

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC048552
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered person	Wings Education Limited
Registered person address	Wings Education Limited Fourth Floor, 43-45 Dorset Street LONDON W1U 7NA
Responsible individual	Paul Brosnan
Registered manager	Gillian Margaret Miele
Date of last inspection	05/03/2014

Inspection date	25/06/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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All the young people feel safe at this home and the vast majority are happy and settled. They are really pleased with the significant positive changes which are continually being introduced following the recent appointments of a new Registered Manager and Headmaster. Most of the staff have embraced the new open culture and ethos and morale and motivation is high. However, this serves to highlight a small number who have not, or will not, change their practices.

The relationships between the vast majority of the staff and young people are excellent. The home has also secured regular and positive contact arrangements for the young people, which is particularly important to them in maintaining a strong sense of identity.

The quality of care provided at this home and the consequent outcomes for young people are very good. This means all the young people are making at least satisfactory progress educationally, developmentally, socially and emotionally.

The new management team are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of their service and comprehensive, realistic yet challenging development plans are in place to address the latter.

The majority of the staff now demonstrate sound care practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the young people. However, there are weaknesses in recording.

Three requirements and six recommendations were raised. These are to ensure that: young people's files include all the required documentation which is up to date and accurate (examples include care plans, review minutes and robust risk assessments); stringent and effective handovers, internal monitoring and at least monthly independent Regulation 33 visits take place; young people's views are recorded following the imposition of sanctions and missing from home incidents; all the accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard and regular feedback from independent reviewing officers is obtained on the quality of care provided at this home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned residential special school, which is also registered as a children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation to 50 young people of both genders, between the ages of 11 and 17 years, who experience emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2014	Full	adequate
03/12/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
03/05/2013	Full	adequate
31/10/2012	Interim	good progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
33 (2001)	ensure visits by an independent person take place at least one a month (Regulation 33(7))	31/07/2014
28 (2001)	ensure all young people's files contain the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 and that they are all up to date, signed and dated (Regulation 28(1))	31/07/2014
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of all the children accommodated, with particular regard to ensuring robust individual risk assessments cover and address all concerns and risks. (Regulation	31/07/2014

Recommendations

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

- demonstrate that young people understand the sanctions imposed and consider them to be reasonable and fair (NMS 3.8)
- ensure that all young people's bedrooms are well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure handovers provide the new staff team with all the essential information about each young person to appropriately meet their presenting needs (NMS 17.6)
- demonstrate that the views of young people's independent reviewing officers are regularly sought on their care (NMS 1.4)
- ensure young people can speak to someone independent of the home on their return from being missing (NMS 5.9)
- demonstrate stringent monitoring of all the records kept by the home and that immediate action is taken to address any shortfalls identified. (NMS 21.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

All the young people living at this home are treated, valued and respected as individuals in their own right.

The vast majority are very happy and settled at this home and have a strong sense of belonging. Indeed, some school leavers have chosen to remain in this placement and attend local further education colleges. Many young people have grasped the new opportunity to have and take full responsibility for caring for their own pets.

Young people benefit from excellent, trusting and mutually respectful relationships with most of the staff. They all say they have a range of staff they feel comfortable discussing any concerns with, knowing they will be taken seriously and effectively addressed.

Recently young people are having more regular constructive contact with family and friends which is especially important to them and maintains their strong sense of identity.

Some significant risk taking behaviours including self-harm, smoking, drugs and alcohol misuse, missing from home and offending have significantly reduced or ceased altogether in this placement. Consequently, some legal orders related to youth offending have been rescinded early due to the excellent progress made.

Young people enjoy good physical health and take full advantage of the regular and excellent choice of challenging physical activities on offer. Examples include raft building, canoeing, sailing, climbing, abseiling, cave and mine exploring. These all develop important team building skills.

Young people say the standard of the meals provided has much improved and confirm that if they do not like the particular menu choices, alternatives are always offered. Some young people have benefitted from appropriate weight loss which has demonstrably increased their self-esteem.

