

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC402370
<b>Inspection date</b>	21/01/2014
<b>Inspector</b>	Judith Longden / Andy Waugh
<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>	13/11/2013
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The service is a residential school that is registered as a children's home to provide care for 54 children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service is owned by a private company.

### 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 **adequate**.

This home provides an adequate quality of care. The quality of young people's care plans and risk assessments has improved and these clearly identify the needs of young people. There is, however, inconsistency in the quality of key work to address these needs and some shortfalls in record keeping.

Young people are making satisfactory progress and achieving positive outcomes, especially in developing their social skills through positive interaction with their peers.

Young people are kept safe and generally feel safe. Their behaviour is improving and there are less physical interventions and sanctions. Staff have improved their skills in behaviour management and demonstrate a sound understanding of safe working practice.

The home has taken action to address previous shortfalls and concerns and have clear plans to continue to improve the home. There are three breaches of regulations in respect of staff numbers, training and record keeping and two failures to meet national minimum standards relating to the quality of key work. However these shortfalls do not significantly impact negatively on the welfare or safety of young people. In addition, the Registered Manager has taken immediate steps to address 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
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the health and welfare of the children accommodated in the home, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25 (1)(b))	25/02/2014
27 (2001)	ensure all persons employed by him receive appropriate training. This is in relation to fire safety training (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	25/02/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which is kept up to date. (Regulation 28 (1)(b))	25/02/2014

## Recommendations

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

- ensure staff support children's social and emotional development and enable children to develop emotional resilience and self-esteem (NMS 2.2)
- ensure each home meets children's emotional and behavioural needs, as set out in their care plan. (NMS 3.7)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people make adequate progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas. Young people have increased opportunities to socialise with their peers out of school time and enjoy a range of activities and clubs, on and off-site. Attendance at evening clubs is no longer compulsory and this allows young people the freedom to choose their activity and who to socialise with. This has improved their confidence and social skills and has enabled them to establish friendships within the care setting and local community. Young people continue to enjoy positive contact with parents and family and staff facilitate and support contact as required.

Young people generally enjoy good health. They enjoy a varied and nutritious diet and are also developing skills in budgeting and shopping for their own food. Young people are encouraged to engage in a range of sports and activities to promote a

healthy lifestyle. Personal hygiene routines encourage young people to learn self-care skills.

Most young people regularly attend school which is provided on-site, although a few young people have found it difficult to settle this term and have not fully engaged with all their lessons. However, achievements in education remain of a generally high standard and most young people achieve their educational potential.

Young people undertake a variety of chores and routines within the home and this enables them to gain some basic practical skills. Young people who are due to leave at the end of the school year take on more responsibility for their daily lives and this helps them prepare for adulthood.

### Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from improved care management procedures. All individual risk assessments have been updated in consultation with young people and reflect current issues and concerns. Care plans have also been updated with young people and reflect a number of objectives and aims for the placement. These are maintained in chronological form which builds a picture of progress for the individual young person. The detail and quality of self-harm care plans has significantly improved. These provide clear guidance for staff on how to support young people, with details of the triggers, early warning signs and individual strategies for intervention.

The updated concerns and issues from the care plans and self-harm plans are communicated between staff and this ensures staff are aware of the current needs of the young people. However, how these current needs are reflected in the daily care of young people is inconsistent. For example, one young person had recently suffered a bereavement and this was recorded in their care plan and self-harm plan as a possible trigger for self-harm and likely to cause the young person distress and upset. However, the following two key work sessions failed to address the bereavement and the young person's feelings of loss. This means young people's needs may not always be met and staff are not always able to support young people to improve their self-esteem and emotional resilience. Two recommendations are made as a result of these shortfalls.

Some records in young people's files require updating, for example several student profile front sheets were not up to date, the legal status of a young person was not clearly detailed and a young person's contact arrangements were not easily identified in their records. There is also a lack of cross-referencing across a number of files. A requirement is made to ensure all records are kept up to date and provide an accurate record for the young person.

Young people attend circle meetings where they discuss issues and concerns and share their views on the home. Young people who are on the care council seek the view and opinions of their peers and take part in consultation with the senior team. A

number of positive changes have been made as a result of young people's views. For example the home has revised its media contracts with young people which details the rules of having media such as laptops, and the home has provided training for staff and young people which enables access to more forms of media. This means young people are involved in the running of the home.

Young people's health needs are identified and actions are in place to meet these needs. Young people have access to a variety of health professionals including a school nurse and psychological assessor. This provides support for young people to meet their holistic health needs. A sufficient number of staff are trained in first aid and the safe administration of medication. A central record of medication is maintained by the school nurse and this ensures records of medication are clear and accurate and the arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective.

