

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032154
Inspection date	10/02/2014
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	25/09/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is part of a residential special school, which provides education and residential care for children with autism, learning difficulties and associated challenging behaviour.

The school offers residential provision on two sites. This home on the school site offers care for 52 weeks per year for up to 16 children. It comprises four separate living areas that are all interconnected enabling children and young people to freely move between them and socialise with friends. The outside areas are equipped with modern play facilities. All bedrooms are single with en-suite facilities.

Another house located off-site, offers term-time residential provision only and does not require registration as a children's home. The school caters for day pupils as well.

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 **satisfactory progress**.

The last full inspection of the home was on 25 September 2013. The overall effectiveness at that time was judged to be good. There were good judgements for outcomes for children and young people, quality of care, safeguarding, and the leadership and management. There were two required areas for improvement. These were in relation to the checks required for agency staff to work in the home and ensuring there are care and placement plans in place for each child and young person.

An additional monitoring visit was completed on the 5 November 2013 following a significant accident during a trip out. Further areas for improvement were identified regarding risk assessment and risk management strategies. At that time the registered manager and registered provider were already in the process of making improvements in these areas.

The registered manager and provider have taken action to improve all the areas identified at previous inspections. Shortfalls in monitoring the service compromise the ability to effect continuous improvement in the quality of care and outcomes for all children and young people. As a result the interim inspection judgement is satisfactory progress.

Since the last inspection the amount of agency staff used has reduced and there are thorough and robust checks in place. As a result children and young people benefit from more consistent care with staff they are familiar with. When agency staff are needed the quality of checks on their suitability ensures children and young people are looked after by staff who are competent and safe.

Risk management strategies have improved with regard to children and young people accessing the community and being transported in the home's minibuses. Child-locks are now used on passenger doors wherever possible and there is more scrutiny and planning of outings. There is clear accountability with senior staff taking responsibility for ensuring staffing levels are safe and that children and young people are safely seated in the minibus.

The manager has been persistent in ensuring there are up to date care plans and transition plans in place for all individual children and young people. This is challenging, with some placing authorities slow to provide this information. In particular not all young people who should have a pathway or transition plan regarding their future care needs have one. As well, the poor quality of some of these plans compromises the quality of planning to meet children and young people's individual needs.

The manager and staff overcome some of these shortfalls by ensuring children and young people have their own in-house plans. These address the health, safety and communication needs of children and young people and support improvements in their behaviour. In addition children and young people are supported to achieve a range of targets, such as independent living skills based on their individual needs. As a result children and young people make progress in a number of areas. They learn to communicate better, eat healthier diets, improve their self-care skills and are able to complete household tasks. The manager has plans to introduce a range of new targets to support children and young people with their education and achieve awards for their progress.

Children and young people have a good say in what happens in the home and their day-to-day care. They are included in developing their targets, choose activities and benefit from regular one-to-one time with staff.

Children and young people enjoy a range of social and leisure activities which also helps them develop their social skills. Safeguarding issues are taken seriously. Allegations or concerns about children and young people's safety and welfare are promptly addressed. Effective action is taken to ensure children and young people are safe and protected from harm.

Since the last inspection monitoring by the registered provider has been inconsistent. Some monitoring visits have not included talking to children and young people or their parents. Written reports of monitoring visits are also inconsistent with evaluating how well children and young people are supported to enjoy and achieve. This compromises how well the registered provider can effectively improve the leadership and management of the home.

The manager undertakes routine monthly monitoring checks. These lack rigour particularly with monitoring compliance of placing authorities' plans of care for individual children and young people. This was further highlighted as some children and young people's individual progress reports and results of placing authorities' reviews were not up to date. These shortfalls impact on how well individual placements are monitored and exploring how good outcomes can be achieved for all children and young people.

There are three areas identified for further improvement in relation to the monitoring of care, children and young people's progress and ensuring records are up to date.

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
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated, a record in permanent form which includes records specified in Schedule 3, in particular: a copy of any plan for the care of the child prepared by his placing authority, including the pathway or transition plan, and of the placement plan (Regulation 28 (1) Schedule 3)	25/04/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated, a record in permanent form which includes records specified in Schedule 3, in particular: the result of any review of the placing authority's plan for the care of the child, or of the placement plan (Regulation 28 (1) Schedule 3)	25/04/2014
33 (2001)	ensure that the person carrying out these visits shall interview, with their consent, children accommodated there, their parents and relatives in order to inform an opinion of the standard of	25/04/2014

	care provided (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	
34 (2001)	ensure the system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 is aimed at improving the quality of care provided, including the compliance with the placing authority's plan of care and the placement plan (Regulation 34 (1) (b), Schedule 6 (1)).	25/04/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that visits to the home carried out under Regulation 33 scrutinise how the home is supporting children to enjoy and achieve. (Statutory Guidance, Volume 5, Paragraph 3.12)
- ensure each child's placement plan is monitored and that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child. (NMS 25.2)

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*.