

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12/01/2017</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC032154</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>National Autistic Society</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>391-393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Helen Eyers</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Lynne Taylor</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Debbie Foster</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12/01/2017</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Sustained effectiveness</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

**SC032154**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home's provision is outstanding because:**

- Young people make significant progress at the home. Their behaviour and social interaction improves in response to the consistent care, routines, boundaries and successful 'low arousal' approach employed by staff.
- Staff are extremely knowledgeable about the vulnerabilities of each young person in their care, and the safeguards and strategies to be used in order to help protect and keep them safe.
- The successful implementation of a multi-agency approach provides young people with the very best support and plans to aid their progress.
- Staff build extremely positive relationships and connections with parents and other people important to the young people.
- Comprehensive monitoring systems successfully identify shortfalls, support improvement and enable the service to maintain very high standards of care.

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

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)  
In particular, ensure that the independent visitor gives an opinion on whether young people are safeguarded effectively.
- Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.13)  
In particular, ensure that the outcome of complaints are clearly recorded.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to 12 children who have autistic spectrum disorder. Children in the home may have other associated difficulties, such as sensory impairment and physical disabilities. The home is part of a residential special school that provides education on site.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/07/2015	Full	Outstanding
14/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/08/2014	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>Young people make tremendous progress because of the individualised care that they receive. A parent said: 'My son has made huge progress in his behaviour. He is now confident and has an awareness of his surroundings.'</p> <p>Staff implement support strategies to ensure that young people engage in everyday life, with structures and routines that support their needs extremely well. This assists in reducing young people's anxieties. They enjoy going to school, and becoming more independent. This is achieved by them being actively involved in making choices about the range of social activities that they wish to take part in, making snacks and deciding on the menu that they have. Young people learn everyday self-care skills such as using cutlery and bathing themselves.</p> <p>Young people thrive because they have strong connections and positive relationships with staff. A staff member said: 'It's our aim to make sure our young people make good progress; that they reach their potential, that we keep them safe and that they enjoy life.'</p> <p>The staff team is dedicated to promoting young people's welfare and continually works in their best interests. This provides young people with a sense of security and belonging. They demonstrate this by readily seeking out the company of staff.</p> <p>Young people profit enormously from the high level of support given to ensure that they can communicate their wishes through sign language and the Picture Exchange Communication System. Young people who are non-verbal have acquired these skills, enabling them to communicate in all aspects of daily life. This gives them an ability to make their own choices and decisions. This significantly promotes their independence.</p> <p>Young people make good educational progress, benefiting considerably from full-time attendance at school and the 24-hour curriculum. In addition to supporting their academic achievements, this support young people to develop self-care, independence and social skills. An educational professional said: 'The staff make sure that young people get to school on time. They always pass on key information, attend meetings and come equipped with all the relevant information.'</p> <p>Young people's physical and psychological needs are swiftly met because they can gain immediate access to the on-site psychological, occupational, and speech and language support services. Their specific health needs are met by staff who are fully trained to respond to any emergencies that require prompt medical</p>	

intervention.

Young people's experiences of the world around them increases terrifically. They enjoy new social situations and leisure activities. This includes cycling, trips out to the cinema, shopping, going for a haircut and eating out. A parent said: 'My son is confident; he has awareness of his surroundings. He is always out. He loves to go swimming, playing on the computer and going out to look for bugs.'

Young people benefit from careful and well-thought out plans that support their move to adult services. Staff recognise the importance of this and ensure that these transitions are successful and a positive experience for young people.

Young people benefit from seeing their family regularly. Staff communicate well with parents. A parent said: 'I am kept up to date about my son's care; this is important to me.'

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people respond well to the structured routines that support their daily lives. This provides them with a safe environment from which they gain enormous benefit.</p> <p>Staff understand the vulnerabilities and risks specific to each young person. As a result, there have been no 'missing from home' incidents, and no young people are at risk of sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Young people receive good support to improve their communication through sign language and symbols. This empowers them and helps them to manage and control their anxieties. As a result, the frequency and intensity of their challenging behaviours is reducing; they are more settled and relaxed. Physical restraints are low in number and decrease for individual young people over time as they respond well to the well-defined care routines that make them feel safe.</p> <p>Young people live in a comfortable environment that is safe because fire, medication, and health and safety checks are regularly undertaken. This helps to provide young people with good quality care.</p>	

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The registered manager holds qualifications in social work and management. She has worked for 30 years with children and young people who have autistic spectrum disorder, and has been the manager for nine years.</p> <p>With well-established, well-qualified, committed and experienced senior and staff teams, the manager maintains high standards of care for young people. All staff speak of being, 'well supported' by the management team. This support is enhanced with regular formal supervision and training in autistic spectrum disorder, epilepsy, safeguarding and the service-specific behaviour management approach. This ensures that the staff are extremely well equipped to meet the needs of young people.</p> <p>There is excellent partnership working between the home and families, professionals, and the staff at school. A parent said: 'I'm kept up to date with my son's care, the staff are great.' Complaints are rare, but are taken seriously and are promptly investigated. Suitable action is taken to address matters, but the records do not clearly detail the finalised outcome of the complaint. This is a procedural shortfall that has no impact on young people.</p> <p>The one requirement and one recommendation made at the last inspection have been addressed. Care plans and risk assessments have been reviewed and the manager now seeks the views of young people about the care that they receive. This assists the home to improve the service further.</p> <p>Comprehensive monitoring enables the manager to make improvements to the care provided to young people and maintain good standards. The independent visitor assesses safeguarding matters, but does not specifically state whether young people are safeguarded effectively. This has no direct impact on young people but would reassure the provider that young people are adequately protected.</p>	



## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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