

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC361167
<b>Inspection date</b>	12/02/2014
<b>Inspector</b>	Christy Wannop
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Interim
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	04/12/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This setting is an independent residential special school registered as a children's home, operated by a private company. The school offers specialised education and care for up to 22 children with learning disabilities and two children under short-break arrangements. The school has a specialism with children who are diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorder and associated complex needs. Some young people stay until they have completed their education at 19.

The service is currently subject to a condition of registration to inform Ofsted of their intention to admit children and young people three months before any new placements of children and young people.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

<b>Good progress</b>	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.
<b>Satisfactory progress</b>	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.
<b>Inadequate progress</b>	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 **inadequate progress**.

At the last inspection in December 2013, the overall quality rating for the service was adequate. This inspection was brought forward after a member of the public raised safeguarding concerns with Ofsted about staff attitudes and management of children.

This inspection found significant shortfalls in how children's behaviour is managed, recorded and subsequently monitored by managers. A newly revised behaviour management policy is in place. However, the registered person has not ensured the procedure is followed in the use of approved techniques of physical intervention.

There is still not a clear account of what has happened following a challenging incident. This is particularly evident when staff use an unauthorised technique of physical intervention. For example, the use of clothing or a towel to move a child. Written and verbal accounts of incidents do not tally. Although a manager signs the record, there is no evidence of their managerial view of the incident and whether the intervention was safe or necessary. It is not possible to see whether other calming techniques could have been used to avoid the restraint. Therefore, it is not clear whether staff have safely managed children's behaviour in accordance with the behavioural policy. Management review of incidents of challenging behaviour and records of restraint does not identify any emerging issues or trends.

Managers have not implemented the organisation's own policy and procedure for protecting children, which requires early referral and consultation with the local safeguarding authority. The registered person did not refer an external allegation about staff behaviour towards children to the local authority designated officer (LADO). Parents and placing authorities were not told about concerns until three days later, after an internal investigation. They did not seek advice or work in partnership to protect children. The registered person did not prioritise the safety and welfare of children because they considered the allegation to be malicious; this was ill judged. Therefore, a statutory requirement is made as management of safeguarding issues is not good enough.

The last inspection found ten national minimum standard shortfalls. The registered person has made improvements in the majority of the identified shortfalls. The service has begun to take better action in response to complaints from parents about the quality of care. Children's privacy and confidentiality are now appropriately protected, as staff no longer store information about families on their personal mobile phones. Managers monitor children's meals to ensure a balanced and healthy diet. Activities are more likely to be healthy and no longer routinely include takeaways or fast food. There are newly introduced key working sessions. Staff have embraced opportunities to capture the children's 'voice' and give them more choice. Some staff use imaginative methods to get young people interested and as a result they participate with excitement in these sessions. This is good practice.

Through use of consistent relief and agency staff, staffing levels are now satisfactory. The organisation is addressing shortages with a rolling programme of recruitment to fill current vacancies. They are strengthening the number of leaders, on both day and night shifts, with the aim of better direct management of care practice. This also results in more staff working directly with children, so they have more opportunities for individual attention from residential care workers.

The service continues to tackle poor staff performance. Though not yet fully implemented, there is a new system to ensure professional development points from disciplinary investigations are followed up in regular staff supervision. The manager hopes this will lead to improvement in staff practice. Training has improved in some respects. Previously, the Registered Manager did not have child protection training. She has now completed advanced training in safeguarding. However, organisational learning about safeguarding is not well embedded in practice.

Managers are now of the view that the staff team understand their roles and responsibilities. Ofsted has been informed of issues and progress at the home through monthly monitoring reports by an external visitor. These show a reduction in identified issues and an increase in managerial action to some issues. These changes result in improved quality of care in areas, such as complaints, children's participation and some aspects of records. One young person reported positively about the care he receives, saying that everything about the service was good, staff cared for him and he felt safe. He has been actively involved in planning his care in development of a healthy eating plan.

However, the registered person must ensure further improvements. These relate to the prioritisation of all children's welfare in any response to safeguarding concerns, and to ensure that use of physical intervention is safe and in the best interests of the child or young person. Safeguarding practice does not prioritise children. Partnership working with the LADO is not embedded. The registered person operates in isolation about significant allegations without early referral and consultation with the LADO. Managerial monitoring does not make use of all information available to establish patterns and trends in staff's care practice and take the right action. The implementation of positive behaviour management is not transparent. Record keeping, while better in some respects, has been unreliable or misleading in crucial records of restraint. Generic, group and individual risk assessments still do not make clear the rationale for deciding safe staffing ratios on activities with young people. The plan for any activity does show the number of staff that will accompany young people, but not the factors that would require an increase in numbers.

Ofsted is taking compliance action because of the chronic failure to safeguard and promote children's welfare and the persistent shortfalls in behaviour management and poor safeguarding practice. Ofsted will carry out a monitoring visit to follow up on these shortfalls.

## 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
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children (Regulation 11(1) (a))	22/03/2014
16 (2001)	ensure the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2)(b)) *	22/03/2014
17B	prepare and implement a written policy (in this regulation	22/03/2014

(2001)	referred to as the "behaviour management policy") which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in the children's home and the means whereby appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the home. (Regulation 17B (1) (a-b)). *	
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\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

## Recommendations

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

- ensure the home implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment, for example that it makes clear the factors for the number of staff needed to safely manage any activity with children (NMS 4.5)
- implement a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the registered person's files and information to be kept on the child's files. Specifically, staff must make accurate and reliable records (NMS 22.1)
- identify any concerns about specific incidents and identify patterns and trends. The registered person should take immediate action to address any issues. (NMS 21)

## 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*.