

SC032154

Registered provider: National Autistic Society

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a charitable trust. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 12 children or young people who have autistic spectrum disorder. Children or young people in the home may have associated difficulties such as sensory impairment and/or physical disabilities. The home is part of a special school that provides education on site.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
---	-------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 15 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The young people make significant and sustained progress relating to their behaviour, education, health, social and independence skills.
- High importance is given to providing the young people with a nurturing environment within structured and safe boundaries.
- The young people are kept safe, and this is achieved by the continual evaluation of their safety. This is embedded in the practice of the staff and safeguarding systems.
- Strong and aspirational leadership ensures that the staff receive training, guidance and support to undertake their role and duties to a very high standard.
- A very experienced and nurturing staff team provides excellent care.
- The standards of care continue to improve due to the action taken as a result of the thorough monitoring undertaken by the management team.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Evaluate and provide further detail about the progress and achievements of the young people, in line with their placement plans, as part of the regulation 44 monthly report.
- Build further on the existing consultation systems with young people to expand their influence on matters that affect their lives now and in the future.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/01/2017	Full	Outstanding
01/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/07/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

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, consider further evaluation of the progress and achievements of the young people in line with their placement plans as part of the regulation 44 monthly report.
- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11) In particular, consider further consultation with young people to expand their influence on matters that affect their lives now and in the future.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The young people make significant progress over time due to the consistent and nurturing care provided by the child-focused staff team. Each young person receives bespoke care to meet their individual and specific needs. The young people benefit greatly from a key team of staff who are committed to their care, development and progress.

The young people develop excellent communications skills through learning the use of the Picture Exchange Communication System, along with the strategies that help them to manage everyday events. They learn daily life skills, for example how to dress themselves, prepare snacks and use public transport. A grandparent said: 'My grandson is doing so well. His behaviour has improved a lot. He has learned to use the toilet. This makes such a difference to his life and ours.'

The young people have built strong, sustained and trusting relationships with staff. These positive relationships enable the young people to listen and engage well with staff, who want the very best for them.

The young people benefit immensely from the specialist on-site health team which provides support for their autism, speech and language, and their emotional well-being. All the young people access routine health checks. The clinical health team works

directly with young people and/or through the staff. This has resulted in the young people's significant progress to reduce anxiety levels and increase their ability to communicate with others. Consequently, the home ensures that their health needs are met.

All of the young people advance as a result of their consistent attendance at school. The home's culture promotes the importance of learning through a 24-hour curriculum. There is a continued increase in their ability to attend and attain in school and at home. This provides the young people with life skills that support them into adulthood.

The young people enjoy positive relationships with their families. The dedicated staff team works diligently, where needed, to rebuild and maintain family relationships. This ensures that the young people have regular visits and overnight stays with family members. One young person said: 'I see my mum all the time.' Consequently, this gives the young people a strong sense of identity, a support network, and ensures that they keep in touch with those who are important to them.

There is a strong focus to build positive life experiences for the young people. These include their social, leisure interests and community activities. In addition, this increases their self-esteem and awareness of the world around them. The young people engage in a number of activities. The activities include arts and craft, listening to music, sensory play, visiting restaurants, the theatre, local parks, and trips to the coast and football matches. These broaden the young people's life experiences and involvement in the local community.

The young people live in a homely environment. The home is well furnished and decorated, with comfortable lounges, personalised bedrooms and a domestic-style kitchen and dining room.

The young people's views and opinions are keenly sought. They routinely tell the staff what activities they wish to take part in, help with menu planning, and seeing their families. This is achieved through daily communication and residents' meetings. However, there could be further expansion to gain young people's views and opinions which would extend their influence and autonomy regarding their care into the plans for their future as young adults.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

The young people's safety is given the utmost importance. The young people benefit greatly from the focus on positive behaviour that includes a lot of praise and reward for their achievements.

The young people live in an environment that is safe due to a number of factors, including high staffing levels that provide one-to-one support or higher. The staff consistently deliver individualised daily care routines and structured boundaries to each young person within a low-arousal environment. Consequently, the young people's

behaviour improves and the incidents of going into crisis reduce dramatically. This maintains the low number of occurrences when the young people need to be held to keep them safe. This care approach contributes significantly to make each young person feel safe and secure.

Each young person has a detailed written risk assessment that the staff follow explicitly. The staff demonstrate a full understanding of the young people's individual risks, vulnerabilities and supporting safeguarding procedures and protocols. Professionals said that staff work closely with them, maintain excellent communication and follow safeguarding procedures. The protection of the young people is accomplished through the effective and sustained planning of care that is delivered by a well-trained team of staff who understands the young people completely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post for 10 years and holds the required qualifications in social work and management. She has over 30 years' experience working with children and young people who have an autistic spectrum disorder.

The management team demonstrates with clarity the service's strengths and weaknesses and has effectively continued to progress and quality assure the service. This is in addition to demonstrating dedication, focus and a desire to provide the very best care for the young people. As a result, this improves staff members' practice and ensures that resources that the young people need are provided. The operation of a multi-disciplinary approach and significantly enhanced communication systems greatly benefit the delivery of all aspects of the young people's care. This produces a fully integrated staff team that has a clear aim of working together to improve the quality of care for the young people.

The senior management team is long-standing, well established and brings stability, clear direction and has high expectations. It leads by example, disseminating that only the best will do for the young people. In addition, the young people benefit immensely from the high ratio of experienced care staff who supervise them and support their needs. The on-site clinical and education team works alongside the care team to support the young people's health, behaviour, well-being and learning. A thorough induction, shadow shifts, mentoring and very good training opportunities equip the care staff team with the skills to care for young people who have an autistic spectrum disorder. Therefore, this provides all the young people with exceedingly good care and facilitates them in achieving the very best outcomes.

Consistently good staff support and robust communication systems remain embedded in daily handover, regular meetings, debriefs and supervision. One staff member said: 'I have terrific support. I can go to any manager and they will listen and help me.' The staff receive formal supervision that includes reflection on their practice. This ensures that the staff are equipped to undertake their duties and that care practices are monitored to make certain that the quality of care provided to the young people remains high.

Excellent partnership working with local authorities, social workers, independent reviewing officers, schools and health professionals assists the staff so that they provide the young people with outstanding care. Professionals reported that communication with them is 'first-rate'. One social worker said: 'The staff always keep me informed. Reports are always sent on time and are of a very good standard. They always run things by me.'

There is an abundance of internal auditing taking place across the home. In addition, the monthly regulation 44 visits continue to improve. The reports are detailed and persevere to identify areas for improvement. Prompt action is taken to progress these identified matters. However, the reports do not always detail the progress that the young people make. This would further enhance the monitoring systems by detailing more explicitly the quality of care being provided to young people.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC032154

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: National Autistic Society

Registered provider address: 391-393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG

Responsible individual: Helen Evers

Registered manager: Lynne Taylor

Inspector

Debbie Foster, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Text phone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018