School attendance is excellent and young people are making good progress especially given their starting points. Some benefit from tailor made education programmes to suit their individual needs and abilities. They are also pursuing both academic and vocational qualifications to support their future employment prospects. Excellent displays throughout the buildings demonstrate and celebrate young people's many artistic talents including pottery, drawing, photography and creative writing. This significantly increases confidence and self-esteem resulting in positive future ambitions. Some young people help in the kitchen to specifically develop their independence skills and widen their career prospects.

Young people really enjoy the excellent range of stimulating activities, trips and holidays on offer both inside and outside the home. Many love working on the farm and the recent purchase of a full size trampoline is proving particularly popular and physically challenging. One young person said, 'I was the first person here to do a double back flip on the trampoline. I particularly enjoy swimming, skate boarding, motor biking and cycling. I am also pleased that we no longer have to share bedrooms.'

Young people are actively encouraged to be sensitive to others. Consequently they are involved in regular fund raising events for local charities. Residents have praised the young people for their polite and courteous manners. They have also joined local clubs where they have made new friendships. This increases their sense of belonging.

Comments from young people include, 'I have made some good friends here and the staff are caring and funny', 'Things have really changed here. It's got better. It's more relaxed and there is more freedom. The manager is sound,' 'We get so many opportunities and I have been on so many trips. Tonight I am going to the theatre to see my favourite musical,' 'I have made excellent progress in maths,' 'My fitness has improved here' and, 'I feel safe here and always have staff I can talk to. I have been helped a lot and now I go on buses myself, shop and cook and do my own washing'.

One social worker wrote, 'Aspirations are high for the young people and they have opportunities to do well in all aspects of their life including education, social and health. Since moving to this home my young person has come on in leaps and bounds. She is now engaging in education, taking part in the impressive range of activities on offer and is kept safe.'

Quality of care

good

Young people are very positive about the quality of care provided at this home. The relationships between young people and the vast majority of the staff is now outstanding.

Young people are also secure in the knowledge that their views are central to the day-to-day running and future development of the service. This makes them feel valued and increases their self-esteem and sense of belonging. Comments include, 'I have moved houses on request and am much happier now and I want to finish my education here' and, 'This place is mint. Staff listen to you and help you when you need it.'

Recent changes as a direct result of listening to young people include: the introduction of smart phones which young people are really pleased about; consistent staff in each house so strong relationships can be maintained; the purchase of two more vehicles to enable more choice of trips out; and, the establishment of a football

team and new kit creating a strong sense of community identity.

Staff are now empowered to be strong and effective advocates for young people. For example, they ensured all school leavers knew, and were happy about, their future placements prior to commencing their examinations. This reduced unnecessary anxieties. Staff have also successfully secured for young people: foster carers in the local area; regular and positive contact arrangements with family and friends; the active participation of parents in care planning and, changes of social workers. This has enabled young people to be more settled in placement and has reduced challenging behaviours and restraints.

Good health and well-being is actively promoted. This includes the provision of an excellent standard of homemade nutritious meals which always includes the choice of a meat and vegetarian hot meal, a salad bar and a choice of sandwiches.

Young people and staff also benefit from the expertise of a qualified nurse on site. She has established good links with the specialist nurse for looked after children and other local health professionals. This means young people receive timely access to the specialist services they need to meet their unique and more complex physical and emotional health needs. They also have a genuine choice about the gender of the professional treating them. This reduces some genuine anxieties around, for example, dental work.

The arrangements for the storage, administration and recording of medicines are safe and effective. Rotas are carefully planned to ensure there is a qualified first aider on duty at all times to attend to any minor injuries.

A significant new development is the establishment of a clinical team to improve young people's emotional well-being.

The home provides a particularly good range of purposeful and stimulating activities both on and off site. Individual interests and talents are also actively encouraged and supported. Examples include astronomy, animal care, boxing, gymnastics, art, music and a range of dancing genres. This is significantly increasing young people's competence, confidence and self-esteem. One young person proudly announced that she is currently the regional gymnastics champion and has set her sights on winning the national competition.

