

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062079
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Registered manager	Helena Sophia Jones
Date of last inspection	06/02/2014

Inspection date	28/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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At the last inspection carried out in December 2014 the service was judged to be inadequate. Eight requirements were made as a result relating to complaints, safeguarding, staff supervision, and the supervision of children, notification of incidents and the administration of medication. The service took immediate action in drawing up and implementing an action plan to address the shortfalls including systems to ensure sustainability. As a result the service is now judged as good.

Complaints management has improved. Senior leaders and managers have a better oversight of all investigations. Safeguarding training has increased the leaders understanding of effective multi-agency working. Staff know the whereabouts of children at all times through increased monitoring; they are not left unattended. Staff receive supervision that allows them to express any concerns they may have knowing they will be taken forward and actioned. The manager has introduced systems to ensure all incident notifications are submitted to Ofsted in a timely manner and are continually monitored. Improved and stricter medication procedures now provide for safer practice, and a more open culture in reporting errors. One aspect of the new medication administration procedures, although planned, is yet to be fully implemented. This is due to external contracts taking time to be agreed and processed. However, until the full implementation of the new stock control methods the service has made sure safer measures are in place.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the service and develop excellent relationships with staff who know them well. Staff work hard to make sure they are happy and can access education according to their current health status. Children receive well-planned and personalised care. Care plans are detailed and take into account the complex and specialist health needs they require. On-site specialist professionals provide expert knowledge and treatment so children can engage and achieve to their maximum potential. In addition children's communication difficulties are considered with many exceeding their expected abilities. Children are able to make very good progress in relation to their complex health and communication difficulties.

Staff receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisals to ensure they are confident in caring for children and protecting their well-being. The manager is committed to staff development and has introduced new training programmes for example in medication administration and safeguarding.

Safeguarding procedures ensure staff have a good understanding of safe working practices. Strong recruitment checks minimise the risk of unsuitable persons working with children. Robust health and safety checks provide a safe environment for children, their families and staff.

Monitoring systems have been strengthened and have a positive impact in improving the quality of care. Senior leaders and managers have tackled weaknesses and secured improvements. There is an open culture at the service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is also a residential special school and it provides holistic services for children with multiple disabilities and complex health needs.

The school provides 52-week placements for learners and is therefore registered as a children's home. This is in addition to being registered with the Department for Education as a non-maintained school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties with an age range between five to 25 years.

The school has 44 educational placements. The registered children's home accommodates 33 learners, in single or twin bedrooms. The residential accommodation comprises three separate houses. At the time of this inspection there were 33 residential learners.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2014	Interim	good progress
23/10/2013	Full	outstanding
07/03/2013	Interim	good progress
16/11/2012	Full	outstanding

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The service supports children in making progress across many areas such as health, communication, participation in activities and involvement in the wider community. In addition children are supported to make good progress in their mobility. They have access to a wide range of therapists who are trained and experienced in brain acquired injuries. Parents and families are very positive about their child's experience at the service and of the progress they make.

Children benefit from close attention to their health needs. They have access to specialist professionals who meet their complex health needs. The support children receive positively impacts on their school attendance and achievement. Children make the best possible progress they can.

School nurses and therapists work alongside teachers to enable children to maintain their time in school. Specialist input aids mobility and communication and allows children to fully participate in the learning environment. Learning opportunities are extended into the residential time, such as `master chef` classes run by occupational therapists. Staff fully support children's access to activities both on and off site. Visits that allow children to participate and contribute to the wider community include sailing, pony and trap rides, bowling and holidays. On site facilities include a hydrotherapy pool. Children's experiences are not hindered by their disabilities.

Transition planning towards adult provision is complex due to the profound nature of the children and the limited specialist services available. Well-organised and timely multi-professional meetings ensure families have a very active input into decision making. Children rely on staff and their families to facilitate and advocate for them. The service provides for open visiting. Staff positively encourage families to be involved in the total care package in place for their children.

Quality of care **adequate**

Medication procedures have been subject to much change although the full impact has yet to be seen. Staff are working through a medication project programme which delivers higher expectations of safe medication administration practices. A more open culture of reporting errors has enabled the manager to better review systems, monitor practices and ensure correct notification to other agencies. An agreement with an external pharmacy provision is to be introduced in April 2015 and will provide a more consistent stock control programme. Until its full implementation the manager has addressed shortfalls to ensure the current stock control measures are safe. This practice protects the welfare and well-being of children.

Relationships between children and staff very positive. Children smile and laugh when with the staff. Staff get to know the children well and as a result can identify changes in individual demeanour or condition. Children have access to an advocacy service and many professionals who have good communication skills so they are able to identify if they are worried, afraid or unhappy. This means that a wide range of staff can respond quickly to the needs of the children.

Children use varying forms of communication methods that are unique to them. Communication passports and the 'follow me' files that accompany children everywhere they go help staff understand how they communicate and how to care for their individual needs. This includes instruction on medication and emergency needs.

Care plans for children are detailed and reflect the changing needs of children through daily, if necessary, and weekly reviews. On-site doctors are able to address the changes in children's health conditions that require a change in care. Staff are then able to implement these changes immediately. Care plans identify strategies and protocols, for example emergency tracheostomy and seizure protocols, so staff can address their specific needs effectively. The information recorded allows staff to support children effectively enabling them to make progress and achieve good outcomes.

