing from the home. The provision of this information is relevant and particularly important to placing authorities and parents. The children's guide also lacked sufficient detail to enable children to fully understand how complaints could be made to the home and how they would be handled.

The home is adequately resourced and appropriate arrangements are in place to monitor its activity and the quality of care children receive. The manager is continuing to develop her monitoring and tracking arrangements to enable greater scrutiny of activity and support evaluation of events and practice. This is successful in informing practice and future planning. Suitable arrangements exist to ensure that all relevant parties are notified when significant events occur. This ensures that parents and placing authorities are kept suitably informed of matters concerning their child and Ofsted is afforded with good opportunity to monitor significant events between inspection visits.



## 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.