Staff actively encourage and support good school attendance and achievement. Additional sessions are provided to improve upon particular subjects. Educational effort and achievement is recognised every day at the end of school assembly, which is significantly increasing young people's confidence and self-esteem. Comments from young people include, 'Things are going good at school and I am getting individual tuition because I want to improve my grades from D to C' and, 'I have 100% attendance. Staff listen to me and push and support me to do well.' An education psychologist wrote, 'The staff work as a team to ensure the very best for the young

people and it is always good to see the progress made both in terms of education and building their emotional and social skills and resilience.' Feedback from placing authorities is also positive. Comments include, 'She has made excellent progress both academically and emotionally. The care staff are very good and ensure her well-being' and, 'This placement provides an excellent level of care. He is safe in this placement and making good progress academically'.

Young people are actively involved in improving their living environment which demonstrates an increased sense of belonging. For example, some young people have created a new recreation room and others are developing the farm. All have chosen the themes and colours for their individual bedrooms which are currently being redecorated.

The admission processes have been significantly strengthened recently to ensure young people's unique needs and personal preferences can be met. It is a more sensitive and gradual process ensuring young people can visit the home, choose their bedroom and talk to staff and young people so they can make an informed choice. Consequently, they settle much quicker. One young person recently admitted confirmed, 'I visited this children's home and said I would like to come here.' Another has built up tremendous confidence in a short period of time to be able to demonstrate her dancing skills in front of the whole school.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

All the young people say they now feel safe at this home and the vast majority are happy and settled. They have all established some strong positive friendships and say bullying is not an issue as staff address any signs immediately. A foster carer wrote, 'This home is nurturing and has an ability to turn young people around. My young person describes it as his 'saviour' I have had several young people from this service and they all say it was a positive experience.'

Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and are able to recognise potential triggers and successfully diffuse challenging behaviours. Consequently, physical restraints have significantly reduced.

Under the new leadership team there has been a major shift to positively reinforcing and rewarding good behaviour and effort rather than the previous emphasis on imposing sanctions. This has had a marked desired effect on young people's behaviours and they are motivated to achieve. Comments from young people include, 'Apart from home, this is the next best place. When I first came you couldn't do anything. Now if you ask, we can go out independently. Now, if you are good, you get a lot back', 'I feel safe here and have built up very strong relationships. I am achieving a lot of good things and I like the awards you can earn' and, 'It used to be very tense and staff were proper strict but had no control. Now there are only a few like that. It used to be firm, firm, firm. Now it is firm but fair.'

Comments from parents include, 'He is doing well here. He has grown in maturity and confidence and we are pleased with his temperament and manners when he comes home. His behaviour has really improved' and, 'Since my child moved to this home I feel he has made good progress. It has changed him and his attitudes.'

However, staff are not consistently recording young people's views to demonstrate that young people feel the sanctions imposed are always fair and proportionate to the particular misdemeanour.

All the staff are trained in safeguarding to ensure they respond appropriately in the event of any disclosures of abuse. The recent appointment of a head of safeguarding for the company as a whole is providing a particularly good source of advice and support to this service.

Effective working relationships with external agencies are now firmly established to safeguard young people. One social worker said, 'I am impressed with the dedication and commitment of the staff. They have a good understanding of the needs of the young people, including emotional and behavioural, and how best to meet them. They support them well and provide a safe and comfortable environment. There is good partnership working and I am kept well informed of all significant events.' A youth offending worker said, 'This home is an excellent example of multi-agency working. The staff are professional and friendly and I always receive prompt replies to requests. The young people I have had contact with have all gone on to achieve their best. This is as a result of the excellent pastoral support.'

The police also report excellent working relationships with this service resulting in a continued reduction of missing from home incidents. One young person said, 'We used to run off to have some private time with our friends because staff would hover when we tried to chat to each other. Now we don't need to because it's so chilled and more homely. It's so much better.'

However, missing from home records do not consistently record the events leading up to the young people going missing and there is limited documentary evidence of return interviews. This is vital information for exploring any triggers and patterns to try to prevent reoccurrences.

The environment is kept physically safe and secure and young people take part in regular fire drills so they know exactly what to do in the event of a fire.

All individual risk assessments have recently been reviewed and revised. The home's system is also that following any significant incident, the risk assessment will be updated. However, this is not consistently occurring in practice. Consequently, for example, risks pertaining to potential child sexual exploitation and criminal behaviours are not fully addressed and strategies identified to lower the risks.