Strengthened checking systems implemented ensure staff are aware of the children's whereabouts at all times. The manager and interim headteacher of the school have worked together and put in place additional checks. School and residential staff communicate with each other closely each morning and afternoon so they know if a child is in school or remaining in the residential house. Improved systems provide better protection for children by ensuring no child is left unattended.

Children's dietary needs are well catered for with input from the speech and language and occupational therapy team. They provide staff with individual eating regimes to follow. Staff practice in delivering feeding regimes is highly organised and professional. A staff food champion on each unit provides feedback to the central catering department.

Staff actively support children's education. Improved contact between the residential units and the school ensures a smooth handover of information at the beginning of each morning and afternoon. This allows children to have consistent care.

Staff provide children with a rich and varied life. Many children exceed their life expectancy. Children do not experience any forms of discrimination and individual culture and personal identity is embraced. Numerous religious and cultural celebrations are positively promoted.

All living areas are of a furnished and maintained to a very high standard and

suitable to children's needs. The manager has plans to introduce more information technology into the houses to enhance communication and engagement. Different areas provide for either a stimulating or calming environment for the children.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Leaders and managers have addressed the shortfalls in safeguarding robustly and quickly. The Responsible Individual has adapted his training and developed his safeguarding knowledge so he has a better understanding of working together with external safeguarding agencies. Leaders and managers are extra vigilant in regards to visiting professionals and the sharing of information to better protect children. Leaders and managers now have effective knowledge and understanding in implementing an effective multi-agency approach in referring on serious concerns raised by external agencies. Working relationship developed between the service and the local safeguarding agency ensures that when concerns are raised they are dealt with appropriately. This proves for better protection of children.

In addition, robust action has been taken to enhance staff training and knowledge of safeguarding. Staff receive individual one-to-one sessions with a qualified social worker to ensure their safeguarding knowledge is regularly reinforced. The recently reviewed safeguarding policy is robust and includes an additional pack which is designed for easy access. It includes a safeguarding focus on children with disabilities.

Staff recruitment procedures successfully protect children ensuring only carefully vetted and selected adults, deemed suitable to work with children, are employed. The service has a heightened awareness of the need for visiting professionals to be closely supervised.

Children do not bully intentionally and any aggressive behaviour that may occur is usually a result of an individual frustration rather than malicious intent. Children have very limited mobility and their inclination or likelihood to be absent without authority is extremely low. Children are protected by the procedures in place if such an event did occur.

Staff use positive reinforcement and encouragement to support behaviour management. The use of pictorial and signing methods of communication ensure children understand the messages being delivered. Celebrations are numerous with many certificates of achievements given to children.

Robust health and safety systems in place protect young people and provide them with a safe environment. Routine checking of all areas is of a high standard. Individual fire evacuation plans together with regular fire evacuation practice drills ensure staff know how to evacuate individual children in the event of a fire. Hygiene

measures across the houses are of a very high standard and provide children with a healthy environment in which to receive care.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has successfully completed the registration process with Ofsted. She has the necessary qualifications and experience to manage the service. Although she took time to fully engage with the required regulations for children's homes she now has a good understanding of her responsibilities as the Registered Manager in relation to The Children's Homes Regulations. She is having a positive impact on the service having reviewed many areas and introduced training and systems with higher expectations of service delivery. The strengthened procedures and processes she has put in place have resulted in systems working well. The internal and external auditing and monitoring systems in place will ensure they can be sustained.

Improved management, tracking and auditing of complaints ensures all areas identified in investigation reports are fully reported on and actioned. In addition there is a new and more robust complaint investigation handling structure. Senior managers now get oversight prior to an investigation report being signed off. This allows for any gaps in reporting to be identified and the investigation re-opened. Further to this all complaints are looked at clinical governance meetings which ensure an additional avenue for monitoring of complaints. Action is taken to address poor practice with disciplinary action taken, if indicated. The management and senior management oversight ensures this will continue.

Notification of incidents to the regulatory body is much improved. The manager has implemented improved systems to ensure all incidents, in accordance with events listed in the regulations, are reported to Ofsted in a timely manner, with updates where indicated.

Planned duty rosters reflect a sufficient number of staff on duty to meet the needs of children. The service continues to employ more qualified nurses to meet the increasing complex health needs of the children. A newly recruited social worker works with the school and care staff increasing the social work team already in place. Staff receive induction training followed by a programme of mandatory and additional specialist training. The recent focus has been in medication administration and safeguarding, including whistleblowing. There is a good gender and age mix of staff. Staffing levels and training ensure children's needs can be met by a well trained staff team.

Staff are better supervised as a result of changes put in place since the last inspection. This relates to one of the houses where supervision failed to carry forward concerns raised by a member of staff. As a result of action taken and

changes made by the manager, staff are now confident that their concerns expressed are listened to, recorded and acted on. Other systems that allow for staff to raise concerns have been highlighted such as the whistle blowing policy, access to an open slot in clinical governance meetings and visits by the monthly independent visitor. The manager has also put in place a system to better monitor supervisions. This promotes safe and open practices where concerns can be raised before they lead to unsafe practices.

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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