

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC032154
<b>Inspector</b>	Monica Hargreaves
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

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<b>Registered person</b>	National Autistic Society
<b>Registered person address</b>	National Autistic Society 391-393 City Road LONDON EC1V 1NG
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Helen Evers
<b>Registered manager</b>	Lynne Taylor
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	10/02/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	07/08/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>good</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>good</b>
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Young people living in this service benefit greatly from the excellent care they receive. This home is holistic, child-centred and autism specific and meets young people's individual and complex needs.

Young people respond well to the structures that are in place and they make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. The care young people receive provides them with the consistency they need to help them to develop confidence, to access education and activities and to carry out life skills as independently as possible. One parent commented, 'they have given my child structure to his life that has actually made him more adaptable to new situations and change'.

This home is managed effectively and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding practices. Consequently young people are well cared for and kept safe.

Areas for improvement that have been identified at this inspection relate to staff training, supervision records, a review of the effectiveness of the whistle blowing policy and one aspect of the maintenance of the home.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The children's home is part of a residential special school. It is an autism specific service which provides education and residential care for children and young people. Children may also have other associated learning difficulties and challenging behaviour.

The school has a residential provision on two sites. This home offers 52 week provision for up to 16 young people.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
25/09/2013	Full	good
24/01/2013	Interim	good progress
17/07/2012	Full	good

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

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that all staff actively promote the welfare of children and young people living in the home, specifically review the effectiveness of the whistle blowing procedure with staff (NMS 4.2)
- ensure that all staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the setting, specifically that all staff who have management and supervisory responsibilities are suitably trained (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that all areas of the home are well maintained, in particular that the torn carpet in one of the sitting rooms is replaced (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that all staff are provided with effective supervision by

appropriately qualified and experienced staff, in particular that all records evidence in detail the discussions that have taken place (NMS 19.4)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people thrive in this home. Their specific and complex needs are met very well by staff. Consequently young people make excellent progress in all areas of their life from their individual starting point. The very clear autism specific structure in place in the home supports young people well and enables them to develop the confidence and skills to access new activities and participate in daily life. This in turn enables them to achieve extremely positive outcomes. Parents are very positive about the progress their children make. One parent said 'My child's progress in life skills, independence and behaviour are superb' and a social worker commented '(Name) thrives on the structure'.

Young people's health has greatly improved as a result of the healthy lifestyles they have. They have a good daily routine, are provided with a healthy diet and are very active. Health plans are tailored to meet their specific needs. Young people are all registered with primary health services and are fully supported to attend all health appointments. The home has strong links with a range of health care services, including psychological services. This enables young people to access holistic health care and ensures their general and emotional health needs are met.

Young people succeed in improving their behaviour and their independence, social and daily living skills. This helps them to grow in confidence and to develop the personal skills they need for their transition into adulthood. One example of this progression is one young person who had not previously been able to access the hairdressers now does this as a regular part of his routine. This is a significant step for this young person.

Young people achieve excellent attendance at school. This enables them to make the most of their education and to achieve their individual potential.

Young people are actively involved in all their care planning and in decisions in the home. Their views are sought in individual ways according to their level of communication. This empowers young people with skills to make choices and voice opinions both in the home and when they reach adulthood.

Young people benefit significantly from the support they are given to build and maintain positive contact with their parents and families. Staff work closely with young people and their families to ensure contact is well organised and as positive an experience as possible. As a result, young people enjoy frequent and good quality contact with key people in their lives. One young person's parents reported that the progress their child has made in the setting has not only improved their family relationships but has also enabled their child to form positive peer relationships.

## **Quality of care**

## **outstanding**

Young people benefit greatly from being cared for by staff who have an excellent understanding of their individual needs. Staff are well trained in working with young people with autism and are committed to providing individual and child-centred care. They create a structured, low arousal environment which supports the complexities of each young person's experience of autism. The way they are looked after allows young people a predictable place in which they can start to learn and develop in areas they have previously made little progress in. Professionals and relatives are very positive about the quality of care. For example, one parent commented 'Our child's needs are addressed by a staff team who are extremely experienced with managing behaviours associated with autism. They really do think outside the box and innovative ideas are not a rarity'.

Relationships between staff and young people are very strong. All staff have high aspirations for the young people they look after and they respect and value them as individuals. Young people's achievements in all areas of their lives are celebrated and each young person is encouraged to reach their maximum potential. This empowers young people. Differences are celebrated and this prepares young people emotionally for later life.

Staff facilitate a wealth of activities that are chosen by young people. Visits to the local community to access amenities are frequent. For example, young people are able to go fishing, shopping and to youth clubs. They also have access to school facilities such as the gymnasium out of school hours. Some young people also enjoy cooking, arts and crafts, listening to music and using the computer. Staff have an excellent knowledge of young people's individual likes and dislikes and they differentiate activities accordingly. Involvement in a range of activities enriches young people's lives and helps them to develop their life skills.

The home's arrangements for managing medication are extremely robust. They ensure that young people are protected and have medicines when they need them.

Staff ensure all young people have an active part in their care planning. Young people's progress and journey from point of entry to the home are clearly documented. Staff commented 'We all go the extra mile to make sure young people have what they need'.