Recruitment processes are now more robust and staff files are in satisfactory order to demonstrate a safe workforce.

Leadership and management

adequate

The new Registered Manager has a sound knowledge of legislation and good care practices. She is suitably qualified, highly experienced and extremely child focussed. She leads by example. Consequently, staff are demonstrably increasing their confidence and competence under her excellent leadership. She has a particularly good knowledge of young people's individual needs and personal preferences and is extremely pro-active in ensuring social workers take an active role in care planning.

In turn, she benefits from a strong leadership team and excellent joint working with the new head teacher. Together they are making necessary and extremely positive changes to the ethos and culture of the service. Moreover, they are involving staff, so there is shared sense of ownership and accountability. Consequently, morale, motivation and commitment is high.

Staff benefit from regular supervision, on-going training opportunities and timely annual appraisals which continue to challenge and develop sound care practices.

Staff say the managers are very accessible, approachable and supportive. Comments include, 'We feel appreciated and I have more confidence. The manager is really brilliant, very helpful' and, 'The manager is on our level and the young people love her. We can talk to her and don't feel intimidated. It's totally different.' A social worker confirmed, 'I have seen a massive improvement in the care and education provided under the new leadership team.'

One young person said, 'The head teacher and registered manager are brilliant here and have made so many good changes.'

This service remains financially viable and the significant improvements being made and challenging future plans are fully endorsed by the Directors of the company. This motivates the staff.

The home is now sufficiently staffed to safeguard and protect the welfare of the young people and to meet their diverse needs and personal preferences. However, handovers are not sufficiently robust to ensure the next staff team are fully aware of all the key issues before starting the shift, for example, young people who are ill or having a detention.

The management team are clear about the strengths of their service and areas for development. A comprehensive and challenging development plan is in place to

address the latter.

This home keeps the regulator Ofsted well informed of any significant events which evidences that appropriate action is taken to safeguard and protect young people. External agencies confirm very good collaborative working.

This service is now clearly demonstrating a capacity to improve. The five requirements made at the last inspection on 5 March 2014 have been satisfactorily addressed. Consequently: there is a more robust system for reviewing the effectiveness of sanctions; all night staff are trained in fire safety; specific reasons for the use of alarms on some young people's bedroom doors is now included in individual risk assessments and written permission obtained from their parents or social workers; the home's statement of purpose has been revised in line with the new regulations and includes the relevant qualifications and experience of all the staff; and an internal review of the quality of care provided in the home was undertaken and forwarded to Ofsted.

Four recommendations were also made. Two have been fully addressed and two are ongoing. In response, pathway plan have been introduced for year 10 students. Also, age and ability appropriate life skills programmes have commenced for all young people to better prepare them emotionally and practically for future independence.

The roles and responsibilities of the night staff are gradually increasing so they are gaining more job satisfaction. In particular, they now work in one house so they are building positive relationships with the young people. Communication with the day staff has also significantly improved which has improved continuity of care. They have also benefitted from significant training recently offered. Moreover, they are looking forward to commencing the level 3 diploma in health and social care in September.

There has been a delay in the redecoration of young people's bedrooms which was planned to commence in March 2014, so this recommendation is repeated. This is because finance has since been agreed to fully redecorate and refurbish the entire houses and this has now commenced. The aim is to significantly improve all the living accommodation and security arrangements before the start of the new term in September.

Very positive questionnaires from young people, their parents and social workers have been received since the last inspection, but there have been no responses from independent reviewing officers on the quality of care provided in the home, so this recommendation is repeated.

Young people's files are generally disorganised, so required information is difficult to find. Not all care plans are up-to-date or signed by all relevant parties to demonstrate their agreement to the contents. Some statutory review minutes are not on individual files. These are key documents to ensure staff are meeting young people's very

specific needs. The details of key worker sessions are not always recorded. Also, the recording does not always give close attention to clarity, relevance and accuracy of information, mindful that young people can chose to read them at any time in their life.

These shortfalls suggest that the monitoring of records is not sufficiently robust. Moreover, although comprehensive Regulation 33 reports are completed by an independent visitor on the quality of care provided in this home, these monitoring visits are not undertaken at the required frequencies.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.

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