The home supports the learning and development of young people. Senior staff from care and school meet regularly to share information on young people's progress and any behavioural issues. . The routines of the home support young people's educational attendance.

Young people live in a home that is well maintained and decorated. The living accommodation provides a homely feel, though some young people say the toilet roll dispensers are too 'industrial', otherwise they are happy with their surroundings. There are a number of facilities and activities provided on the site and young people are also encouraged to take part in community activities such as cadets, taekwondo and youth club. This enables young people to enjoy a range of activities and socialise with friends in the home and community.

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

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

The home has recently implemented a new behaviour management system that focusses on a more therapeutic approach to intervention. Staff have received additional training and this has resulted in a substantial decrease in physical interventions in the last month. The recording of incidents has also improved, and these now provide a clear account of all interventions and de-escalation techniques employed. Young people and staff are involved in debriefs of incidents and this enables them to reflect on what has been effective. Staff say this has resulted in an improvement in young people's behaviour and, as a consequence, relationships have improved.

Sanctions for negative behaviour are fair and reasonable and discussed with young people. For example, young people who had been throwing food at each other chose to clear up the mess and spend time talking to each other to sort out their differences. Sanctions are recorded in sufficient detail and their effectiveness is monitored and reviewed with young people. This means young people learn from their behaviour and understand the consequences of their actions. The manager also

reviews and evaluates all interventions and sanctions. This means they are able to identify patterns and trends to inform the care provided.

Young people generally feel safe and are able to identify staff they can talk to. Young people benefit from detailed individual risk assessments which are regularly updated to reflect current behaviours and provide detail on how to control and reduce the risks. Clear policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place for countering bullying. Any issues of bullying are dealt with promptly. As a result young people are protected from bullying.

The home has sound policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations and recruitment. The recording of child protection concerns and allegations has improved. Investigations into allegations and concerns are handled effectively and recorded in detail. Staff are trained in safeguarding and senior staff are undertaking training for the role of designated child protection officers. The home operates safe recruitment processes and visitors to the home are asked to sign in and identification is checked. This ensures young people are kept safe.

Staff are aware of the dangers young people may be exposed to if they are absent from the home. The home has a sound missing from care procedure and protocol and records of any absence are clear and provide detail of the action taken. Young people are responded to positively on their return and discuss their absence. As a result they are protected as far as possible.

All required health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner. Fire drills are held on a regular basis so young people are aware how to evacuate safely. However, not all staff have completed fire safety training and as a result may not be competent in ensuring sufficient precautions are taken to prevent fire or what to do in the event of a fire. A requirement has been made to ensure this shortfall is addressed. The Registered Manager has already taken action to bring forward the fire training that was planned for the summer and this will now take place shortly.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The home has appointed a new manager who is in the process of applying for registration with Ofsted. The current Registered Manager is remaining in post until the process has been successfully completed and is supporting the new manager in their induction period. This ensures a smooth transition and provides consistency in leadership for young people.

The home has made a number of improvements and met the compliance notice and requirements made following the last inspection. As a result the welfare, care and safety of young people has improved. Three requirements and two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. However, these shortfalls do not significantly impact on the welfare or safety of young people and the Registered

Manager took steps to address the majority of these during the inspection.

The home has taken action to address complaints that have arisen since the last inspection and the quality of record keeping in relation to complaints has improved. The manager has established sound relationships with placing authorities and takes action to support young people experiencing difficulties with contacting their local authorities. This means young people are confident their complaints and concerns are taken seriously.

Parents and placing authorities are aware of the service provided by the home as a result of a clear and comprehensive Statement of Purpose which is regularly reviewed and updated. Young people have a guide and induction book which details the service offered and telephone numbers for them to contact for support and advice. This ensures young people understand what the home provides and who to contact for information.

Young people are cared for by a staff team with varied qualifications and experience. Adequate staffing levels are maintained during the day and evening, however, there are insufficient staff on duty during the night. This means, if there is an incident in one of the houses on site, another house could be left short staffed. A requirement is made to ensure there are sufficient staff to meet young people's needs at all times. The Registered Manager has taken immediate steps to increase staffing levels in the short-term to ensure young people are kept safe and is undertaking a review of the staffing rota.

Staff develop their knowledge and skills through a range of training opportunities to improve their competency. Recent courses include therapeutic risk taking, managing behaviour and self-harm. This means training is relevant for staff to address the needs of young people. Staff benefit from regular supervision, care meetings and professional discussions. As a result they are supported to continue to provide a quality service for young people.

The home has clear and effective procedures for monitoring the quality of the service provided and the welfare of the young people. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends as well as progress made by young people. As a result young people are consulted about the quality of care they receive and how effectively their needs are met and their welfare, protection and progress is monitored. All significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified to the appropriate agencies and actions taken as required.

## 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.