Staff work extremely well with a number of other agencies to ensure the young people have the specific support they need. Staff have access to a multi-disciplinary team within the setting; this ensures young people receive very individualised support. For example, there is a speech and language therapist on site. Staff have a sound knowledge of each individual's communication style. This benefits young people as they can communicate their choices and likes. It also ensures any young

person's dissatisfaction and unhappiness is recognised and is able to be resolved.

Education is highly valued in the home and staff ensure that young people are fully supported to attend and to achieve. Staff work very closely with teachers in the school. They take young people to and from school and ensure that important information is handed over to teachers. They attend education planning meetings and have copies of young people's education plans. This ensures that they understand young people's individual targets and can support them to achieve their goals.

Young people benefit from living in a homely environment that is comfortably furnished, clean and tidy. They have individual bedrooms that are personalised to reflect their wishes and their needs. Young people spend time in their rooms when they wish. This gives them privacy. The home is generally well maintained throughout. However, the carpet in the sitting room of one of the houses is ripped and needs replacing. This detracts from the overall presentation of the home. At the time of the inspection, the manager confirmed that this had been reported and that there was a plan in place to address this.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    good**

Young people are safe living in this home. This is confirmed by parents and professionals. Staff have safeguarding training which is updated regularly. They have a sound knowledge of the safeguarding protocol, although recently there was a delay in reporting an incident to senior managers. When this was brought to their attention, managers responded promptly and the incident was managed effectively. Due to the nature of the incident there was no impact on young people and their safety was not compromised. Management are currently reviewing and reinforcing protocols with staff.

Managers have sound relationships with the Local Authority safeguarding team, social workers and the police. Professionals are very positive about the way the service works to protect young people. One professional commented 'The young people are safe there; staff are prompt to seek advice and report issues'.

Detailed risk management plans ensure potential hazards for individual young people are minimised and specific strategies implemented to keep them safe. Young people in this setting do not go missing from home. However, there is a clear protocol in place for staff to follow should this happen. The home has a bullying policy that is clearly visible in writing and in basic symbol format to support young people's understanding of the issues. Staff supervise and support young people appropriately to lessen the risk of bullying and consequently, this does not happen in the home.

Consistent behaviour management strategies are put in place in line with each young person's individual behaviour support profile. This approach is effective in supporting

changes in young people's behaviour. Relatives and professionals report that young people's behaviour improves greatly over time in the home. Restraint is rarely used. Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour and also in the safe use of restraint. Training is regularly updated to ensure that staff maintain their knowledge and skills. If restraint is used this is only at the lowest level needed to keep young people and staff safe.

Young people are protected by the home's recruitment practice. This ensures that all appropriate checks are undertaken before staff start work. The identity of visitors is also checked before they are allowed into the home and their whereabouts monitored during their stay. This ensures that young people are protected from individuals who may pose a risk to them.

The home itself is kept safe for young people, staff and visitors. This is achieved through a robust system of risk assessment and management plans and regular checks on equipment. Staff regularly practice evacuating the building with young people to ensure that they can leave the home safely in an emergency.

## **Leadership and management**

**good**

The home is managed effectively. The Registered Manager has significant experience in working with children and young people in residential care and has managed this home for some years. She holds a qualification at level 4 in Management and a social work qualification. She is registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council.

There is a clear management structure across the houses. The Registered Manager and deputy work closely with team leaders who take a substantial role in managing their individual house. With oversight from the Registered Manager and deputy, team leaders manage staff on a day-to-day basis. They also provide staff with regular supervision. These arrangements provide consistency and continuity for young people within their individual houses. Team leaders hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care and are appropriately experienced. However they lack specific management training. Without this additional training, management practice is not as robust as it could be. In the absence of team leaders, senior workers can be named people in charge of individual houses for periods of time. They have appropriate care qualifications and experience but they lack specific training to support them to take on this responsibility. This training for team leaders and senior workers is currently being developed.

The Registered Manager demonstrates a clear commitment to the continuous improvement of the service for the benefit of young people. All the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed to a good standard. The manager has ensured that copies of looked after children documents, transition plans and placement plans are in place for each young person. Reviews of young people's progress are available on their files ensuring that full information is



available. Young people benefit as a result of staff being fully informed to support them.

The work of the home and the progress that young people make is routinely monitored. Reports of this monitoring activity now include the consultation that has taken place with stakeholders and also reflect the checks that the manager has made on young people's plans. The daily running of the home is currently under review and changes are planned for September. It is envisaged this will further enhance the training and development of staff and consequently further improve the quality of the care young people receive.

Staff benefit from regular supervision. The recording of these sessions does not always detail the issues covered or the quality of the discussion. Staff report being well supported by their line manager and say that all team leaders are approachable. Supervision records are an area of ongoing development.

There have been no complaints since last inspection. There is a sound policy in place to ensure that any which do arise are dealt with effectively.

There is a detailed statement of purpose. This provides clear information about how the home is run and how the young people are cared for. The home delivers care in line with this document. The young person's guide is presented in a symbol format. There are further guides available in other formats according to individual needs.

Staff keep detailed information about young people that contribute to their overall history and time in the school and this home. Information is recorded in individual files and kept securely to protect young people's right to privacy and confidentiality. Files are well maintained.

## 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.